

FFWPU UK: Members' Spotlight - David and Patricia Earle

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For more than three decades, David and Patricia Earle have dedicated themselves to building bridges between people of different faiths, cultures, and backgrounds through community service, hospitality, and peacebuilding initiatives.



2009 Interfaith Peace Blessing in a Christian Church

In response to a series of questions for this Members' Spotlight feature, the couple reflected on the experiences, relationships, and values that have shaped their journey over the years.

Their involvement in interfaith work began after returning to the UK from America in 1991 and settling in Birmingham. Patricia first attended an interfaith course at the Harborne Hall Multi-Faith Centre, where participants learned about and experienced six major religious traditions over six weeks. David later attended the course as well, and through it, they formed friendships with people from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities.

By the end of 1992, they had begun hosting interfaith and peace meetings in their own home, something they have continued for the past 33 years. Alongside these gatherings, their work expanded into practical service projects, including supporting homeless communities, organising Religious Youth Service projects in Birmingham, helping refugee and disadvantaged women through yoga and craft activities, and contributing to the building of an Interfaith Children's Home in Hyderabad, India.



Interfaith Children's Home in Hyderabad, India

For the Earles, interfaith work has always been rooted in human connection rather than religious division.

"It's important to go beyond religion and denomination, on the level of the heart," they wrote. "When people experience this 'one family of humanity' in a very real way, things can move forward very quickly."



That approach has led to many meaningful relationships over the years. One recent example came through Patricia's work teaching crafts to refugee women alongside Women of Hope, where she met women from the Ismaili community. Some later attended peace meetings hosted in the Earles' home, eventually leading to invitations to visit the Ismaili Centre and discuss future peace initiatives together.



Women's Peace Meeting in the Earles' Home



response acknowledging their peace and interfaith efforts "from Birmingham to Hyderabad."

Despite the challenges of an increasingly divided world, the Earles shared that what continues to motivate them is the joy of bringing people together and creating spaces where peace can be genuinely experienced.

"We feel so much joy and gratitude to be able to continually build bridges of friendship," they wrote.

Above all, they hope people see them simply as ordinary people striving to reflect God's love through service, compassion, and community.

"We hope that people can feel something of a parental heart from us," they shared. "Also, that we are ordinary people, but with God's help we can do extraordinary things together."

When asked about memorable experiences from their years of community work, both David and Patricia shared moments that left a lasting impact on them.

David reflected on meeting members of the Parents Circle and Families Forum during visits to the Holy Land. The organisation brings together Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones in the conflict, yet choose reconciliation and peace over hatred and revenge.

"They are turning their pain and suffering into a force for good," he shared.

Patricia spoke about meeting Dr Sakena Yacoobi, recipient of the SunHak Peace Prize, whose work has helped provide education and vocational training for millions of Afghan women and girls. After first meeting her at a UPF Africa Summit in Senegal, the Earles later invited her to Birmingham to speak about her life and humanitarian work.

"In spending time with her, I realised she is a 'Mother Teresa' of the Islamic world," Patricia wrote.

Outside of public life, family remains central to their everyday lives. With four children, their spouses, and seven grandchildren all living relatively nearby in Birmingham, much of their time is spent supporting and staying connected with family. They also enjoy walking in nature, gardening, spending time with friends, and participating in community activities.

Patricia, who has practised yoga since the age of fifteen, continues to teach regularly through women's groups, refugee programmes, mosques, and health meetings. She described yoga as something that benefits "the body, mind and soul."

Another special moment they reflected on was receiving a personal letter from King Charles III following the Coronation Champion's Award presented to Patricia for her voluntary service and community work. After writing to the King and Queen Camilla to express their gratitude, they later received a personalised