



THE Family Times

www.ffwpu.org.uk

December 2002, Issue 1

A monthly publication for families of all faiths

Published by:

The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

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Interfaith conference encourages family values and spirituality

Nine religions were represented at the 38th International Leadership Seminar in London on 2 August 2002.

Organised by the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (and supported by the Family Federation) the day long event consisted of keynote addresses, progress reports of the IIFWP and discussions. The theme of the seminar was: "Rebuilding the Nation: An Exploration of Principles and Practices that Strengthen Families, Educate Our Youth, and Rebuild the Society". Every two months the IIFWP has held conferences on the theme: "The Role of Religious Leaders in Building a New Britain," and this event marked a culmination of their dialogue and plans.

Participants of the conference, many of whom are interfaith activists, heard several presentations and took part in group dis-



From left to right - Mr. Nazir Mustafa, Prof. Ian Hall, Rev. Robin Marsh and Ms. Kadija Hussein

cussions and a moving marriage rededication ceremony at the event's end. The ceremony emphasised the importance of family relationships and their benefit of transcending every religious and cultural boundary, no matter how strong. "We already learned the importance of working together," said Rev. Daniel Moughrabi of

Christian Lebanese background who was moved to tears when he and his wife took part in the ceremony. "There is great potential to make significant contributions to world peace.

Like the schedule of previous seminars, the conference began with a keynote address by Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak, *(continued on next page)*

We love being different



Ajay and Aniko Rai with their twins, Simrin and Aryan

It's not everyday you see an white-asian married couple. Ajay and Aniko Rai are not only that, but with their three small children they are part of Britain's growing number of interracial families. This country boasts the highest rate of interracial couples in Europe.

A young couple, Ajay and Aniko come from Punjabi and Hungarians backgrounds. It is with their twins that the most distinctive racial resemblance of either parent stands out.

When they were first married, both found it difficult to adjust to new in-laws and a new culture. In Indian families, the daughter-in-law is *continued on page 4*

*Mr Taj Hamad,
Director of the Summit
of World Muslim
Leaders spoke frankly
on the image of Islam
in the Western world.*

*“While most
societies are
politically governed,
religion lies at the
root of national and
cultural identities.”*

*IIFWP founder
Rev. Sun Myung Moon*

See the last page for more information and up-coming events of IIFWP. For more information on past events please visit the official IIFWP website:

www.iifwp.org

Inter-national Chairman of IIFWP, followed by a speech and multi-media presentation by IIFWP director Dr. Thomas Walsh. He gave an introduction to the aims and global activities of IIFWP.

The second session focused on IIFWP branch organisations, including, WANGO (World Association of Non-Governmental Organisations.)

Other presentations on IIFWP activities in Britain followed. David Earle from Birmingham



Rev. Daniel Moughrabi was moved to tears when he and his wife took part in the marriage rededication ceremony.

reported on the progress of the Hyderabad Interfaith Children's Home in India, which houses thirty-two children. The home

has been a focus for IIFWP interfaith work in Britain, where it receives most of its funding.

Public Affairs Co-director Margaret Ali also gave an

Human Rights said afterwards: “This is a great message. To get people to meet and talk together from all types of backgrounds is just what we need.”



A group photo of all the participants at the conclusion of the conference. Nine religions were represented.

update on the conference series entitled: “*Role of Religious Leaders in Building a New Britain*” which saw several events this year, as well as the popular Prayers for Peace monthly interfaith meetings. The conclusion of the conference, focused on the importance of commitment in family life with, saw a marriage rededication ceremony.

Mrs. Ahlam Mira Akram of the Arab Organisation for

Religious Education teacher Mr. Alan Rainer Rev Kwak's speech was “taught with a brutal honesty that cannot be denied.”

Mr. Iqbal Hussain, writer and social scientist of international acclaim said, “The IIFWP Seminars have great potential as they are not confined to any specific religion. They underline the importance of goodness, love and humility which are common to all religions.”

Local Stories

North London Manchester Birmingham Scotland Wales Northern Wiltshire Newcastle Eastbourne Ireland Bromley East London Glas

New office opens in Edinburgh

The Scottish branch of the Family Federation has opened a brand new office and networking centre in the heart of Edinburgh. For many years FFWPU members endured the use of a first-story apartment on the famous Cockburn Street for their Sunday Services and meetings. “We wanted something that was on the street level,” says Edinburgh

pastor Robert Williamson, “something more public.”

That is what he officially opened on 29 September, at number 30 Easter Road. The old centre on Cockburn street will now be used as a temporary base for a group of young FFWPU members on tour of Europe.

Mr Williamson is confident about the future of the new centre. From the street it will

be accessible to the public via a new age shop and community networking centre. “The shop has a mind, body and spirit theme,” he said, “ranging from ginseng tea to books on spirituality.”

In contrast to Cockburn St, the new centre will see more opportunity to interact with the Edinburgh community and introduce more people to the FFWPU Scottish

branch. Around the store will be information on FFWPU activities such as fortnightly interfaith prayer meetings as well as their regular introductory seminars at Loch Tay.

Along with the day-to-day administration and meetings, the centre will be used for Sunday Services and meetings with like minded organisations in Edinburgh.

Youth

On a warm Saturday last November an energetic group of teenagers put on a program of music and comedy at the Family Federation headquarters



Putting on a comedy sketch

in Lancaster Gate. Like most British teenagers, young members of the Family Federation have active social lives; but once a month, they devote an whole Saturday to preparing a show for the public.

Their monthly program is held in tandem with outreach for FFWPU in London. Anyone who is interested in the core

ideas of the FFWPU can come for an afternoon talk. Then the young Family Federation members, or HARP (The High School Association for the Research of Principle), will have already met together in the morning and prepared a program of singing and sketches to be later shown to an audience of guests and friends.

The program has become popular with the regulars who come from all over London and the South East. "I get to meet up with friends who I haven't seen for ages, and do something for other people," said Richard Graham, aged 12.

According to Mary Franklin who, with her husband David, are the main organisers, the meetings help the children develop their personality and feel more confident in themselves. "It's also one way they can share their own faith with others, and that makes them happy. That's the main thing."

Morality FORUM

Opening the debate on family issues

The Morality Forum mobilises both religious and community leaders to express their common beliefs on family issues. It campaigns for sex education policy for schools that emphasises loving marriage as the place for human sexuality. The forum is also working towards greater protection for our young people from gratuitous violence or irresponsible role models in the broadcast and print media, supporting other organisations that advance similar aims.

UPDATE:

The American owned lap-dancing chain, Spearmint Rhino, is reported to be planning for "hundreds" of new clubs in Britain.

The franchise recently submitted an application to open a branch in Vauxhall South London, prompting the local council's licensing committee to discuss how it's license would be issued. Morality Forum representatives Bruno Klotz and John O'Neil took initiative in a simple but effective way: They headed for the Vauxhall area and in

just over an hour they had made a petition of 64 signatures with only two people refusing to sign. No one had been aware that Spearmint Rhino was coming to the area.

Despite John and Bruno's efforts to dissuade the licensing



The world's biggest chain of lap-dancing clubs is owned by John Gray, an American multi-millionaire. Many branches employ up to 200 women.

committee with their evidence of views of a selection of the community, Spearmint Rhino was granted the license. They have not lost hope, however. Petition forms are now being mailed to over 120 ministers in Vauxhall, with one Imam committed to getting 1,000 signatures from his mosque. The campaign continues.

The Big ISSUE: Can morals be taught in schools?

Amid a flurry of international crisis last October, president George Bush unexpectedly announced a national "Character Counts Week" in November for educators across America. The initiative reflected a swingback towards values based teaching - a new concept that has been increasing in momentum for the last decade.

Educators around the world have noticed a growing movement for character education. They have found that many want to reclaim the "moral mission" of schooling. There is no denying that children around the globe are the ones who experience the full brunt of their society's moral and ethical decline.

The concept of "character education" is based on the premise that universal values exist, or there is an underlying



While some programmes such as PSHE have taught sex education in the classroom, there has been little emphasis on relationships and character.

existence of right and wrong. In light of the present trends towards impartiality and leniency, these perspectives

are different. Although virtues such as respect, honesty, fidelity and self-sacrifice are agreed upon the world over, none of these values are particularly emphasised in British schools. The aim of character education is not only to focus on those points, and therefore stimulate the development of a child's character.

It is unconventional for schools to take the liberty to teach kids about following their conscience. Some schools have already started using charac-

ter-based curriculums. The International Education Foundation* curriculum is currently in use in over 5,000 schools in Russia with pending proposals by IEF in Britain. This particular series is also "family based", and includes models and tips on family relationships and conflict resolution. Studies have shown that in schools where character education was used, student behaviour vastly improved.**

* IEF character education curriculum and projects are listed in: www.internationalcharacter.org

** "The Child Development Project" Developmental Studies Centre, Oakland CA. (1998)

What is the FFWPU?

The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification is a spiritual and family based organisation. We believe that spirituality, as expressed in the world's different faiths, sustains strong individuals and traditional family values are the



IIFWP supporter Mrs. Tina Coombs and Dr. Iftikhar Ayaz at an interfaith conference in October 2002



Working with IIFWP, this service project in India saw 30 young people from different backgrounds build the foundations for an interfaith children's home.

basis of a society's well-being.

Founded in 1994, by the Reverend and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon and inaugurated worldwide in 1996, the Family Federation International seeks to build a peaceful world through true families.

In 185 nations we promote activities which strengthen the love of husband and wife, the love of parents for their children, and the love of children for their parents. We are dedicated to the realisation of God-centered families and the pursuit of world peace through sponsorship of marriage rededication and blessing ceremonies, educational conferences, service projects, seminars on family life and interfaith meetings.

With branches all over the UK, we have an active membership of over 500 with many thousands more who support and espouse our views.

Family church members of the FFWPU hold regular worship services and Sunday schools. Various outreach and educational programmes are run including introductory two and seven-day seminars. A youth club is run

once a week in most Family Churches along with national summer camps. For more information on local activities contact us for your local Family Church address.

The FFWPU supports educational and charitable programmes that promote Godly family values. The activities we currently support include the Family Church, Prayers for Peace, the Morality Forum, IIFWP conferences, the Interfaith Children's Home in Hyderabad India, HARP and CARP (for youth) and Won Hwa Do (a form of martial arts based on the basic principles of the FFWPU).



IIFWP founders, Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon

This newsletter analyses and discusses issues that relate to the FFWPU's founding ideals of family values and interfaith harmony.

Upcoming EVENTS

Prayers for Peace

Interfaith peace meeting
"Children of the World; Special Focus on Famine in the South Africa Region"
Speaker: Ian Lethbridge, Director Feed the Children
7 pm, Tues **3rd December**

Women's Federation

Christmas Party

£5 (£3 for members)
Entertainment with a festive bazaar
3pm, Sat. **7th December**

IIFWP Seasonal Gathering

Interreligious International Federation for World Peace networking luncheon
1pm, Sat. **14th December**

All events shown are to be held at:

**43 Lancaster Gate
London W2 3NA
(Central Line tube)**

Religious Holidays

Eid Ul-Fitr

5th or 6th December
Islamic holiday marking the end of Ramadan

Christmas

25th December
Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus.

We love being different (continued...)

often seen as not only a new member of the family but an asset to the household. "There is a huge difference between the family that I grew up with and my Indian family today," says Aniko. But Ajay's parents say they are happy with the marriage. With their other children having gone down the traditional route of marrying within the faith, they were surprised at the stability of Ajay and Aniko's unconventional marriage.

Although there is nothing shocking about interracial couples in Britain is there still ever a feeling of unease when the Rai's are out in public? "I don't think people ever really look at us strangely," says Ajay. "We love being different and we're proud of each other."

"When I see a mixed race baby, I myself find I'm trying to figure out the background of its parents," says Aniko. "It's exciting - you want to see what can result from two peo-

ple who look completely different. And there are so many possibilities for how they will be brought up."

The different backgrounds of the Rai's do come into play when it comes to rearing their children. They say that overall, having children has taught them many valuable things about each other's backgrounds. Together they have created a combination of cultural traditions and a truly special family.

The Family Times is an official publication of the FFWPU in Great Britain

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