



The FamilyTimes

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A publication for families of all faiths

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**The Family
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IN THIS ISSUE

The Iraqi people

Update on
Hyderabad

Back to India

Youth - Fasting for
Change

Morality Forum

Upcoming Events

Introduction to the
FFWPU in Britain

Could we put ourselves in their shoes?

For the last few months the headlines have been dominated by all aspects of the development of a war on Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

All aspects, that is, except the very real impact that the war will have on the *people* of Iraq. Whether one is pro-war or not there is one thing that everyone can agree upon, and that is that yet another crisis in Iraq will not be an easy ride for the Iraqi people. We often forget that they are an important part of this situation - the soldiers, diplomats and "key" players, Bush, Blair and Saddam are usually the first to come to mind when we think of the crisis.

But one thing is clear: Iraqis are exhausted by the combined effect of the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's, the 1991 Gulf War and 12 years of United Nations sanctions. Iraq is a bruised and divided country.



An Iraqi family: Seiman Methboub has eight children

The number of orphanages in Iraq is growing as more families abandon children, and the divorce and suicide rates are also rising, according to humanitarian workers in Baghdad. According to a UNICEF representative, economic problems have caused a serious breakdown of the family structure with many children dropping out of school to help support their families. Do the Iraqi people have the resources or the strength to withstand an additional crisis? It is worthwhile appreciating the extent to which their lives are being



A quarter of children in Iraq are malnourished. Most families rely directly on government food rations to survive.

affected and imagining what life must be like for them.

One Iraqi woman, Seiman Methboub (below left), a widow with eight children, is very anxious. Like most other families, hers leads a tough life. They even show a general acceptance that they may not live to see the end of the war, beginning all statements about the future with the words, "If I am still alive..." She said in a magazine interview*, "We believe the American people are like us, and want peace - they don't want to hurt anybody. But let their families be in our place, and feel what we are feeling.

"It is in the hands of God. Whether

our life ends, in a war or not, it is up to God."

Ordinary people often feel frustrated that there is little in their power to help those like Seiman Methboub and her family. But the very least we can do is understand and empathise with her. We are connected to her whether we are Iraqi or British, Shia or Sunni, because a belief in a first cause, Allah, God or Yahweh, is one thing we have in common. Perhaps it is His viewpoint, rather than that of our politicians, the media, even our own, that we need to see from. If we are really living in a brotherhood of man then God is our common link. We should continue to attend and connect to him

PRAYERS FOR PEACE

THE RENOWNED MONTHLY INTERFAITH MEETING OF THE FFWPU

Korea
Crisis on the Peninsula
Tuesday 6 May

(see back page for more details)

Youth

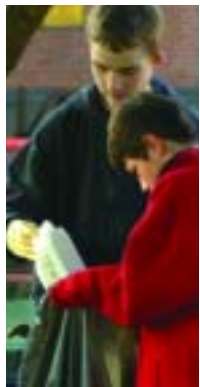
Young people going hungry for a change



Young people from North London chose to go without food for 24 hours, raising money so those with no choice can eat.

Ever wondered what it would be like to grow up in one of the many famine stricken regions of Africa? The young HARP members of North London's Family Church got together on Saturday 22 February to do just that, and raised over £700 in the process.

"People often feel they want to



Picking up litter during the fast

do something to help the situation in Africa," said Michael Franklin, the young North London HARP leader. "But as well as

raising money, we wanted to understand what it felt like for people who live in famine, even if it was just for 24 hours."

The project was inspired by *World Vision*, a charity which had already set up a nationwide campaign for people to do sponsored "famines". Thirty-two HARP members, mainly from North London and the region of Harrow, volunteered to take part, and they decided that they would do it all together.

"Although it would be physically

difficult, especially for some of the kids who had never fasted in their life, we wanted to make it fun," explained Michael. "We started together and ended together." At precisely noon on Saturday the ambitious kids had gathered in a rented hall to mark the beginning of the 24 hours. They passed the time they would normally spend on eating lunch and dinner with activities such as building a paper chain to represent the number of people who die each hour from starvation.

There were over 1,000 links!

The kids kept themselves busy throughout the rest of the day, first by going on a scavenger hunt and then by giving their evening time to the local community and cleaning up litter on the streets of Harrow. The next morning the group attended the Sunday service of a local Christian church instead of their regular North London Family Church.

The money raised in total from sponsors was £717. Many of the kids expressed they found the fasting surprisingly easy, adding that doing it as a group helped to distract them from the hunger. As well as giving a substantial token of money to the people of South Africa, the North London HARP members could gain a memorable and insightful experience for themselves.

Morality FORUM

The Morality Forum mobilises both religious and community leaders to campaign for family issues. It has focused on sex education policy for schools gratuitous violence or irresponsible role models in the media. It works under the Family Federation and with other organisations that have similar aims.

(Taken from the "Morality Forum Update")

UPDATE

The Morality Forum has had several demonstrations at the Houses of Parliament.

They provided an opportunity to meet a number of people from the media as well as politicians. Some MF members were interviewed on the radio and one family made an appearance on Kilroy. John O'Neill, director of the Morality Forum has spoken on radio phone-in programs a number of times and highly recommends it as a way to make a point to thousands of people.

The Forum has received several requests for "starter packs" from people anxious to combat the growing number



of lewd clubs. It must be encouraging to see that people are not only concerned but want to take positive steps towards making society better. Brian Warner and John O'Neill, who organise the Forum, are now overseeing the collation of materials to send to create a starter pack and send out at people's request.

John O'Neill said, "We must never underestimate the power of public opinion even in this over-regulated age. If we don't speak out, politicians, councillors, church leaders and other citizens will not even know that there is a public opinion.

"Pick up your pen, take up the telephone, create a petition, make the voice of reason heard and we can definitely replace the present corruption with better values and attitudes."

The case against pornography

A burning issue for the MF

You don't have to be prude to be against pornography. It is not a question of anyone objecting to nakedness or sexual relationships. The question is, are people valued enough as individuals, with a unique character and personality,

We need a resurgence of true love and concern for others.

or as commodities? Are they simply objects, to be manipulated to satisfy somebody else's debased motivation?

"It has been claimed that pornography will keep potential rapists and murderers off the streets," said Superintendent Hames, Head of Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Department. "Actually, it encourages the state of mind which makes violent sexual crimes possible."

Many doctors have suggested that the need for pornography is a symptom of sickness, rather than a sign of health. Porn has replaced love in many relationships. There is a desperate need for unselfishness to be re-established in today's society. Porn has made this fundamental problem worse as it has an insidious effect on the mind. We need a resurgence of true love and concern for others. We can improve matters by speaking out.

Focus on 'Hyderabad'

The orphanage in southern India, sponsored by the Family Federation, UK



The Home in its early states of construction by a group of international volunteers in 1998

UPDATE: By David Earle

In July 2002, Patricia and I received a most unexpected letter. We had been recommended to receive the Hind Rattan (Jewel of India) award from the Non-Resident Indian [NRI] Welfare Society of India, for our work in establishing the Interfaith Children's Home near Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. We eventually decided to accept the invitation to attend the awards ceremony in New Delhi, one of our main reasons being that it would give recognition to all the

many Indian people living in Britain who have so generously supported the project, not least our dear friends Mr and Mrs Jagjit Sapra, the Consul General of India and his wife here in Birmingham.

We flew first to Hyderabad, where we spent one week at the Children's Home. With kind help from the International Relief Friendship Foundation, we were able to obtain an excess luggage allowance from Emirates Airline, and could take a suitcase full of gifts and craft items for all the children to enjoy. We



The Earles and Ajay (see article below) receive a colourful welcome

were joined there by Ajay Rai, (see below) who will help to plan the next Youth Service Project which we wish to hold to expand the



David and Patricia Earle, project founders, receive their award from Dr Ifthikhar Ayaz (centre)

Children's Home later this year. Ajay had a great time with the children, teaching them new songs and games, and could also meet several young people during our time there who would like to be involved with our work for Communal Harmony.

We were extremely busy the whole week, the most intense day being

one in which we met Hon. Devender Gowd (Home Minister in the ruling Telegu Desam Party's Cabinet) at his residence at 8.00am, met the opposition Congress Party leader, Mr Satyanarayana Rao, at Ghandi Bhavan at 11.00am, attended Sunday Service with a small independent church community where I gave an address and then conducted a Family Blessing and, finally, went to the Children's Home where we arranged a cultural evening and celebration, having the children give one of their wonderful

(Continued overleaf)

Some younger children at the Home



Back to my homeland

By Ajay Rai

It had been almost fourteen years since I last was in India. I was encouraged to go and find out for myself how things were developing for our Interfaith Children's Home in Hyderabad, a project of the FFWPU UK. For over a year now I've been working with a student volunteer organisation called Service for Peace (SFP) and my hope was to send a dozen or more students to take part in a project to help build an extension to



Ajay (far right) meeting with national and local level government officials

the Home in September of this year. On my trip I got to prepare for that, as well as experience India in all its glory.

I was impressed by the amount of networking that was involved during my visit as well as the local interest in this project. I also never expected that the local papers and television would do features on myself and the main directors of the Children's Home, David

(clockwise from left): the children welcome us to their home, two teenagers girls, the kids show off their works of art with Patricia.



and Patricia Earle, but they did. We even met with leaders from both the main political parties. In the spirit of SFP, I was 'learning from doing' all the time - this included trying all kinds of local food (including Chinese!) thanks to the great Indian hospitality.

The most important aspect of my trip was meeting the children, which I got to do at a set time every day. They

make up a wide age range with the oldest ones being mainly girls between 12 and 14. The children had exams everyday and followed a disciplined schedule, including two study sessions outside of school - so I decided to give the kids a chance to have

fun and be creative. We played indoor and outdoor games and learned to sing a few songs like "Old McDonald". I even introduced them to Elvis Presley and rock 'n roll! They ended up calling me "Bhai," which means big

brother, and being a big brother or big sister is definitely one thing I would like other young people to experience during the service project in September.

"I introduced them to Elvis Presley and rock 'n roll."

We want to build an extension to the Home so that those who visit there in the future will have their own accommodation and can spend as much time with the staff and children as possible. When I started off on this trip I was thinking about my work as a Service for Peace representative and realised that I had only been carrying the torch for the organisation. On the plane, as we were just about to take off, I wrote down in my notebook: "Now I will be the flame." I want the SFP vision to spread and going to India was a special way for me to do that.

Ajay is a father of three and the director of 'Service for Peace' UK. He lives in East London.

**Visit the British
Family Federation
WEBSITE**

WWW.FFWPU.ORG.UK



Upcoming EVENTS

Prayers for Peace

“Korea - Crisis on the peninsula”
Tuesday 6 May
7pm to 9pm
Monthly interfaith prayer meeting focusing on international peace. Prayers and talks are presented by the various faiths.

Service Conference

Saturday, March 29th
All day
Continuing the series of Interfaith conferences, this time focusing on the value of service work

All events shown are to be held at:

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



The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification



The Founders of the Family Federation, Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon.

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 that traditional family values are the 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 for World Peace

and Unification seeks to build a peaceful world through true families.

In 185 nations the FFWPU promotes 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 re-dedication 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. Some of 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, and HARP and CARP (for youth).

The Family Times newsletter analyses and discusses issues that relate to family values and interfaith harmony, the founding ideals of the FFWPU.

Update on Hyderabad (continued...)

displays of Indian dancing for invited friends and guests, and with everyone staying on to chat together long into the night.

Patricia and I then flew up to Delhi. We had cordial meetings with Dr Mrs Mohini Giri (Guild of Service), a long-time supporter of our movement, and with Lady Catherine Young, wife of the British High Commissioner, at her residence. We then spent four or five days as part of the group of 30 NRI's receiving the Hind Rattan award. Most award winners had come as couples, so we could get to know many successful Indian people from as far away as

Canada and New Zealand, all of whom are investing their time, money and resources back into their native India.

It was a great honour to receive the award from former President of India K.R. Narayanan, in the company of K.C. Pant, Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers in the current national government. We also met former Prime Minister of India, I.K. Gujral, at the opening ceremony. I gave a slide presentation about our interfaith work to the whole assembly, and this generated great interest amongst the participants with its unique combination of humanitarian and interreligious activ-

ity. The next day, after observing the Independence Day parade, we left for 2 days of sight-seeing together in Jaipur, the 'pink city', 250 kilometres south-west of Delhi.

We seem to be the first non-Indians to receive this award since its inception 15 years ago, and we had a genuine sense of fulfilment, both personally from our integration into the Indian community here in Birmingham, and also with respect to the ideals of our Family Federation for World Peace, going beyond nationality, race and religion into a realm of heart with one another, on the level of our common humanity.

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

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