



Quon Stothers Journey

Berkeley / Los Angeles / Ireland

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Newsletter June 2009

Epilogues: *Perspectives in conflict . . .equipping*

The loyalist paramilitary groups, the Ulster Volunteer Force, and the Red Hand Commando decommissioned their weapons just a few weeks ago. BBC reported it, but we don't watch television, so we don't know how much media attention this event got. Even though our friends here acknowledged it after we brought it up, there seemed to be little mention of this amongst our local community. However, we were excited for it means 900 less weapons of destruction! It's great news. We sent the link to a few friends at home and posted it on the Stothers' blog (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northernireland/8121842.stm>) Perhaps for the local people, it is too long and too many hurts to get excited about another media announcement. I am trying to respect their pain.

More personal to us, Marda finished a class entitled "Epilogues: Perspectives in Conflict". The aims of the course are exploring the underlying cause of conflict, developing a culture of justice



Jim Keys, facilitator for Epilogues

and human rights, and equipping citizens for peace building. This ambitious project used interviews of 30 people, either victims or perpetrators of the Northern Ireland violence, to explore the topics of violence, loss, revenge, forgiveness, justice, and human rights.

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Belfast Home Address:
42 Glenbank Place
Belfast BT14 8AN
Northern Ireland UK

Berkeley Address:
2600 Warring Street
Berkeley CA 94704 USA

Donations/Address corrections:
CTEN
PO Box 291307
Kerrville, TX 78029-1307

Crumlin Road
Presbyterian Church
292 Crumlin Road
Belfast BT 13

Hm ph: (028) 90.291986
from US 01144.2890.291986
Mobile ph: (075) 99.852567
from US 01144.7599.852567

Email:
wardstothers@cten.org
Email:
mQstothers@gmail.com



citizens for peace building

The UN Declaration of Human Rights is used as the basis for discussion, and active citizenry is encouraged as the way forward. Take a look at their website: <http://www.epilogues.net>

Through eight three-hour sessions, a group of 12 women at the Shankill Women's

Centre watched these video interviews and discussed the themes as they related to the Troubles. This was facilitated by Jim Keyes, trained as a teacher now working full time on peace. He was a 16 year old living in the Catholic side of Londonderry/Derry in 1972 at the time of Bloody Sunday. He said his mother protected

Special prayer points

PRAISE FOR many new connections.

PRAISE FOR visits from both of our children this month. Families here are very close.

PRAY FOR cross community dialogues progressed through meeting Dario a Chilean minister assigned to North Belfast

PRAY FOR Desmond and Roberta. They have moved into a bungalow, a one story house

Crumlin Road missionaries: Mark, Peter, and Rachel. Drennans traveling to Seattle for Peter's wedding.

College Avenue Presbyterian Church, in Oakland, Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) working.

PRAY for our kids outreach in August. Friends from old Chinese Presbyterian church are coming to help

PRAY for us as we learn to listen intently

PRAY and **PRAISE** for sustained support in 2009.

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Stothers' Ministry: to come alongside the people, to impact the community, and to enliven faith.

For secure online contributions: www.Cten.org/giving

More than a surprise

Your gift of support is

Pure joy over God's call

And the aftertaste of steeping friendship.

Commission To Every Nation (CTEN) www.cten.org, is our charitable support agency. CTEN was founded in 1994 by Rick Malm. The CTEN mission statement is simply Prayer, Giving, and Going.

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TO EVERY NATION



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

him from much of what happened by saying "there's bother over in town". He said for the next 15 years he believed that the IRA caused Bloody Sunday. There doesn't seem to be much evidence for that although unionists still say, "don't believe everything they tell you". This is the complexity of the situation: 30 years of targeted and indiscriminate mayhem, 3700 killed, the whole country traumatized, and still polarized.

This class was a privilege to take. The women attending and the facilitator are courageous and forthright. They honestly listened and learned from the dialogue. The project leader is skillful; the material was professional and revealing. We hope to be involved in more work like this.

We continue to try to understand and adapt to the local culture. Although we came with the advantage of speaking a common language and sharing a common western history, we are often tripped up by cultural differences. Differences like the open ways of asking you in at anytime for a cuppa (tea and biscuits and a little

"craic") which we find wonderfully friendly. Yet there are huge physical and metaphysical brick steel walls of separation from each other and from outsiders like us.

We were warned before we came that we would be fine if we didn't discuss politics. Fine with us we don't vote here and can't keep up with the government. We discover politics means the Troubles. We now understand that the border is the only

political issue. We see that everyone is affected by their views of what happened and what is going to happen with the border. Even though the people want to be open and are often forthright, the pain is deep, the walls go up, and the distrust remains.

We are getting better at listening and practicing as best we can, hope, equality, humility, and the joy that Jesus Christ expressed.

