



Overpass

Connecting GFS Members across Australia

Chairman's Communiqué

*Loving Lord Jesus
as the heavens are high above
the earth so are your ways
higher than our ways.
Strengthen us as we build
bridges of love between
GFS Communities.
Be our source of kindness,
gentleness and enthusiasm so
we may reflect You to those in
our ministry, and that Your
truth and grace be evident in
all we do.
We pray this in the name of
Jesus Christ Our Lord
and Saviour. Amen*

Prayer Points

- For National Executive positions and those who have nominated for them:
Vice Chair - Gail Orchard
Treasurer - Noeleen Stewart
Ordinary members - Val Gribble, Helen Petering & Jenifer Tutin
- Plans for Australian Council – any Australian Outreach Projects?
- For a way of supporting the GFS World Project 'Makem Strong' in the Solomon Islands
- New GFS World President, Glenys Payne of Wales and her team as she takes up the reigns of World GFS
- Continued prayer for Australia's support of GFS in PNG
- Pray about Australian Council for:
 - healthy discussions
 - our keynote speaker - Jennie Bickmore Brand
 - our younger members will bring fresh ideas to our discussions
 - wonderful worship and fellowship
 - safe travel for all
 - St Catherine's staff as they cater for us
- For GFS USA President Llyn Carter who is ill - for healing and recovery

Helen Keller was once asked if there was anything worse than losing one's sight. She responded: "Yes losing one's vision"

It's hard to believe that the years as chair are drawing to a close. As I reflect back over these past 3 years I am grateful to our Lord, who has sustained and encouraged the journey! It is always the hope of Christians on our walk that we are sanctified by Christ daily!

I visited GFS in Tasmania and Gippsland in September! What a pleasure it was to meet our faithful members and fellowship with them. See the article and photos!

In Perth recently we were host to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and the visit of the Queen. Behind this venture was an army of the faithful praying. One woman was called by God to establish the Commonwealth Prayer Initiative and out of this, thousands of churches across the Commonwealth 'adopted' nations to intentionally pray for that nation. There was such a spirit of unity across the Body of Christ!

As we gather in Perth for our Australian Council, my prayer is that the same spirit of unity and love will permeate our relationships. It's my pleasure to introduce Jennie Bickmore Brand in this newsletter. She will be our keynote speaker and has set 2 tasks for us to do prior to coming to council-so please read her letter to us for your tasks!

As this is my last Overpass I wish to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this newsletter by forwarding news, photos and articles. A big thank you! Also I must thank Noeleen for her skills and generous help with producing the Overpass.

May the love of Christ touch our lives and overflow into our communities as we prepare for Advent and Christmas. Thanks to Josie, our chaplain for her advent article. Looking forward to meeting many of you in Perth this January.

Yours in Christ
Kate Brewer

PS - A reminder to all Diocesan Chairmen to have your reports into Noeleen by early December! Thanks!

NOTICE OF AGM

GFS Australia will hold the National Council AGM during the course of the National Council in Perth, January 10-15, 2012. The meeting will be convened in the context of the Council which will be held at St Catherine's College, Nedlands WA. The Agenda for the meeting will be available on the website if you wish to download this - all members attending Council will be supplied with a copy.

GFS TASMANIA VISIT



On my arrival in Hobart, my wonderful host, Julie showed me the sights of their lovely city! It was a pleasure to meet with the Southern executive, for a luncheon at the beautiful Botanical Gardens. Later to meet with the other members and to share the



rich service that Japan compiled for GFS World Day of Prayer. To meet Barbara, who has faithfully researched and written the history of GFS in Tassie! What an amazing task!

We later travelled to the north coast to meet with Leonie Stitz and marvel at her mother's spring garden! Then onto meet the Northern group in Launceston and again share the World Day of Prayer service. What a privilege to meet these faithful women (1004 years of



GFS !!) and to be blessed by their hospitality.

Please pray for them as they support Julie Smith as the incoming Australian Chairperson.



GFS VISIT TO GIPPSLAND

After leaving Tassie I flew to Melbourne, where Lauren Jankovic met me at the airport and we drove across to Moe, to meet with their GFS group that evening. What a joy it is to see GFS in action across our country – the different flavours and colours of our ministry. Mary Nicholls and her faithful team are ministering to a number of Sudanese families in their GFS and are meeting the challenge 'head on'. Well done!

Later I met with the adult members of GFS (190 years!) in Gippsland and enjoyed time with them. It was encouraging to



know that Mary was honoured with Life membership for her GFS work.

Thanks to Lauren and the Nicholls family for their generous hospitality!



Kate Brewer

Shaping the Future for Good

Hi There Fellow GFS Friends

As a former GFS girl I was delighted when Kate Brewer joined me in on the conversation you were having about the future of GFS. As someone whose own early formation has been imprinted by GFS I have a real heart for the special contribution this ministry of the Anglican church of Australia has. One of my strongest memories was completing a composition (as it was called in those days) on a retelling of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. I recall being the last to finish and I was still writing well after everyone had packed up the Christ Church North Adelaide hall and the girls had gone home and only a couple of leaders remained. It was so important for me to get it all down! I was probably 7 or 8 at the time. Such patience and love was shown to me as these godly women shaped the lives of the young “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man” and so we too were being grafted to the vine of the community of believers with Christ as our head.

Turning our hands to the plough

In January 2012 many of us will meet for what will be a significant conference. I say significant because the tide of modernity is pushing through our communities and unless we stand united and clear about what it is we do, we may be tossed and turned and drift off like flotsam down the stream. Our Dear Lord and Saviour knows our hearts desire is for this not to happen so I am adding my muscle to yours this January in Perth- city of sun and sea and light.

One thing I desire

I'd like you to come with a list of activities that either you do or other groups in your area do, that are effective in working with young people. I believe the power of networking is greater than any publication or key note speaker. I pray for the fruit of what will come out of our sharing of ideas. If you have any materials/pamphlets or other promotional materials that help to give us a clear idea of what the activities are like that would be great and if there is a website for the organization write that down too. This activity alone will provide GFS with a fabulous resource for sharing.

Well actually... two things I desire!

The second thing I would like you to do is to pray about your own branch and by God's leading come prepared to share what your heart's desire is for the future? We have a God of hope and promise and he hears the prayers of his faithful.

I do look forward to us joining together. What a wonderful thing when people of God join to share in furthering His kingdom.

Safe travels (don't forget your sunscreen, bathers and bible ☺)

Dr Jennie Bickmore-Brand



Prayer and Praise points

- GFS Australia received a thank you note from Gail Orchard, Newcastle, for the prayerful concern at the recent passing of her mother.
- Congratulations to Nathalia and Graeme Stevens, from GFS Ballarat, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary! There was a special blessing of their rings during their service and a family dinner – they appreciated our card from GFS Australia!
- Those of GFS who attended World Council in Dublin will remember Tanya Brown from Sydney, who has recently lost her Dad – please pray for her and her family at this time. Also please keep Karen Fagan from SA in your prayers as her father is unwell at the moment too.
- For Chris Loos and family as they return from the UK back to Brisbane in early December.
- For Val Gribble as she celebrates upcoming 70th birthday in early December

Greetings of the Season - "Christmas comes but once a year" is a saying that is interpreted in various ways by different people. Some people find the whole season challenging and would quite gladly bypass the event entirely. Others are very grateful that it does indeed only occur once a year. While another group seems to revel in all the joy and goodwill that abounds at Christmas time.

If you asked me, I'd probably say I put myself somewhere in the last group. Each year I'm delighted at the way many people are considerate of the "other". When this happens en masse a positive change begins to permeate throughout the wider community. Why does the birth of a little baby born 2000 years ago continue to influence our mostly secular culture today? What is it that makes a difference?

I would say the mystery of the Word made flesh, of God choosing to become incarnate, to live among us, to die for us to show us just how unconditional his love for us is, might have something to do with it. No one else in all of history has done this for us. Whether people consciously realise this or not doesn't matter, for this deep truth touches something and resonates within the very core of our being. It speaks of spiritual mysteries that bring our consciousness up to another level; we are taken to a different place from where we began.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if en masse at the end of the Christmas Season people were able to hold onto something of the Christmas consciousness throughout the year? Imagine what an impact that would have on the world. You and I are called to encourage and foster this awareness in others, to help them knowingly come into full relationship with our amazing God. May we go out and live our commission boldly this year.

And may you, and those you hold dear, be filled with the joys and love of Christ this Christmastime and throughout the year. God bless the Reverend Josie Steytler

Commonwealth Prayer Initiative - Perth 2011

In the lead up to CHOGM here in Perth as well as during, our City was soaked in prayer. 2 years ago when it was announced that Perth was hosting CHOGM a wonderful lady Wendy Yapp had a vision of churches in Perth praying for the 54 Commonwealth Nations. Well it grew and grew and grew until thousands of churches around WA, Australia and the world were praying for the Commonwealth Nations. I heard about this back in January this year and visited Wendy and well the rest you may say is history! As part of the 10 days around and during CHOGM the CPI unveiled The Tree Of Life - it is the only lasting



reminder of CHOGM in our city and it was made by a local artist and the leaves of the tree represent the 54 nations and around the base are the prayers of children from WA and around the world. Two of our children from Lynwood branch got their names on the base which was really great as there were over 600 children who submitted prayers and drawings. The Governor Malcolm McCusker, his wife Tonya (our Patron) and their daughter Mary came to unveil the sculpture and there were a number of local Christian schools and we also had some beautiful Jesus Flags which were scattered around the outside of the church.



The unveiling of the sculpture was on the first day of 24/7 prayer at the Wesley Uniting Church during CHOGM. It was such a fantastic time and has certainly changed our city for the better.

