

**GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY  
WORLD COUNCIL**

**USA – 1957**

Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the World Council of the Girls 'Friendly Society held at Bronxville, New York, United States of America on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June 1957.

**Present:**

Chairman:		Mrs Frank Russell Barry	England and Wales
Australia	Delegates	Mrs K Bright-Parker, Miss N Long	
	Observer	Miss H Bright-Parker	
British Guiana	Observer	Miss S McMurdoch	
Canada	Observers	Miss Tester Miss B Cunningham, Girl's Auxiliary Miss C Kiff	
England and Wales	Delegates	Mrs Russell, Barry, Miss J Almgill	
	Observers	Mrs K Mulliner, Miss C Hawks	
Japan	Observers	Miss A M Ueda, The Revd JS Yamane, The Revd J H Araki	
	Guests, 1 <sup>st</sup> Session	The Revd and Mrs Hikaru Yanigihara	
Newfoundland	Delegates	Mrs Cruchey, Miss Davage	
	Observers	Mrs Garland, Mrs Yatman, Mrs Sheppard	
Panama	Observer	Miss G Smith	
Philippines	Observer	Miss K Longid	
Puerto Rico	Observer	Miss A Flores Sanchez	
Scotland	Delegate	Miss E M Darvie	
USA	Delegates	Mrs H E Woodward, Miss R Cooney	
	Observers	Mrs Sumner Walters, Mrs S K Mahon, Mrs E G Ferreira, Miss M Heald	
	Secretary	Mrs E G Ferreira, USA	

Apologies were received from Ceylon and Ireland.

June 24<sup>th</sup> 1957 – afternoon

The third World Council of the Girls 'Friendly Society was held at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, USA preceding the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and National Assembly of the GFS, USA.

Mrs Russell Barry, President of the World Council opened the meeting and called on the Revd J S Yamane and The Revd J H Araki of Japan for opening prayers. Mrs Barry then welcomed by name the delegates and observers to the World Council and noted the coincidence that the date of the meeting was also the second birthday of the founding of the World Council in England in 1955.

Welcome was also given by Mrs H E Woodward as host for GFS, USA.

Mrs Barry read a welcome from the Episcopal Church of the USA, presented an illuminated address from Ireland and another from Scotland. Letters of greeting were read from Her Excellency Lady

Slim, Patron of GFS in Australia and from the Primate of Australia, His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney.

It was moved by Mrs Bright-Parker, seconded and agreed

*"That each delegate should have a vote and each observer the right to speak but no vote.*

### **Minutes**

Minutes of the previous meeting of the World Council were read and approved. It was noted that minutes would be circulated and signed, and a copy placed in the Minute Book which was presented by the GFS of England and Wales.

### **GFS World Day of Prayer**

Reports were made on the World Day of Prayer by the different countries. These reports showed wide diversity of observance, but general enthusiastic acceptance of the idea.

The meeting adjourned to accept the hospitality at tea of Mrs G Burpee and Mrs C Proctor of Bronxville.

### **June 24<sup>th</sup> 1957 – Evening**

The second session of the World Council met on the evening of June 24<sup>th</sup> at Kober House, Bronxville, Mrs Barry presiding. She spoke briefly of the history of the World Council and the outstanding progress made in the past two years. She expressed the hope that the Society would draw together in bonds of Christian fellowship and community which would lead to truer international understanding.

### **GFS World Day of Prayer (cont)**

Discussion was resumed on ways of implementing observance of the GFS World Day of Prayer.

England presented the intercession leaflets prepared by them, based on the information given in the World Newsletter and offered further copies upon request to Townsend House, London.

There was general discussion on the form of service. The question was raised whether it was preferable to prepare one service for use by all or offer suggested prayers and intercessions to be incorporated in any service. Various points of view were expressed, among them Australia who feared that contents prepared in advance might lose their poignancy, England warning that too much paperwork would mean hardship on the country providing the chairman. England suggested that a theme should be agreed, and each country left to develop it in its own way. Newfoundland felt there was an advantage in the use of a set form and all using the same service. All agreed on the value of using the same prayers. Scotland suggested that each year each country should send a petition representing its particular needs to be incorporated in a set form of service to be used every year. Australia asked for a special service suitable for children. It was agreed that there should be a common theme and that intercessions be prepared.

The use of the offering was discussed. Australia felt that the use of money for oneself turns one's thoughts inward and that a gift for missions would be more desirable. USA agreed that their original idea was that the money should be used for scholarships but that they had agreed to use it for the

expenses of delegates since this would be one way of subsidising the Council. It was decided that the offerings given on the World Day of Prayer should be used for a joint project in the mission field. This project would not cut across the programs of the individual countries.

It was moved by USA, seconded by Australia and agreed "that the theme adopted for 1957/58 should be *The World-wide church and the place of GFS in it!*". It was suggested by Mrs Bright-Parker of Australia that the theme for the following year be "The United Nationals" and that the project be in connection with either UNICEF or UNESCO.

After a general discussion on projects including work to promote good relations in South Africa, proposed by Mrs Darvie of Scotland, and international work camps proposed by Mrs Mahon of USA. Newfoundland suggested that it might be better to build up a reserve fund and to leave the decision of the exact way in which to use it until it was known how much money was available. It was there proposed by Australia, seconded by USA and agreed

*"That the contribution from each country be put in reserve funds to be used for the further education of some girls in another country, the decision to be made at the next meeting of the World Council".*

Discussion followed concerning a poster. England suggested one perpetual poster. Australia felt that teenagers change their thinking so rapidly that it would soon be updated. USA stated that a poster was not necessarily the answer. England felt that a poster been essential in 1955. Australia said they had not used the poster and did not feel it was advisable unless it was a really first class one. It was finally moved by Australia, seconded by England and agreed, *"That until the machinery of the GFS World Council became more workable posters for the GFS World Day of Prayer be left to the initiative and responsibility of each country".*

### **Joint Activities**

Opportunities for joint activities in addition to the World Day of Prayer were then discussed. Australia spoke of correspondence through pen friends. Cynthia Hawkes of England told of a round robin circulated by those who had attended Les Diablerets and also suggested that correspondence between branches in different parts of the world be encouraged. Newfoundland mentioned the World Newsletter as a means of keeping together its members. Jean Almgill of England asked that since there was no central organisation the names and addresses of those present be circulated with the Minutes. Miriam Heald of USA spoke of the problem of making the World Council real to members. Exchange of staff and letters was helpful but working on a common project would be a real means of uniting members in all parts of the world. It was suggested that the Council might need a committee that would not necessarily meet to deal with such matters.

Australia reminded the meeting that letters of introduction from one country to another could be very useful. Mrs Mahon of USA spoke of exchange programs of students now in progress and possible future expansion of this idea. Mrs Bright-Parker asked if this might mean exchange of jobs. The past experience of USA and England in the interchange of staff was spoken of.

The Council discussed International Conferences. Cynthia Hawkes suggested that sectional conferences be promoted where world ones were not possible.

### **Film Strips and Tape Recorders**

Film strips as a means of communication were discussed. England were now producing a world one in black and white. Australia had colour slides of the four-fold basis of GFS activity in that country. Interchange of colour slides by countries was thought to be more valuable than film strips, as the former could be varied and replaced when necessary. It was moved by England, seconded and agreed

*“That colour slides taken at the meeting and in our various countries be made available to other countries and information concerning them should be circulated”.*

Tape recordings were suggested by British Guiana and it was decided to make one of the meeting to demonstrate their possibilities. It was suggested that a message be recorded at the meeting and sent to all countries.

### **Finance**

The matter of finance was discussed. England explained their birthday fund whereby one gave a coin for each year of membership. Australia spoke of their delegates fund and said it would be difficult to create another. It was agreed that there should be a World Council Fund if this proved practicable.

The meeting was adjourned until the following day after an effective use of England’s intercessions for the World Day of Prayer, each President reading the section concerning her own country.

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> 1957 – morning**

The meeting was opened with a tape recording from Japan.

### **Further Expansion**

Consideration of means of further expansion included the necessity of personal contact and taking the initiative. Mrs Woodward suggested that members should make themselves known to organisations and leading church people as they travelled round. Mrs Bright-Parker reported that Australia had expanded through contact with outside ladies such as Mothers Union, Women’s Auxiliary, Labour League and National Fitness Council. Newfoundland felt that they publicised the Society through church organisations. Jean Almgill told of speaking to students at a Theological College, of interesting those in teacher training colleges. Naomi Long said that the Society must be built up from inside so that it would promote itself as it grew. Mrs Walters of USA displayed the new folder jointly issued by GFS USA and the Women’s Auxiliary. Mrs Barry said that there was a need to fill our girls with a sense of Christian vocation so that they would be stimulated to draw others into the Society, that it was important not only to expand numerically but to provide witnesses for GFS and the church.

Mrs Mahon asked that “Total Operation Girl “should be borne in mind and ways should be found of working with other youth organisations. Mrs Barry said that the GFS of England and Wales had had to work out ways of co-operation with many youth organisations both secular and of the church. Cynthia Hawke said that GFS in England were trying to work with the Church of England Men’s Society, the Mothers’ Union and the Church Lads’ Brigade and that a pamphlet had been published describing the work of the four organisations. Branches of GFS Guides also existed and the system

was working very satisfactorily. Mrs Darvie of Scotland spoke of their affiliation with other organisations such as AYPAs. Mrs Walters felt that secular organisation in the USA did not touch the spiritual side of life and as the Society's task was to convert girls it must have an entirely different program, a spiritual one. Mrs Walters pointed out the difficulty of holding teenage members. Cynthia Hawke spoke of reasons for this. Naomi Long agreed that in view of this a vision of what the Christian life could be, must be given to them. Mrs Bright-Parker felt that if girls were given a solid training up to the age of 14, they would come back later and take an active part in the church again. Mrs Barry said that it should not be considered a loss if they did not attend meetings after the age of 14 after they had been in the Society for eight years, as they were still members and carried their membership wherever they went. Miss Graff of USA spoke of the recent study by the Boy Scouts Association on this subject. Representatives of the GA of Canada told of their plans for teenage members.

Representatives of the Diocese of Osaka in Japan reports that it was hoped that the GFS would be adopted by the whole church in Japan. The Philippines and Panama also contributed to this discussion.

### **Leadership Training**

Leadership Training was next considered by the World Council. The USA told of their G-3 plan, developing potential leadership and of the summer opportunities project. Australia used the syllabus provided by the church and had secular training through National Fitness Councils. Correspondence courses were also made use of. England described their Leaders' Training Corps and summer courses and Area and Diocesan Leadership Conferences, displayed the "Hour" leaflets and explained their voluntary leaders' certificate for courses in GFS work and theology provided by the church.

Canada spoke at length of their dominion leadership training courses that were also open to girls of 15-16 years of age, and of leadership training in camping. Scotland, Panama and Newfoundland spoke to the desirability of making current courses open to all. It was moved by England, seconded by USA and agreed

*"That all countries that have leadership training courses should make them available to any country in the World Council who wished to use or adapt them".*

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> 1957 –Afternoon**

The World Council held its final session on the afternoon of June 25<sup>th</sup> at Kober House, Mrs Barry presiding.

### **Directives**

The suggested Directives were considered point by point and accepted as under.

- 1 **Name.** The organisation shall be called the World Council of the Girls' Friendly Society.  
**Discussions:** England spoke to the desirability of keeping the name Girls Friendly Society, until the World Council was better known, at least USA spoke for changing it. Australia had found little response in a poll on the subject. The difficulties which might arise if some countries changed the name and not others were raised.

2 **Purpose.** The purpose of the World Council of the GFS shall be to promote fellowship between the members of the Society throughout the world, by the exchange of information and ideas. The promotion of World Assemblies, camps, exchange visits and correspondence between members shall be encouraged. September 29<sup>th</sup>, St Michael and All Angels Day shall be the GFS World Day of Prayer.

**Discussion:** Australia had submitted the following statement of purpose: "To unite girls and women in a fellowship of prayer, service and a high quality of life for the Glory of God throughout the world, by the exchange of information and ideas, through the practical means of world assemblies, camps, exchange visits, correspondence."  
It was suggested that "high quality of life" should be replaced by the words "integrity of life".

Australia withdrew the motion for reconsideration at the next meeting of the World Council.

3 **Membership.** Membership shall be open to GFS in all countries whose purposes are in fundamental agreement. Each country seeking admission shall be considered separately and the policy shall be inclusive rather than exclusive. Representation at Council meetings shall be extended to two delegates from each country, one of whom shall be ideally between the ages of 16 and 21 years.

**Discussion:** The final words "years of age" were thought to be redundant.

4 **Officers.** The Chairmanship of the World Council shall pass from one country to another in alphabetical order and it shall be the duty of the Chairman to inform and obtain the acceptance of the country next but one and to arrange for the editorship of the Newsletter. The Chairman shall not necessarily be the President of the country but shall be chosen by that country.

The duration of the office of Chairman shall, after 1957/58 usually be for not less than two years and shall coincide with the term between meetings, and the Chairman shall relinquish office at the conclusion of the Council meeting. The responsibility for the Chairmanship of the GFS World Council shall rest on the person of the Chairman and not on the Executive Committee or Board of the country she represents. The Chairman of the previous period shall be the Vice-Chairman for the next meeting.

**Discussion:** Moved by Cynthia Hawke, seconded by Mrs Woodward

*"That the words 'where possible' be inserted to read 'and where possible' to arrange for the editorship of the Newsletter in that country".*

It was moved by Mrs Woodward, seconded by Cynthia Hawke.

*"That the words "in alphabetical order" be deleted".*

These two motions were carried. The suggestion was also made that large and small countries hold the chairmanship alternately. It was moved by England, seconded by Australia and agreed

*"That the country providing the Chairman should be elected by the voting delegates at World Council."*

It was understood that this might be an election by mail.

- 5 **Votes.** Each country on the Council shall normally have one vote and the countries concerned shall decide which of their representatives shall be the voting member. If the Chairman is not the President of the GFS in the country concerned, then the President shall be an ex-officio member of the Council, but the country shall only cast one vote.  
**Discussion:** It was decided to delete the first sentence and substitute "Each delegate on the World Council shall have one vote". "Observers have a voice but no vote."
- 6 **Agenda.** Suggestions for inclusion on any agenda shall be sent to the Chairman of the GFS World Council to reach her not less than 3 months prior to the date of the meeting. The agenda for a meeting of the Council should be circulated to the Presidents and Secretaries of member countries as long as possible in advance to allow for discussion and suggestions.
- 7 **Minutes.** Minutes of each meeting shall be circulated and signed by the Chairman of the meeting and shall be recorded in a book which shall pass from Chairman to Chairman. Further that as a common language will be necessary for this book, English to be used as the official language.
- 8 **Newsletter.** The newsletter shall be edited by the country providing the Chairman or any another country at the request of the country providing the Chairman. At least one copy shall be sent to each member country. The distribution within each country shall be the responsibility of that country.  
**Discussion.** There was much discussion on the editing of the newsletter, with the suggestion that only larger countries might find it possible to carry out the work involved and that if the editing was linked with the chairmanship this might deter countries from accepting the chairmanship. No action was taken other than that taken with regard to the Directive concerning Officers and the Directive covering the newsletter was left to stand.
- 9 **Applications for Membership.** Application for membership had been received from Grahamstown, Union of South Africa. After discussion about the fact that there was only one branch in that diocese and the possibility of other branches or dioceses joining with them, the matter was deferred to the next meeting of World Council.  
**Further applications for membership were received at the meeting.** Mrs Woodward sponsored the request of Japan, seconded by Australia. Miss Flores requested membership for Puerto Rico, seconded by Scotland. Miss Glenda Smith requested for Panama seconded by USA. All requests were granted subject to confirmation of the applications by the countries concerned. The Revd J Araki thanked the World Council in the name of Japan.
- 10 **Affiliation of the Girls' Auxiliary of Canada.** The Girls' Auxiliary of Canada requested membership or affiliation. During the discussion which followed it was pointed out that the Constitution precluded full membership. It was moved by Australia seconded by England and agreed that affiliation be offered to the Girls' Auxiliary with all privileges other than that of the vote and the chairmanship of the World Council. Miss Tester of the GA told of this dominion wide organisation of the Anglican Church and gave an outline of its work.

- 11 **Executive Committee.** The question of an executive committee to act between meetings of the World Council was considered and it was moved by the USA, seconded and agreed

*‘That the Chairman be given authority to appoint a standing committee to consist of an equal representation of women and girls. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Chairman for the following period should be ex-officio members of the Committee, the total number of which should not exceed eight.’*

The World Council expressed its sympathy for Ireland in the recent death of their President, Mrs Bewley, and asked that their love and sympathy be sent by the Chairman.

- 12 **Handover.** The handover of the Chairmanship of the World Council to Mrs Bright-Parker of Australia was postponed to the public meeting of the National Assembly and the Chairman declared the Council adjourned.

Secretary: Lilian J Barry