



GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee met at Helsinki, Finland from Friday 10 to Sunday 12 October 2003. Mr. Timo Kanerva and PTK-Finland hosted the meeting, which was chaired by Mr. Carsten Kristiansen. Also in attendance were Mr. Grant Taylor, PRF; Mr. Stephen Lane, ERF, and the honorary Treasurer, Mr. Alistair Burrow. For particular items of the agenda we welcomed Mr. Timo Sainio, General Secretary of PTK, and Ms. Tuovi Varis, Secretary of ERF.

GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL 2004

Every third year Representatives from all Regional Fellowships of GF will come together for the Global Fellowship Council. The next Council meeting will take place at the PTK CENTRE PARTAHARJU in Finland 21-28 August 2004. All Member Organisations and Regional Fellowships are encouraged to make sure that Representatives are appointed and items of the Council agenda are considered in each Region prior to Council. The GF Constitution and Standing Orders will tell you about the authorities and proceedings of the Council meeting as well as the number of delegates/observers from each Region. In view of the upcoming Council, the Executive Committee dedicated the major part of the meeting time to discussing future strategies of GF and how best to organise the preparatory process.



GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP IN THE FUTURE

With the adoption of a totally revised Constitution for the organisation the Council in 2001 embarked on a new direction for our worldwide Fellowship. Particularly, for the first time the role and responsibilities of the Regional Fellowships were formally laid down. A development was envisaged whereby the Regions would gradually assume a stronger role in our organisation as a whole. This in turn would lead the Global Fellowship into a role of coordination and common identity building rather than the operational role that was the ambition of the past.

The Executive Committee evaluated progress and development since 2001. The Members confirmed their general adherence to this main direction, because it was believed to be right and because it was seen to be necessary. A continuation along the lines from Council 2001 will eventually have quite dramatic consequences for GF and the way we operate and co-operate as National Organisations, Regions and as a global body. As the Members should be given time to involve themselves in the necessary consideration process leading up to Council, it was decided that a discussion paper be produced and circulated to the entire membership as soon as possible. You will find copies of the paper enclosed with this report.

GLOBAL YOUTH CONFERENCE IN 2005

2005 will see the 75 years jubilee celebrations of the BB in Singapore. The Brigade wishes to add an international dimension to the celebrations and has kindly suggested a global youth leaders' meeting and conference to be hosted in Singapore. The Executive Committee warmly welcomed this invitation and was happy to enter into discussions with Singapore about the details.

Plans are still in their initial stage, but a 7-days residential programme is envisaged for some 75 younger youth leaders from all over the world; to take place by the end of May/beginning of June 2005. BB Singapore will try and raise funds to reduce participation costs. But realistically, organisations that send participants will have to bear travel costs themselves. More information will be provided as plans progress; but please do consider participation in this event now.

GF SECRETARIAT

After more than 11 years of excellently serving Global Fellowship, Caroline Goodfellow has now left the office to become the new National Director of Girls' Brigade Scotland. We thank Caroline warmly for all she has given to our Fellowship over the years, and we wish her a blessed future in service for the GB. Caroline has been replaced by Jim Ferguson, who is a Presbyterian, a former Bank Manager and resident in Helensburgh with his wife and son, who is working part-time. Over the last couple of years Jim has occasionally worked for us on a voluntary basis, so he already knows the GF and our members quite well. If you wish to contact Jim by telephone please do so Tuesday-Thursday. Or feel free to contact the Chief Executive, Tage Kleinbeck, throughout the week.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONS

As an aspect of the FDF-Denmark Mission Project 2004-2005 part of the awareness raising and fund-raising will focus on the strengthening of particular Regional Fellowships of GF. This is a result of the Fellowship Project that was approved by Council in 2001. GF has agreed on a co-operation with the FDF and the Danish agencies Danchurchaid and Danmission, including some financial and organisational support for three selected Fellowships: South Asia, East Africa and Central Africa. These are areas of the world where the two Danish agencies have a long record.

REPORTS FROM REGIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

Greetings had been received from a number of Regional Representatives and thanks were expressed for these. Events, projects, meetings and initiatives were reported from several of the Regions, the following is a summary of the most important activities.

PACIFIC

As a joint action, BB New Zealand and BB Australia, have invited for a Summit of the Pacific Regional Fellowship in February 2004. This would be the first Regional meeting for quite some years. The response from the countries/islands in the Region has been fairly good; only travel costs are an obstacle for participation for many of the Members. Recently, BBA, BBNZ and GF have all agreed to assist with travel support, and the planning committee is quite optimistic that the meeting will become a reality. The GF Chief Executive has been invited to attend the meeting as a resource person, and also the planning committee has decided to invite an observer from the East Asian Region.

EAST ASIA

Shortly after the Executive meeting the Chief Executive went on a visit to Singapore and Hong Kong. In both countries talks focused on the future development of the East Asia Regional Fellowship. Members in the Region have expressed unhappiness with the existing set-up as it is felt that it has not worked as an effective framework for cooperation and extension in the Region. As a result, considerations about forming a new structure under the name of BB Asia are ongoing. The meetings between the Chief Executive and the Executives and Staffs of BB Singapore and BB Hong Kong provided needed and very fruitful opportunities to listen, to explain and to clear away misinterpretations. In fact, parallels to many aspects of the East Asian discussion in recent years can also be found in other Regions of GF, and it is vitally important that these discussions are reflected and dealt with at next years Council meeting. The talks left no doubt of a mutual, strong commitment by the GF and by the Brigades in the two countries to the fundamental purpose of our global movement as well as to our vision of providing young people all over the world with opportunities for international Fellowship.

It is extremely encouraging to report rapid growth of membership in both countries. Furthermore, extension efforts of Church and youth work continue in Burma, China, Taiwan, the Philippines (jointly with the Girls' Brigade), and Cambodia. A joint visit to Cambodia of leaders from BB Singapore and BB New Zealand is under consideration. As explained above BB Singapore is planning to invite the members of GF to attend a world youth event in 2005.

SOUTH ASIA

Sishu Kishore Sangha of Bangladesh will host the next annual meeting and young leaders' seminar to be held in Dhaka in March 2004. Following directly after the regional meeting the 25 years jubilee children's camp of Sishu Kishore Sangha will take place. Adding to the four full members of the Fellowship another three Christian organisations in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan will be invited as observers. The Chief Executive plans to attend the meeting. Furthermore, South Asia has invited an observer from the European Fellowship to attend the annual meeting.

EAST, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

The next annual meeting of the East Africa Regional Fellowship is scheduled for March 2004 in Nairobi. In view of the upper mentioned agreement with FDF-Denmark, which includes two Fellowships in Africa, it has been suggested to arrange for a joint meeting later in the year. This might even include members of the Southern Africa Fellowship. A fresh look at the regional structure in East, Central and Southern Africa is needed, as the existing Regions face many difficulties and may not be viable as they are. The Chief Executive plans to take part in the meeting in Nairobi. Very encouraging reports have been received of growth in membership in Tanzania, DR Congo and Swaziland.

WEST AFRICA

BB Nigeria is in the process of building a new headquarters in the Capital city of Abuja. The Brigade organised a successful National Camp in celebration of the 95 years anniversary this year; and a delegation from Nigeria even travelled the long way to join the National Camp of PTK in Finland last July. Communication from other countries in the Region is received regularly, but the Members have not recently been able to come together as a Region.

EUROPE

The European Secretariat has shifted from Denmark to PTK/NK in Finland for a three-year period. Individual Members in the Region continue to organise cooperation projects with sister organisations in developing countries: FDF with India and BB UK with Batalhao da Bandeira in Brasil. The long-term leader-training programme called Euroclass continues; this year with 15 students from many European countries. A new concept for a European youth event is planned to go live in 2004, by making use of the subsidised European train tickets programme for the youth, young people from the member organisations are invited to join a Europe-wide adventurous expedition being guided via mobile phone text messages. The Chief Executive attended the 2003 annual meeting of the Region.

EASTERN & SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN

The Region met for the annual meeting last July in Tortola, British Virgin Islands. The Fellowship supports extension and restart activities in a number of the Caribbean islands. Also, a regional leader training officer has been appointed. The Region has appointed a Representative and an Observer to attend the GF Council next year. The annual meeting in 2004 in Antigua will coincide with a regional leader-training seminar. The Region considers inviting Representatives from the Western Caribbean Fellowship to attend.

The Chief Executive attended the meeting in BVI and gave a presentation about the future global cooperation.

WESTERN CARIBBEAN

The Coordinator, Mr. Henry Curry has assisted restart of BB work in Belize by travelling to the country in order to conduct leader-training.

NORTH AMERICA & BERMUDA

No regional activities are reported. A group from the Boys' and Girls' Brigade Neenah-Menasha will come to Scotland for a company visit in 2004.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Global Fellowship has been formally recognised as an international, ecumenical organisation in working relationships with the WCC. Feel free to point to this recognition in your publicity material where appropriate.

GF WEBSITE

Links to websites of Member Organisations or Regional Fellowships are displayed on the GF website. Whenever Members establish new sites please advise us so that we can link you up.

NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

The Executive Committee will meet again in Helensburgh, Scotland April 30 - May 2 in 2004.