

GFS WORLDWIDE PRESIDENT’S REPORT
TO
WORLD COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
16-18 July 2021

GFS World Executive, National Presidents from 32 countries in 5 Continents, GFS Past World Presidents, GFS members from around the World whether direct or associates, Speakers of the day, Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy, our guests, and all family of Christ, I greet you all in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

We are hosting this conference in SA at a time when our beloved country is engulfed in chaos and destruction of property of untold magnitude. We are witnessing the destruction of property and infrastructure and the death of people as a result of riots that are currently happening in two of our major provinces, KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng. However, we are praying and I know that many of you are praying with us and we have faith in our Lord that, this too shall pass.

As Christians we will remember that in the bible, we are informed that towards the end of times things like this will happen, but it is not for us to know where and when it will happen. Let’s take this as an encouragement to draw closer to God. All this mayhem is taking place during the devastation of COVID-19 with the new Delta variant taking away many of our people. The current riots will definitely affect the processes of vaccination that have already been going on. We pray for peace in South Africa and around the World!

With all set and done, I welcome you to the 23 GFS World Council and table what my address will encompass:

- Delivery on the Theme “Growing GFS together in prayer and action.”
- GFS Growth during the term 2017-2020
- World President’s visits branches around the World
- Human Interest (Personal)
- Achievements (united the World using 3 Projects)
- Recommendations

WORLD PRESIDENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA – AN OVERVIEW PERSPECTIVE FROM 2017 TO DATE

GFS World President with her executive were entrusted by the 2017 World Council to preside over all countries with GFS Worldwide, to provide leadership and strategic direction.

Furthermore, the Worldwide President was tasked with leading preparations for 2020 World Council hosting.

THEME: “Growing GFS together in prayer and action”.

This theme assisted in uniting GFS Worldwide. It is true that in previous years each country was operating individually though guided by Rules of the Council and reporting to the Council after 3 years. Thank you to the World Council that made it possible for the current GFS World President to deliver on this theme, by providing her with a vehicle to visit members in different countries. With the support of GFS Worldwide I was able to travel to different parts of the world connecting GFS Worldwide chain of prayer. The Covid 19 pandemic, which affected us all, brought into sharp focus our need to hold each other in prayer, over and above sharing our sorrows and joys. This covered us with a seamless blanket prayer as we struggled to cope with these challenges. GFS Worldwide responded well to Fr Isaiah of PNG ‘s question from the last World Council in Australia asking, “How are we going to grow the Kingdom of God”. Our occasional Webinar meetings also facilitated this prayerful connectivity. May God’s Kingdom continue to grow through our work.

GFS Growth from 2017-2020

During this time, the World President engaged with branches in different countries. She assisted in the establishment of GFS in 6 countries: Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Malawi, Tanzania, Eswatini and South Sudan. Also, using technology, in 3 dioceses, one in Kenya in the Anglican Diocese of Ack Thika, in Mozambique the Anglican Diocese of Niassa, and in Ghana in the Anglican Diocese of Sunyani, participated in the establishment of new branches. I give praise to God who makes things possible.

World President Visits to Branches:

The following countries were visited from 2018-2019:

United Kingdom: England, Ireland, Wales; Cameroon, Rwanda, DR Congo, Swaziland, the United States of America (USA), and South Africa.

The PURPOSE of these visits was:

- To appreciate the work and operations of branches in the different parts of the world, and how that could enrich the work in other parts.
- To have meetings with country leadership and members.
- To listen, observe and advise.
- To assist in putting up systems according to GFS Worldwide standards
- To advocate with bishops and leadership to support the work of GFS branches.
- To share good practices and lessons learned from other branches, and,

- To be part of the commissioning of National Presidents.

We were grateful for the warm welcome by all countries, portraying the spirit of GFS motto in Gal 6 vs 2, that of bearing each other's burdens. These visits yielded positive results. GFS leaders, members and congregations were motivated. Church leadership responded to the call of fully supporting GFS in their parishes.

In all countries that she visited there is a story to tell. Please allow me to mention some of the highlights of these visits. The World President was shocked and confused when landing in Cameroon when she was received by a VIP security protection on her arrival. Having a language barrier, she was confused as she was taken alone from the flight by security wondering what they found in her luggage. Security drove her to the VIP lounge, where she was welcomed by bishop Elango, National President Estelle and clergy. Whoow, thank you lord bishop, as I take this as reward that is promised in Gal 6vs 9.

World President visited the Anglican Communion offices in London. GFS was presented in this platform and well received. Questions about GFS in England and Wales were asked. Thank you to Revd. Canon Terrie Robinson who made this possible. Their hospitality is greatly appreciated.

The World President felt honored to be given a platform to present GFS to the synod of bishops of All Ireland. This involved 10 bishops and 2 archbishops. 3 programs that are run during the term 2017 to date were presented. These are:

- The observance of the 25 of each month (the orange day) in support of the campaign against abuse of women and children.
- Curbing of Climate Change through care of creation, greening the world through food gardens as well as for food security.
- Spiritual growth through worship.

Excited as one was it was noticeable that even at the church level, gender balancing is still a challenge that the world still needs to work on. The ascendancy of women to senior positions is still an uphill task. The task before us is to create an enabling environment to inspire and equip our young girls to aspire higher.

This was followed by visits to different parts of Ireland. This brought back memories of our World Council in Ireland in 2010. I was also pleasantly surprised when I visited a first parish to establish GFS in 1898 the, Christ Church, Bray, Co Wick low in Ireland 'among I also visited the second smallest chapel in the World. (Ireland report of President visit, is also attached)

I also visited the USA. A warm welcome by GFS National President Lois who first took me to taste fresh fish of Connecticut as she knew that I am from Johannesburg where we swim from the dams as we are in inland. Thank you, President, for your love. She then took me to GFS New York branches where I addressed different group, welcomed by members with warm hearts. Thank you to the leaders of those branches including the home that accommodated

me. After few days I was taken back to National President house slept over and then taken to airport to visit branches of the diocese of Los Angeles.

I landed in California hosted by Diocesan President Margaret Nolde, her team and Fr George, the Rector of St John the Devine Costa Mesa. I was blessed by peaceful night at Fr George's house. One of the highlights was the dinner which was organized by the president and the team, lot of food and entertainment. I was taken on a tour of the Environmental Nature Centre in Newport Beach. The president arranged for me to be taken to Disneyland. Such an interesting experience as we see those things on TV in our places.

In one of the days the World President attended the pool party held at the home of the Los Angeles Diocesan Bishop, John H Taylor. Many girls attended; there was swimming and games.

Margaret took the President on a driving tour of Los Angeles to see the Cathedral offices and Olvera Street and enjoyed some singing at the plaza, at which is the old centre of Mexican heritage of Los Angeles.

In all these places the World President was taken for shopping in other places and to movies. GFS family you know among values of GFS its sharing of gifts. Other countries designed clothes for the president. GFS World President also presented gifts to all countries she visited. I say thank you to all countries that showed love during my visit.

I was also invited by the late bishop Elinah to the Green Anglican Conference held in Pretoria, South Africa, who gave me platform of presenting GFS to a group of bishops. That yielded good results as today we have admitted some of the countries which their bishops were part of that conference. Thank you, bishops, for responding positively to my presentation.

I would like to express our collective appreciation to all the GFS branches that hosted me during these visits. Your hospitality is greatly appreciated. You gave flesh to that old song, 'The more we are together, the happier we shall be.'

Achievements

All those, who were part of 2017 handover of the presidency from Australia to South Africa will remember the current World president address, when unpacking her theme, she informed the World Council that GFS will always grow because it is a vibrant youth organization, but her focus will be in facilitating the quality more than quantity. Now is the time to report on Achievements.

Please allow me to report that all countries supported the current presidency very well working together and united in Christ. Thank you, GFS leadership. Branches increased from 26 to 32 countries, attesting to God's hand, in our efforts to grow GFS. The acceptance of GFS in the Anglican Communion through Revd. Terrie Robinson's office, who facilitated this as she linked GFS World with their communication unit is one of the achievements of this term.

Visiting branches around the World assisted many branches in getting more support from Anglican Church leadership. The partnerships with organizations with same values were established, for example with the program of fighting against Abuse of Women and Children partnership with Commission for Gender Equality in South Africa, the program of Curbing Climate Change with Green Anglican and Government departments in South Africa together

with partnership with South African Tourism which during World President visit to USA supported the USA National Assembly with promotional material was one of the Highlights. Thank you, SA tourism for liaising with your office in New York. Thank you to our partners in S A and in all around the World.

The promise by His grace the archbishop Michael Jackson, of supporting GFS All Ireland and advocate for GFS Worldwide during the high-level meetings of archbishops and Primates, with the archbishop of Canterbury was one of the highlights.

All 3 programs of term from 2017-2020 were launched almost to all countries where GFS is operational. Rollout is continuing.

The standing-up of developing countries being part of their development using natural resources that they have for example using available land as food gardens for food security, turning waste into wealth creating jobs and others is noticeable.

The continuing support of developed, supporting developing countries also showing them how to fish is much appreciated and is one of the achievements of this term. Unfortunately, further visits to other countries were prevented by the onset of Covid 19 and subsequent lockdowns.

Personal Interest

History was made on Thursday evening 10 May 2018 when Revd. Sonia Roulston was ordained and consecrated as assistant bishop to the Inland Region, of the Newcastle diocese in the Anglican Church at Christ Church Cathedral Australia. There was excitement in GFS around the world as Bishop Sonia has been part of GFS from age 7 years. This position was announced as the most senior role of a woman has ever held in the 171 years in the diocese of Newcastle.

The recent appointment of the Very Revd. Thandeka Vikilahle as the first woman dean of the Anglican Diocese of Mthatha is another joy in our GBFS South Africa

GFS in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is still mourning the passing-on of their mother, the Rt. Rev Ellinah Wamukoya, the bishop of Swaziland and Global environment advocate, on 19 January 2021. Today GFS Eswatini has been admitted in GFS World Council 2021, how joyful GFS would be if she were physically present. We are grateful for her efforts to make this possible. "May" she Rest in peace and God's perpetual light shine upon her.

Positives of COVID 19

Covid 19 pandemic severely affected all countries in the world. Many of us were infected or affected by this virus. Many lost jobs. Economies across the world were negatively impacted. This is a clarion call for us to form a chain of solidarity to hold each other up, especially as the Delta variant spreads its deadly grip across the world.

GFS Worldwide united more than before as this pandemic forced us to do things differently. Before, we would meet under one roof, once in 3 years. From 2020, we met virtually many a times carrying on with our duties establishing contact with each other frequently. Thank you, GFS leadership, for your flexibility.

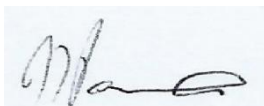
GFS World Council 2021, was a good experience. GFS World President learnt a lot during this term. It was not easy as most of the time the road was steep and rough but the support that she received from World Executive with all National Presidents was amazing. Lois and Val thank you for showing sisterhood carrying me in times of difficulties.

Thank you, Provincial Youth Liaising Bishop and Provincial Youth Chaplain, for your support and prayers.

Recommendations

- All 3 programs to continue, that is Curbing of Climate Change by Care of Creation, Greening project meaning each household to have food garden for food security. Support Against Abuse of Women and Children and Spiritual growth should continue until 2023.
- Focus on making educational program simple and understandable
- Countries with GFS must assist in marketing GFS to countries closer to them for example GFS to be spread in the whole province with the assistance of World office.
- Create an enabling environment for young people to join the GFS.
- We should learn strategies on programs.
- Now that we are in new normal, the 4th industrial revolution must be the tool that we all use as we are able to connect and discuss with each other easily. The world has really become a global village.

I thank you! Obrigado



Ms Thembeka Pama
GFS Worldwide President
Date: 16 July 1021