

## South London Family Festival Marriage Rededication Ceremony and Awards

Franklin and Cecilie Fortune  
February 24, 2018



An exciting programme of entertainment, awards, testimonies, food and fellowship, capped off with a beautiful marriage rededication ceremony, inspired a gathering of about 70 people of all ages at the Family Festival celebration on Saturday 24th February. The event, held in the warm surroundings of the South London Peace Embassy on a cold winter's day, was held under the joint auspices of FFWPU, WFWP and UPF.



Our two featured speakers, Frederick Clarke of Mighty Men of Valour and David Rennie of FFWPU, offered profound reflections on the importance of the family in building peace in our communities and between nations. Frederick introduced the ground-breaking work of his organisation in supporting the role of fathers in family life, particularly encouraging institutions such as primary schools to facilitate an environment for fathers to be more involved in the lives of their children. David gave a moving personal testimony of how his marriage to a German lady helped overcome the inter-generational enmity between people of two nations scarred by war, reinforcing the message that international and intercultural marriage can substantially heal deep wounds of division.

The programme featured awards to recognise exemplary couples who epitomised the commitment to marriage and family. The eight couples who received the award took the opportunity to share about key aspects that have been the foundation for their successful relationships, with one recipient expressing the

importance of the support of their local congregation for each couple's marriage. Another couple testified that they have had to continually rebuild their lives as they moved frequently from country to country, but they felt so much at home in the friendly atmosphere at the event. An Ambassador for Peace award was also presented separately to Councillor Brenda Fraser, former Mayor of Merton, in recognition of her dedicated service over many years as an educator, councillor and magistrate.

Varied entertainment comprising songs, dance, flute recital and a quiz all featured during the celebration, wonderfully introduced by MCs Christian Klotz and Miho Fortune who guided the audience through the schedule. In the final part of the programme, Margaret Ali, director of UPF, introduced the Marriage Rededication Blessing, citing the powerful impact it has had on her own couple's relationship and the significance of people from all different religious or non-religious backgrounds coming together to

reaffirm the value of marriage and speaking as one voice in the public arena. A poignant ceremony was conducted by Franklin and Cecilie Fortune in which six couples received the marriage Blessing, with a congratulatory song exquisitely rendered by Dong-Sun Chen.



The event concluded with a hearty meal over which the participants could share fellowship and experiences, before departing into the night with eager anticipation of the next Family Festival to be held in May.



Written by Staff at the South London Peace Embassy, 24th February 2018