

**GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY WORLD COUNCIL
1969**

Preface to the World Council 1969 Minutes

At the World Council in Japan in 1966, the USA was chosen as the venue for the GFS World Council in 1969 and Mrs William A Atkins was elected as World Chairman.

In 1966 "The GFS, USA was incorporated within the Department of Christian Education of the Episcopal Church" and, arising out of this situation, it was suggested that the GFS World Council should be part of a forthcoming International Youth Conference, which was to be held in the USA sometime in 1970. GFS delegates could attend the Youth Conference but would convene and conduct their own business meetings. One of the difficulties which this presented was the impossibility of making plans sufficiently in advance, as nothing was yet firmly decided about the arrangement for the Youth Conference.

In November 1968, England and Wales, supported by Ireland, suggested that the USA World Council for 1969 be cancelled and a "Meeting by Mail" be held. This was later agreed by the other members of World Council.

Throughout the three years of her Chairmanship, Mrs Atkins carried out her role under very great difficulties and it would seem right that our grateful thanks to her should be recorded in the preface to these minutes.

Here follows the agenda items, as sent out by Mrs Atkins on 25.6.69 and following that, a report of the replies received, as sent in a letter to England and Wales dated 16.9.69, (A further letter to all countries appears to have been written, but this is not available at the time of compiling these Minutes)

Sd. F J Mandleberg, World Chairman 1972-1975

1969 GFS World Council

Dear GFS Members around the World:

My grateful thanks to all of you who sent me reports and pictures. All the material could not be included in the GFS World Newsletter, but I certainly enjoyed learning about your GFS activities, and I have the reports in my files to refer to from time to time.

Thank you, too, for your understanding and cooperation when I wrote you about the necessity for cancelling the Meeting of the World Council in the USA. Now it is my privilege and duty to see that the business of the World Council is accomplished by some method. This letter is an attempt to conduct the GFS World Council Meeting by mail and I am sure you will give the following paragraphs your thoughtful consideration and then will reply to me as soon as you possibly can.

- 1 The Australian GFS has generously offered to accept the responsibility for the World Council for the next three years 1969-72, with the highly qualified Mrs F W Cheshire as the Chairman of the World Council. Do you vote "yes" or "no"?
- 2 If you voted "no" to the above, then what nomination do you want to make for this?
- 3 GFS in England has invited the World Council to participate in its 100th Anniversary celebration of the Founding of GFS and will host the meeting in 1975. So, England will have the World Council Chairmanship from 1972 to 1975, if this is acceptable.
- 4 We want to express our gratitude and admiration to the GFS in Korea for the exceptional progress they have made. This World Project towards which our World Day of Prayer offerings have been sent for the past four years have been sent has certainly been an outstanding success. Now a new World Project for the next three years must be chosen. Please send me your ideas about this, and if you know of a country where GFS needs special help, tell me all you know about the special circumstances. In choosing a new

World Project, we must have all the information we can obtain. Mrs Tsuji, World Council Vice-Chairman, has proposed that the Philippines GFS be the next World Project. Some of you will remember the presentation given in Japan by the Philippine delegates. The GFS in the Philippines needs help to expand and is very worthy of our help. New Guinea has also been suggested, there is no GFS branch there now, but there are good prospects for GFS work. World Project money is spent for leadership training, promotion by travel and literature, conferences and program material.

- 5 Do you vote to accept Saint Michael as the Patron Saint of the GFS World Council? As you know, the annual services of the World Day of Prayer take place on September 29, on the feast of Saint Michael and All Angels.
- 6 Since there will be no World Council meetings in 1969, we sincerely hope that it may be possible for regional meetings to be held, or at least that neighbouring countries will exchange program ideas and leadership training help by correspondence. For example, perhaps GFS groups in various parts of the West Indies, or Africa, or Asia could communicate with each other to their mutual benefit. What is your opinion about this?
- 7 Shall we continue the publication of the GFS World Newsletter? Mrs Simmons and the Australian GFS are to be congratulated on the publication of the 1968-69 Newsletter, but it is a difficult and costly undertaking. If you want the Newsletter continued, then do you think that every 18 months is often enough, or what time interval do you prefer? An alternative to the Newsletter is that each country distributes its yearly reports to every other member country and intensifies its correspondence with each other. What do you think?
- 8 If you haven't already sent me your annual dues (2-1/2 cents per member) please do so promptly. I want to have my accounts audited before relinquishing my job to my successor.
- 9 Have you any comments regarding the World Day of Prayer Service? It has been suggested that the World Chairman choose a theme and perhaps a special prayer each year, but that each country prepare its own Service to meet its own special needs and age groups.
- 10 Please tell me about additional concerns you may want to bring to the attention of GFS World Council.

In order to expedite this meeting by mail, it is extremely important that I have your answers and suggestions as soon as you can get a consensus from your members. You may have to have a mail poll of your members – circulating copies of this letter perhaps. I am confident that you GFSers will give this meeting by mail your prompt attention and this will enable me to fulfil my responsibilities as your World Council Chairman and I can turn over my "job" to my successor before August first. It has been a joyous privilege to serve as your Chairman since the meeting of the World Council in Japan. Your love and support have truly been a "sharing of one another's burdens" and I am humbly grateful.

May God bless and keep you all and may GFS continue to be a worthy instrument of His peace and His love.

Faithfully and affectionately

Nancy L H Atkins, Chairman GFS World Council.

Replies to the meeting by mail trickled in slowly, in spite of the plea for haste. Here are the results.

Mrs Cheshire was unanimously elected to be the new GFS World Council Chairman. She will be installed in October.

The invitation of GFS in England and Wales to have the 1975 World Council was gratefully accepted.

The Philippines will be the next World Project from 1969-72. Some replies suggested that there be an investigation into the possibility of having New Guinea chosen in 1972. Others said they would explore additional projects, but Philippines received the greatest number of votes.

Even though England and Wales saw no reason for having a patron Saint, other countries voted to adopt St Michael, as proposed several years ago by Australia.

Many of the GFS countries reminded me that they already had close relationships with neighbouring countries but agreed to the advisability of exchanging letters and reports, with any or all active GFS groups who are interested. The majority preferred to have a yearly Newsletter but were willing to have it published every 18 months, realising the difficulties and the cost involved.

Most agreed to have selected prayers instead of a complete service for the Day of Prayer.

So, you see, the GFS countries around the world have made their decision by voting in the Council meeting by mail. As Chairman, I could not vote, except to break a possible tie. GFS, USA, under the changed structure had to refrain from participating in the voting officially, although individuals with whom I corresponded endorsed all the proposals and are hoping to attend the meeting in Australia in 1972 as unofficial visitors.

Faithfully yours

Sd. Nancy L H Atkins, soon to become Vice Chairman of GFS World Council.