

The challenge of sharing the Principle and the Blessing in contemporary society

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By David Earle

In our west European society, there has been much debate about multiculturalism, immigration and integration in recent years. This is still a major concern, and one of the

key topics of discussion in the current election campaign in the UK. The uncertainties thrown up by Brexit, and the climate of fear generated by atrocities carried out in many of our European cities, only serve to compound the issues and the search for

lasting solutions. For the younger generation, increasingly exposed to so much of all of this through social media and the internet, so many questions arise regarding the future, in addition to the challenges of finding work and job security. For some in the older generation, particularly those who lived through WWII, the question is often “What has become of us?”

As FFWPU which has ‘F’, ‘P’ and ‘U’, family, peace and unification, at the core of our name and identity, we have tried to respond to all of this in Birmingham by bringing people together, creating an environment in which they can genuinely feel that we are one human family, and then explaining the Principles of Peace which underpin all of our different activities.

Following on from the Interfaith Peace Blessing which we held in February this year, which many people found inspiring in terms of the great diversity of communities represented together, we have tried to continue our Family Evenings on a regular basis, providing





food, fellowship and the opportunity to study the Principle in a homely environment. Often, we have a combination of new guests, old friends and people who took part in the Blessing coming for the evening. Sharing food is a nice way to get to know one another such that, when we move from the kitchen into the study room, we bring with us a feeling of togetherness, something which is already there and which makes the presentation of the Principle much smoother, and more focused. Singing one or two songs together is also good in creating a feeling of oneness, although we are always careful to choose more devotional songs when we have Muslim brothers and sisters with us, out of respect for their tradition.

The majority of people want to continue to study with us, and will often say how much inspiration they receive from the evening, both for their personal lives, and in terms of dealing with what is happening in our society. One of our aims is that everyone will feel a little more hopeful when they leave, than when they arrived, and the different components of the evening generally allow that to happen.

There are still so many good-hearted people present in all our different religious and ethnic communities, but the challenge is to meet them, build relationships of trust, and then consistently invest with heart and truth, and begin a shared journey together, empowering one another in goodness. It is never easy, but it is possible.

