

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



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December, 1987

Dear Friend,

This packet contains material submitted to the WSC Policy Committee, discussing the issue of voting participation at the World Service Conference. These drafts were prepared by individual N.A. members, committee members, and include articles that had been previously published. This was done in accordance with a motion adopted by the participants of WSC '87 which referred the issue to the WSC Policy Committee to be placed in the 1988 Conference Agenda Report in a proper form.

During our full committee meeting in October, 1987, it was decided that according to the intent of this motion, that it wasn't our responsibility to discuss the merits of the issue but simply to place the issue in the Agenda Report in an appropriate manner. Therefore the Committee did not take into consideration the pros and cons contained in this material and offers no recommendation in regards to the issue.

The information provided in this packet should be used by service committees, members and groups as the basis of their discussions. It is our hope that the information is helpful and assists your effort to reach an informed decision on this issue.

In service to the Fellowship,

The WSC Policy Committee

GH/pm

MOTION FOUR

Be It Resolved: That only RSR's (or their equivalent) be voting participants at the WSC. Non-voting participants (WSC officers, WSC Committee Chairpersons, Trustees, and Chairperson WSO-BOD) may make motions or address the Conference.

The 1987 WSC directed that this issue be included in the Conference Agenda Report to be voted on at the 1988 WSC. This is not a new issue. Previous Conferences have considered and acted on who should be voting participants. Debate was often heated and emotional. Debate continues yet. Involved is a conceptual difference of opinion over interpretation of the Second Tradition: How is group conscience best expressed at the WSC and what is the role of the trusted servant?

The apparent intent of the '87 Conference is that by prior notification in this Conference Agenda Report, Fellowship-wide discussion will be stimulated, and action taken at the '88 Conference can be accepted by all as reflecting a Fellowship-wide conscience.

Adoption of the above motion would necessitate changes in the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*.

VOTING PARTICIPATION AT WSC

1976 thru 1987

The following is a compilation of the minutes of the World Service Conference whenever the subject of voting participation was mentioned and recorded as part of the approved minutes of the meeting. We have also included the number of actual participants at each Conference and their positions. As you will note in this information, RSRs have maintained a clear two-thirds majority as of WSC'84. Since some of the information from early Conferences is somewhat sketchy or unclear, we have tried to interject some clarity to the approved language from the minutes. These explanations will be set apart by italicized print.

1976 - There was a total of 37 voting participants. 21 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 21 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

Only ASR's, RSD's, Trustees and authorized spokesmen shall have a vote on any item considered.

Page 1, #'s 1-5

Nominations should come from the World Service Board of Trustees and/or Conference delegates.

Trustees are members of General Service Conference and are co-responsible with the General Service Delegates in all decisions affecting overall service.

1977 - There is no record of the number of voting participants.

There was no record found discussing WSC participation.

1978 - There was a total of 28 voting participants. 9 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 19 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

III The Chair will recognize the following as Conference participants:

B. Option Two (AS MODIFIED): Any Trustee, Regional Delegate, Area Representative or spokesperson from a state outside of California.

IV Only Conference participants will wear a colored tag for voting and recognition.

Motion made the Recording Secretary (Lin A.) as an active officer of the WSC, be allowed a vote. Seconded CARRIED

1979 - There is no record of the number of WSC participants.

Motion was made, seconded and carried that all subcommittee chairmen decline any delegate positions to avoid confusion over voting since they already have a vote at the WSC.

Motion made and accepted "to recognize III, Option Two of last year's Conference be put into effect: Any Trustee, Regional Delegate, Area Representative, Delegate, Spokesman from outside California, WSC Officers, and subcommittee chairman all have a vote."

Greg motioned: Proposed guidelines be presented to Conference for edition and until done so we go by procedures of last year plus allowing subcommittee chairman to vote. Seconded and Carried.

Motion was made, seconded and carried that all subcommittee chairmen decline any delegate positions to avoid confusion over voting since they already have a vote at WSC. Carried

1980 - There was a total of 33 voting participants. 15 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 18 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

No record was found discussing WSC participation.

1981 - There was a total of 36 voting participants. 18 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 18 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

No record was found discussing WSC participation.

1982 - There was a total of 39 voting participants. 21 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 18 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

WSC POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT: Larry then stated: Input received reads: That only RSR and State Reps. be defined as voting participants (members) of the WSC. We as a committee make a motion to that effect, that our service manual be changed to read that only RSR's and State Representatives be defined as voting participants (members) of the WSC. Seconded. Discussion... Gene H. made an amendment of-which read - to include a representative from the Board of Trustees, a representative from WSO and representative from each subcommittee. Seconded. Discussion. George made a motion to lay this motion on the table and take from consideration of this body any time this year, and refer to subcommittee for consideration of WSC-83. Seconded. Motion restated: To lay on the table until the Conference of 1983. Takes a majority vote. Passed.

Gene H. made a motion: that we table further consideration of input on change of policy until 1983 WSC and to instruct the Policy Committee to make an investigation of A.A. Service Structure and report to the 1983

WSC as to how the beneficial aspect of operation and structure of A.A. Service Manual might be adopted by N.A. as per page 36, item 1, section 2 of Service Manual, for the Policy Chairman to develop the committee. Discussion. Motion passed.

(The above motion was carried out and a report was given to WSC '83, but was not discussed at length or otherwise considered.)

1983 - There was a total of 47 voting participants. 29 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 18 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

Larry N. (WSC Policy Chair.) moved "that the following motion be brought from the table from last year's Conference and be the order of business."

Motion: "That only RSR's and State Representatives be defined as voting participants (members) of WSC." Seconded by Rick D., (Trustee).

VOTE: To bring from the table. YES 36 - NO 2 - ABSTENTIONS 0 - **CARRIED**

Amendment: Rose R. (Florida) moved to "amend the motion above that (a) the following committees have one (1) collective vote: WSO, WSB of Trustees, WSC Administration Committee, (b) also that each Subcommittee Chairperson have one (1) vote each." Seconded by Roland H. (Louisiana).

Amendment to the Amendment: Keith S. (Ohio) moved "to delete the words after the word 'following' in the amendment and insert the words 'that the Board of Trustees be given one vote collectively.'" Jim M. (N.A. Way) seconded.

WSC Admin. Committee Chair Bob R. asked for suspension of the Amendments and Amendment to the Amendment to allow approval of the following motion to study the issue. Conference passed this by a 2/3 majority vote.

Motion: Martin C. (WSC Finance Chair) moved "that we table the main motion (and amendments) and that Bob R. appoint an ad-hoc committee to study the motion and return to the Conference by 4:00 pm with their suggestion." Seconded by Bud K. (No. California).

PASSED 2/3 MAJORITY

WSC Admin. Committee Chair appointed these participants to the ad-hoc committee: Chuck G. (WSO); Jack B. (WSB); Bud K. (No. California); Larry N. (WSC Policy Chair); Keith S. (Ohio); Mark Z. (Mid-America); Henry B. (Pacific Northwest); Rose R. (Florida); Karyn M. (Chesapeake/Potomac).

Motion: Mark Z., Chairperson of the Ad-hoc Committee and RSR (Mid-America), on behalf of the Ad-hoc Committee and seconded by Keith S. (Ohio) moved "to make the following changes in the 'Temporary Working Guide':

1. Page 25, item D, delete "vote" and the comma.
2. Page 25, item E, delete the item in full.
3. Page 26, item II (a) delete in full and substitute the following:

`Voting participants shall be defined as RSR's and State Representatives. Each voting participant shall have one and only one vote.'
4. Page 26, item 2 (d) #4, insert "voting" before "participants".
5. Page 27, item 5, insert "voting" before "conference"

DEFEATED - VOTE: YES - 14 - NEEDS 2/3 TO PASS

(This is essentially the same motion presented to WSC'87 and referred to the WSC Policy Committee.)

Amendment: Jack B. (Trustee) moved, seconded by Chuck G. (WSO, Inc.) "that voting participants be defined as RSR's, State Representatives, a representative of the WSB, a representative of the WSO. Each voting participant shall have one and only one vote."

VOTE: YES 12 - NO 20 - ABSTENTIONS 9 - DEFEATED

Motion: Bob K. (Tennessee Volunteer), informal opinion as to whether this Conference wants to change the present voting structure of the WSC. Keith S. (Ohio) seconded.

VOTE: YES 11 - NO 24 - ABSTENTIONS - DEFEATED

1984 - There was a total of 51 voting participants. 34 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 17 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

Motion: Chuck G. (WSO) moved, seconded by Chuck L. RSR (Arizona) [PERTAINS TO THE TABULATION OF VOTES ON 4TH AND 9TH TRADITIONS] "that a 2/3 majority of all voting participants, 1983/84 WSC, will be necessary for this motion to pass. The count to be computed by the Chairperson of WSC 83/84, copy to be sent to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and published in the WSO *Newsline*."

VOTE: YES 39 - NO 0 - ABSTENTIONS 11 - CARRIED

Amendment: Mike C., RSR (Central Great Lakes) moved, seconded by Danny W., RSR (West Virginia) "to allow only RSR's to vote and delete officers."

VOTE: YES 5 - NO 40 - ABSTENTIONS 4 - DEFEATED

Amendment: Danny W., RSR (West Virginia) moved, seconded by Tully A., RSR (Alabama/N.W. Florida) "to delete officers of WSC and add Board of Trustees."

VOTE: YES 3 - NO 35 - ABSTENTIONS 10 - DEFEATED

Motion: Leah G., RSR (Florida) moved, seconded by Shirley C., RSR (Georgia) "that the World Service Board of Trustees have one vote collectively."

VOTE: YES 3 - NO 36 - ABSTENTIONS 5 - CARRIED

Amendment: Dale A., RSR (Tri-State) moved, seconded by Mike C., RSR (Central Great Lakes), "on matters that have been out to Fellowship for group conscience."

VOTE: YES 3 - NO 38 - ABSTENTIONS 4 - FAILED

1985 - There was a total of 61 voting participants. 42 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 19 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

It was M/S Bill A.)RSR Mid-Atlantic/Ed D. (RSR Alt New England), "that RSR's be the only voting participants at the World Service Conference." The Vote: Vern p. (Policy Chair)/(a second is not required) moved, to "object to consideration of the motion." The vote: A roll call vote was requested: AL/NW Florida NO; Alaska ABS; Arizona YES; British Columbia YES; Carolinas YES; No. California NO; Chesapeake/Potomac YES; Colorado YES; Florida YES; Mid-Atlantic NO; Hawaii YES; Georgia NO; Germany ABS; Iowa YES; Ireland YES; Louisiana YES; Michigan YES; Mid-America YES; Mid-Coast NO; Mississippi YES; New England NO; No. Nevada YES; So. Nevada YES; New Mexico NO; New York State NO; New York City NO; Ohio NO; Ontario YES; Oregon/So. Idaho NO; San Diego/Imperial NO; Show-Me YES; Lone Star YES; Best Little Region ABS; Tri-State NO; Upper Mid-West NO; Upper Rocky Mountain YES; Volunteer NO; Quebec YES; Leah G. YES; Susan C. YES; K. Bea C. YES; Bill H. YES; Kim J YES; Bobby B. YES; Sally E. YES; Mike B. YES; Dutch H. YES; Bo S. YES; Bob R. YES; Sydney R. YES; Jack B. YES; John F. ABS; Chuck G. YES

THE VOTE; YES 36 - NO 14 - ABSTENTIONS 4 - OBJECTION CARRIED BY 2/3 VOTE

1986 - There was a total of 68 voting participants. 48 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 20 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

There was no record found discussing WSC participation.

1987 - There was a total of 76 voting participants. 56 were area or regional representatives, and the remaining 20 were other voting participants (Committee chairpersons, trustees, Conference Officers, etc.).

It was M/S/ Forest B., RSR (Kentuckiana)/Mike B., RSR (Wisconsin) "to make these changes in the Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure:

1. New (E) on page 34 to read "Among the Conference participants, only RSR;s (or the equivalent) (refers to page 33-C-6) may vote on motions.
2. Page 34-II-A Change "Conference participant" to "RSR"
3. Page 34-I-D Delete word "vote"
4. Page 34-II-D-4 Change "participant" to "RSR"

Intent; to help WSC move closer to the position of clear consistency with our Second Tradition. So that only those representing regional service committees or recognized geographic regions. Hopefully the effect of this policy will be decrease controversy and thereby increase unity.

It was M/S/F J.R. F., RSR (Greater Philadelphia)/Ruben F., RSR (San Diego/Imperial) "to commit the above motion to the Policy Committee". Motion Fails by voice vote.

It was M/S/C Ivan, RSR (Ohio)/Jack K., RSR (Indiana) to amend motion, "to place the motion in the Agenda to be voted on at the 1988 WSC." Voice Vote Carries.

After passage of this procedural motion, discussion continued and as a substitute to the above motion, it was M/S/C Mary B., (WSC I.C. Chair)/Mark E., RSR (Oregon/S. Idaho) "to commit the motion to Policy Committee, to be put in the 88 WSC Agenda in a proper form." Motion Carries by 2/3 majority voice vote.

It was M/S/F Ivan F. RSR, (Ohio)/Forest B., RSR (Kentuckiana) "The Policy Committee place this motion in the 1988 WSC Agenda with the pros and the cons to this motion. Intent: For full review and understanding of the entire Fellowship." Amendment fails by voice vote.

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September 15, 1987

The following is input on the motion that only RSA's vote. It is a compilation of several pieces of input of which most is based on A Guide to Service.

Trusted servants are N.A. Members first and foremost. When our service committees reflect a good mix of experience and new ideas, our Fellowship is justly served.

The reason N.A. leaders are called trusted servants is because they are placed in a position of trust by the group conscience of the Fellowship they serve. By trust we mean that we are placing with them the authority to act responsibly within their best judgment. The reason we place trusted servants in these positions is so they can perform the general administrative and related personal services that are necessary to the ongoing needs of Narcotics Anonymous. This insures that the message of recovery will continue to be available not only to the present members but to the addicts who are still in active addiction. These services that are handled by the trusted servants free the N.A. groups to focus on the primary purpose and provide the personal service that is the trademark of Narcotics Anonymous.

Trusted servants have decisions to make in performing their duties. Part of our trust is allowing them to make these decisions. They are usually the ones with the most hands-on experience and information regarding the needs of the particular situations they are handling. If we insisted that they return to us with every decision, they would not be trusted servants at all, they would simply be messengers. If we made every decision for them, it would quickly demoralize them and take away their effectiveness. However, it is very important that the trusted servant keep the Fellowship informed of the actions they have taken in conducting their responsibilities.

Much confusion arises over the carrying of group conscience. Trusted servants frequently face challenging group conscience situations. A group conscience issue can be voted on by the Fellowship which is being represented and later, additional information may be available which sheds new light on the issue. At the service meeting, the issue could be amended to a point where it is quite different from the issue that was originally presented to that representative's Fellowship. This is where the right of decision takes place. The representatives must decide whether these changes are significant enough to be returned to those they serve. If not, the

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representatives utilize the trust bestowed upon them to make a decision based on the best possible understanding of the issue. In essence, we instill our confidence in our trusted servants as a matter of course when they assume the duties and responsibilities of the position to which they have been entrusted.

Realizing that these trusted servants are entrusted with the right of decision in handling and voting our group conscience issues, places a new light on group conscience. Since we trust them to handle these responsibilities, it becomes apparent that group conscience is not only formed by the N.A. groups, but also by the service boards and committees that serve the N.A. Fellowship. Committees and boards are also given the right to decide which issues to handle and which to return to the service body to which they are responsible. This entrusts the most informed and experienced members to make decisions affecting their area of service expertise. It is important that we recognize the right of these committees and service boards to handle their responsibilities. They are made up of trusted servants and have correspondingly been delegated the responsibility and related rights of decision by the N.A. groups via the adoption of the N.A. Service Structure. They also operate according to our Ninth Tradition that states that we may create these service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. The Fellowship has a deep commitment to insure the continuation of the service boards, committees, and trusted servants that make up the N.A. Service Structure. Further, it is the responsibility of the Fellowship which created this service structure to support it financially, emotionally, and with the human resources-the trusted servants themselves.

Each duly elected trusted servant is representative of the collective conscience of the members who so elected him, whether they be an area subcommittee chairperson, regional treasurer, or trustee. The N.A. groups, by delegating their authority to their GSR, are represented also by the members the GSR elects to trusted servant positions. If we follow this line of reasoning to the world level, all of the trusted servants serving as part of the service structure are representative of the collective conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. Every elected trusted servant represents the collective conscience of the Fellowship they serve.

In order for our trusted servants to fully serve their group conscience, it does not make sense to limit them to any status other than full participant. It is not the individual who experiences the rewards of balloting privileges, it is the group conscience

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process as a whole that stands to benefit. The right of the individual trusted servant is only a secondary consideration and whatever power we perceive is present in voting rights is strictly nonconsequential for our needs as a spiritual Fellowship. We somehow seem to be denying ourselves the value of their experience and knowledge in our decision-making process. Participating only in discussions or by making motions is not full participation and limits the significance of our decisions, accordingly. It is not so much the individual's right to balloting privileges that is important but what that ingredient adds to the combined conscience of those participating in our decisions. This is how the Fellowship is served, when our decisions are composed of all the various influences exemplifying the cross-section of the total experience of our membership.

There is one more reason to consider the full participation of our trusted servants and this has to do with our spiritual needs. All of us have a deep desire to belong and just as we have no second-class memberships, neither should we regard some of our trusted servants as second-class. In order for trusted servants to be effective, they must have the trust and faith of our members, so they may be encouraged to understand the discipline necessary to accomplish their service tasks.

INPUT

Group conscience has two important parts: the process and the decision. Each part of the formation of a group conscience must strive to achieve the ideal, an expression of a loving God. Our decisions in Narcotics Anonymous, especially those of great importance, need to be based on spiritual principles and the best possible information and experience available.

Every year during the WSC we sometimes confront questions which may impact the continuation and growth of the Fellowship. If we do not carefully consider our responsibility to our future members, they will be faced with overcoming problems that we create. This we cannot very well afford to do.

The WSC in serving the Fellowship as a whole deals with a number of issues most N.A. members are unfamiliar with. Although the ideal would be to have all N.A. members participate directly in each aspect of our decision making process, is it really practical to expect that? We have tried with some success, to inform our members sufficiently but overall this effort has met with mixed results. After all, at what level does the group become saturated with business from the ASC, RSC, and WSC and unable to carry out its primary purpose? How then can we as a responsible service entity continue to be of service and maintain the integrity of our Fellowship?

If we, as trusted servants, are to serve our members and our Fellowship, we must provide stability and consistency to our spiritual principles in all the decisions we make. Most N.A. groups are able to achieve these characteristics over a period of time by having a sort of balance between newcomers and those more experienced with utilizing the principles of the program. Although experience does not always guarantee quality, most of us are somewhat more comfortable seeking the guidance of our more experienced members, than we are of members who have just arrived through our doors. A combination of new blood with experience, usually provides a good environment for any member and gives the group a good balanced foundation to rely upon. It is this balance that is the key to our success.

Trusted servants are N.A. members first and foremost. When our service committees reflect a good mix of experience and new ideas, our Fellowship is justly served.

INPUT

Most RSRs are elected to serve only a single term. Usually they are fairly young in their recovery (under five years) and have only marginal experience with understanding the day to day work of world services and the problems facing N.A. as a whole. This is not their fault it is simply a statement of fact. It does not make them any less able to serve but sometimes it takes years to familiarize themselves with the many different aspects involved in serving the Fellowship as a whole.

Trustees, WSC officers, and committee chairpeople provide a stabilizing ingredient to the decisions we face at the world level. Most of these members have longer clean time, more experience with service and a practical understanding of N.A. as a whole. They have seen and been involved with the successes and failures of our past. They have learned to recognize certain cycles and truths about issues and solutions. They understand better the whole picture and are slower to react to what seem to be monumental problems. And they have their faults too. They are not perfect.

We need balance in everything we do. To help us from going too fast and reaching for the nearest solution and to keep us from becoming "old in service" or too rigid in our thinking. N.A. is served best when it's decisions include all the ingredients of our total membership. Ideally, it may not be the best, but its the best we got.

Input


To the Fellowship:

N.A.'s Second Tradition holds the key to understanding the concept of our service structure. The interaction between the "Ultimate Authority" of the Fellowship and the active service work of "trusted servants" is what enables our service structure to function. In the New York City Region we have formed policy, supplementing the Temporary Working Guide, where we found our needs would be better met. This open letter has been prepared to explain the conceptual thinking that was behind these policy initiatives. It is our hope that this letter will raise the level of discussion on this issue.

On June 30, 1984 the N.Y.C.R.S.C. held its First General Session. This is a conference which brings all the GSRs of our Region together to discuss and resolve matters of common concern. During the conference, two resolutions were passed which enabled the Regional Conference to become a responsible, working body. The first resolution reads as follows:

On all routine business matters of the NYCRSC, all participants of the conference shall have a vote. All group conscience matters and major decisions shall be voted on by the area service representatives and the Hospital and Institutions chairperson. What constitutes a major decision will be determined by a majority vote of the NYCRSC.

Resolution number two changed the way group conscience and major decision votes would be counted. This resolution put these decisions into the hands of all the groups. It reads as follows:

All questions of group conscience will be counted on a group-by-group basis and each GSR will be furnished the question in writing at least 90 days in advance.

...../

The upshot of these resolutions was to give the Regional Conference the active service authority to carry out their various delegated responsibilities. The message received ~~then~~ was that New York was ready to break new ground and endorse creative solutions to some difficult problems. Because of continuing discussion, we will again consider these issues this year at our General Session. To help everyone understand the intent of these resolutions, this open letter was written, explaining how "Ultimate Authority" and delegated authority can interact in our service structure, as stated in N.A.'s Second Tradition.

While it is well known that our groups and members hold ultimate authority over the service decisions that are made, it would be impractical for them to assume that they should exercise total authority. For one thing, it would divert them from their primary purpose while holding endless business meetings trying to conduct the business of N.A. service. Also, knowing that their's is the final authority, the groups could sometimes be tempted to instruct their area service reps exactly how to vote upon certain matters of the conference. Because they hold ultimate authority, there is no doubt that the N.A. groups have the right to do this. If they insist, they can give directives to their area reps on all matters.

But good management seldom means the full exercise of a stated set of ultimate rights. For example, were the groups to carry their instruction of area service reps to extremes, then we would be proceeding on the false theory that group opinion in most regional service matters would somehow be superior to conference judgement. Practically speaking, this could almost never be the case. There would be very few questions that "instructed" representatives could better settle than a conference acting on the spot with full facts and debate to guide it. Of course, it is understood that complete reporting of conference actions is always required in order to better ensure accountability. Nevertheless, the "instructed" representative who cannot act on his own conscience is not a "trusted servant" at all; he is just a messenger.

But why do all the participants of the Regional Service Conference need to vote? Can't the area service reps acting on their own make sufficient judgements? It is evident that the hundreds of N.A. groups and thousands of N.A. members scattered all over the region cannot of themselves actually manage and conduct our various N.A. services. In order to get effective action, the groups must delegate the actual operational authority to chosen service representatives who are fully empowered to speak and act for them. The group conscience of N.A. could not be heard unless a properly chosen conference was fully trusted to speak for it regarding most matters of regional service.

Hence the principle of equally delegated authority and responsibility to "trusted servants" must be implicit from top to bottom of our service structure. It seems reasonable that if we are to trust a regional treasurer with thousands of dollars of N.A. money, we would trust them with a vote on how that money is spent. If we trust committee chairpersons to run activities and forums, we should trust them to vote reasonably on how they are to be held. This is the clear implication of N.A.'s Second Tradition.

Within the framework of their general responsibilities -- whether these be defined by charter, by resolution, or by custom -- it should be the right of all regional service conferences, committees or officers to decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will consult or ask specific directions from the Fellowship. We ought to trust our regional servants with these discretions because otherwise, no effective administration can be possible. Therefore, having seen that the groups cannot either individually or collectively carry out active service work, it is of utmost importance to give due consideration to the election of our regional officers. Because having trusted them with these discretions, we must choose responsible members worthy of trust.

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or abuse. If the Conference does not function well, the groups can call for new elections of officers. If the officers lose the confidence of the Fellowship, the Conference can censure them. These remedies are ample and direct. But as long as our regional services function reasonably well, then "trust" must be our watchword-- otherwise, we'll be ineffectual. This mechanism ensures the correct balance between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility. Therefore, it ought to be clearly understood and agreed that as conference participants, we are primarily regional servants of N.A. as a whole; that only in a secondary sense do we represent our respective areas. Consequently, conference participants should, on day-to-day business decisions of service work, be entitled to cast their votes at the Regional Service Conference according to the best dictates of their own judgement and conscience at that time.

It should be kept in mind that our area service reps can never be like a congress in constant session, having their own working committees. Our AFRs cannot possibly function this way for the simple reason that they meet for a few hours only, monthly. Hence, they cannot have an extensive, first-hand acquaintance with many of the problems on which they are expected to vote. Our regional committees work independently, incorporating members throughout the Fellowship, then reporting the work they do at the Regional Conference. This is all the more reason for allowing all regional officers to share the voting privilege on regular business matters.

Finally, those who would do away entirely with the votes of regional officers in the Conference overlook the point that group conscience matters constitute only a fraction of the business of that body. And those matters are always referred back to the groups for a Fellowship-wide vote. The Conference is far more concerned with policies, plans and actions which have to do with taking care of the business of providing the services of the region. It is unworkable to give the authority to decide to the N.A. groups outside the scope of the actual work being done while requiring the Regional Conference to bear the responsibility for the completion of that work.

Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities. All of the above is fully implied in N.A.'s Second Tradition. Here, we see the "group conscience" as the ultimate authority and the "trusted servant" as the delegated authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a right and harmonious working balance.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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PRO

Who Carries Group Conscience?

No discussion of the investing of group conscience can take place before we can arrive at an acceptable definition of group conscience. As we discuss group conscience in NA, we pretty much must stay within the requirements of NA to have a structure of some sort. Our structure has been described in many ways, but the most popular descriptions appear to relate it to an inverted pyramid or a tree, implying all power and authority at the top-where the individual addict member appears in the structure. Our second tradition states that ultimate authority rests with our higher power and is expressed by the conscience of a group of addicts. This "Group" (which I don't think we can escape recognizing as the unit of NA Members which meet at a regular time and place to carry the message of recovery from the disease of addiction through the twelve steps and twelve traditions of Narcotics Anonymous) meets and discusses a concept, and somehow comes to an agreement on which course of action to follow, if any. How they arrive at that agreement is a function of the Group. Each Group makes its own decision on majority, plurality, quorum, etc, and in the best conscience of the collective members of that group, they establish for themselves (and no other groups) how they will operate. As long as that self-granted responsibility is enacted within the scope of the twelve traditions, there is no problem where the responsibilities to get our work done lie. We assign all responsibilities to ourselves and each other. We delegate responsibilities, never authority.

This basic reversal of the roles of supervisors outside NA and trusted servants within NA is obvious in the NA service structure. Virtually all structure in society is the inverse of ours, and in those structures (notice corporations, the armed forces, government, churches, charitable organization and endless individual associations)

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authority to initiate actions is delegated to the workers, while final responsibility for the success or failure of the action lies with the supervisor or leader. A captain who must surrender the navigational control of his vessel to a local pilot when entering a strange harbor, remains totally responsible for the vessel's safekeeping. If the Pilot runs it aground it is the captain's fault, nevertheless. If the crew mutinies and scuttles the ship, the captain is to blame. Ultimate responsibility has been expressed in naval tradition by expecting captains to perish with their ship. Can there be a stronger statement made on responsibility? seems to me that I can recognize that I as an addict go down with the ship, while I as a trusted servant am merely an observer of a sinking ship, and perhaps the disgruntled or mutinous crewman who helped to scuttle her through self-will and usurped authority. Thus, it seems to me that our higher power is the skipper, the members are his voice, and that we elected servants of the FELLOWSHIP are the workers who have accepted the responsibilities delegated to us. When we take on authority in any way, we begin to cease to serve. Pure Total Selfless Service implies all responsibility and no authority. This we must always strive for in our service.

This does not relieve us of the responsibility to act as needed for the fellowship when it is in the best interest of the fellowship for us to act. It would be a poor butler who refused to buttle for fear of spilling the soup. Our responsibilities are described by the fellowship, and in their descriptions, all trusted servants have a voice in their descriptions. Certainly if we are servants, we are members. We are even many times granted the licence to generate new literature, plan conferences, conventions and the like, make decisions in many ways, and even have original thoughts, suggestions and ideas! We plan the best way to describe our suggestions to the fellowship while in our committees, then go for it, taking all responsibility for our own actions. When it comes out good and our peers

adopt it, we derive great joy from NOT signing our names to it or taking individual credit for it. As we are directed in our twelfth tradition, we freely give it up to proper authority.

What is this "proper authority"? As a member of my home group, I surrender to the expressed will of the group. I have had the opportunity to express my views on an issue, and to take some sort of contributory action on my views. Probably in a vote. In the spirit of our first tradition, we wish the rest of NA to know what we have done. Since we think its a good idea, we send our REPRESENTATIVE to the ASC with our collective idea and an instruction to suggest our idea to the other representatives of groups. Those GSR's, all in CONFERENCE, make up the Area Service Conference. They are given free reign to develop a system of COMMITTEES to get the actual idea in motion as a project. These COMMITTEES, when working on multiple projects may choose to divide into SUBCOMMITTEES to attack the individual problems or projects. They are made up of members of NA who wish to serve. These members are all a part of a group of NA, and thus will be a part of the expression of ultimate authority at their home group's business meeting. Thus, their input to the project is in work and in deciding how best to get the work done, not if the work is or is not to be done. Selfless service requires no authority and no vote, as a vote is an expression of authority. Action based in responsibility to the fellowship does not imply authority.

The scenario described above for GSR and ASC is exactly repeatable at the RSC and WSC meetings. The word REPRESENTATIVE in the job description accurately describes who carries group conscience. The "Group Conscience " we speak of here is merely the voice of the NA group. The authority is God's, the voice is the group's and the representative is the messenger or speaker for that voice. All others in service, in fact, the representatives most of

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the time, are to serve in a responsible manner, not an authoritarian manner. OUR leaders are but trusted servants, and we are grateful to be trusted as well as permitted to serve.

Service is an action verb, and servants of NA are an action bunch. The level of recovery we gain in our surrender to each other in NA is without parallel. We who rarely could work together with anyone, seem to be able to ultimately agree on a lot of things. Perhaps with a great amount of introspection we can agree that the conscience of the group is carried to the ASC by the GSR, then to the RSC as a collective entity by the ASR, and finally to the WSC by the RSR, where these matters we refer to under our First, Second and Fourth Tradition are decided by collecting those voices into the collective conscience of NA and implemented by our responsible servants.

WHY SHOULD ONLY RSR'S VOTE AT THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE?

The issue in this matter is over an understanding of the spiritual nature of our Second Tradition, in addition to a literal reading of the words of the Second Tradition.

If we believe, as most of us do, that our Steps and Traditions were inspired by a Higher Power, then we must accept that the obvious meanings they present are inspired by a Higher Power. It is proper for us to then adhere to the Steps and Traditions in their obvious meaning rather than trying to place our own interpretation on them from some "implied" though you can "imagin" was intended.

The Steps and Traditions came long before the current service structure. Consequently the Traditions should be applied to the service structure in the literal sense rather than adapting the Traditions to fit the service structure.

In the Second Tradition there are three distinct spiritual and obvious principles. Lets examine each in sequence to understand how they apply at the group level and all other levels of service in the same manners.

"Four our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority..."

If there were more than one authority the disunity and conflict in our groups would paralyze the members in their efforts to understand recovery and the N.A. program. If there were more than one authority the constant conflict between factions would forever divide us and provide permanent conflict, suspicion and fear. If there were more than one authority the Fellowship would eventually divide into different factions and eventually collapse.

Is there any difference in a spiritual manner between the "Group" and an area committee, a region committee or the world service conference, as this part of the Second Tradition applies? The answer is no, there is no spiritual difference. We have all acknowledged this by using the same language of "requiring group conscience" (by which we usually mean a vote rather than a dictate by one or more members). In our recovery "Group" we invite all members to be equal participants when we take action thereby we exercise collectively the single authority the Tradition identifies.

This same principle needs to be applied to

"...a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience;..."

A loving God speaks through us at the group level by each member representing his own conscience contact with a higher power in each decision. Each member is expected to consider each matter with an open and clear spirit so that personal fears, prejudice or distrust are not influencing their thoughts. As a member meditates or contemplates each

issue they draw on their recovery and understanding of a Higher Power in an attempt to have the will of a Higher Power expressed in the outcome. This is an act of faith that we learn about and commit ourselves to when we accept and practice the Third Step.

If we use the concept described in this part of the Tradition for decisions we make at the area committee level, region level or world level, then we must be bound by the same requirement. At the area level of service the member of the service committee selected by the group to represent them is expected to reflect the group conscience made by that group. This is the extension of all of the members of that group when they assembled and arrived at a group conscience on the matter in question. In similar manner decisions made at the region or world level should, by virtue of a clear understanding of this Tradition, reflect the actions of each representative presenting the "Group Conscience" of those who evolved the "Group Conscience decision" they are empowered to present.

It can clearly be seen at this point that no mention is made about trusted servants in connection to group conscience or ultimate authority so far in this Tradition. There is an undeniable message in this. Group conscience is an activity reserved for the member as an equal participant in the decision. At each successive level of service there is equality in this foundation of decision making only among the representatives equally elected to represent the next lower level in the service structure. This clearly means that a committee chairperson at the area level does not have the same group conscience backing that a GSR has.

Consequently at the area level our Higher Power is most clearly evidenced when only GSR's vote on actions. When non-GSR's vote, then a new element not covered in the Tradition is entered into the decision making process. We do not have the authority to change the Tradition to suit our interpretations of what this Tradition meant as it applied to an unwritten service structure. We must apply the Tradition to the service structure regardless of how it is organized or when it was done.

In similar manner only those elected at an area level to represent their area should vote at the region and only those elected at the region should vote at the world level.

"...Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern."

Trusted Servants are expected to consummate the actions of group conscience in the manner that the group conscience they represent elected to conclude. Without doubt, this is what the last part of this Tradition says. We do have leaders, and we trust them, but they are instructed by the decision of the group conscience that sends them on how to do what they are to do. While there may be other trusted servants in addition to the representatives who carry the

group conscience responsibility these additional trusted servants are not representative of the ultimate authority. These other trusted servants are not covered in this Tradition and therefore should not be included in a group conscience process decision on an equal basis as a trusted servant who is vested with the authority of group conscience.

The last part of this section is the clearest admonition against non elected representatives from voting in bodies where group conscience decisions are made. A trusted servant who is not an elected representative of the next lower level of service is not entitled to vote. Should these non-elected members vote then the spritual basis of group conscience is lost. The decision then becomes subject to influence that is not provided for within the God related process described in this Tradition.

This does not mean to imply that trusted servants such as a committee chairperson are not in contact with a loving God. It simply means that representatives whose authority is derived directly from a group conscience process is the person this Tradition speaks favorably of when it says "as He may express Himself in our Group conscience".

The last phrase of this Tradition has special meaning as it applies to decisions at the area, region and world level. At each of these levels of service we need trusted servants to handle duties and responsibilities that are to vast for the elected representatives to manage alone. The tradition acknowledges this but places a separate admonition on them as trusted servants that "they do not govern".

While our service boards and committee may give considerable responsibility to these trusted servants, when it comes to "Group Conscience" decisions of area, regions and world service, these other trusted servants should allow the elected representatives their proper authority to make decisions. To do differently places the body in the situation of having the nonelected representatives governing the decisions. It is appropriate and essential that these other trusted servants have opportunity to provide input and advice, but they are not appropriate participants in the actual voting.

A trusted servant in this situation has only the vested interest of their committee or board and their individual interest as a member of that committee or board as a basis for any decision they would be involved with. For example, a committee chairperson of the World Service Conference would represent their committees viewpoint rather than a region. The regions representative should be reflective of the group conscience of their region. Of the two only the regions representative has the appropriate spiritual basis that the earlier part of this Tradition speaks of.

It is important to acknowledge and appreciate the advice and input that a committee or Board member can provide to the decision making process. Such advice and influence should be sought and evaluated by those vested

INPUT

with the responsibility to make the decision. The decisions should, however be made by the representative alone.

Nr2draft

From: William Allen III, WSC P.I. Vice-Chairperson

Re: RSR's as only voting members of WSC

First we need to take a look at what our service structure is. Our service committee is the Ninth Tradition. N.A., as such, ought never be organized. But we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

So, if we take a good look at this we come to see that we were created by the groups to be an aid or a tool for them to be able to practice the Eleventh and Twelfth Steps of N.A. and also the Fifth Tradition. This comes from coming to know God and finding out our purpose is to serve to be that word a servant. Our serving takes place from having had that spiritual awakening we carry the message to that suffering addict.

Our Conference is to be that of a Conference of the regions coming together to communicate, to collect group conscience and direct our service through our RSR. The rest of us are to serve by doing the work.

The vote would seem to be not an issue at all if we would let go and allow our spiritual principle to work and trust our Fellowship. That we would serve them, allow them through our Second Tradition to allow God to speak through the groups and that conscience to be carried through our GSR, ASR and RSR. The purpose of the committee to meet is to plan the upcoming year of work. They meet throughout the year working on projects directed by the Fellowship upon completion then turn back over to the Fellowship to conscience. At that point the spiritual principle of our Second Tradition should be put into to action. That would free us up to work on other projects to serve and follow direction from the groups. No one vote should be able to carry the same as one region. Our committee chairs, our trustees that are addicts and our Board of Directors have already expressed their feelings and also that they have a home group to express their vote in. That is the practice of the Second and Twelfth Tradition.

Pro. that only RSR's be voting members of the WSC Conference.

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The opinion of the WSB is highly valued by all members, however the value of the WSB is decreased by the WSB voting at WSC. It is extremely important to remember that Trustees are members of NA and as such should contribute to the voice of NA. Thus, their vote on group conscious issues should be cast in their home group. Their opinion as Trustees should be expressed as a board at the WSC in the spirit of unanimity by one vote, cast by the Chairperson of the WSB on all issues of group consciousness.

Furthermore, if one member's "group conscious vote" is as important as the next members; How can there be any spirituality in (12) members vote being as valued as (12) regions vote? If a Trustee vote is in opposition with that of a region, should we accept that HP speaks through a Trustee as he does in group conscious? We have to ask ourselves; Does HP speak as clearly and as loudly through a Trustee as he does through a region of areas, of groups, of members of NA?

It is my belief that keeping in the spiritual principals embodied within the 2nd Tradition; If the WSB has ~~any~~ any ~~vote~~ vote at WSC, it should be one vote cast by the Chairperson of the WSB.

It is the opinion of the WSB that we value, not their vote!

In Loving Service;

LISA E.

From: Jim E., RSR, Chicagoland

Re: Who may vote at WSC

The current voting procedure is a reflection of group conscience indirectly showing God's will. Everyone who has a vote at the WSC is approved by people carrying a group conscience. RSR's are approved by RSC's and RSR's carry their group conscience to WSC where they use that to vote for subcommittee chairs, officers, Board of Trustees and Board of Directors. These officers of the Conference use their experience and knowledge tempered by their personal program to show God's will when they vote on an issue.

Who are we to say that God's will is only shown at the group level. Group conscience happens at the area, region and world level also. If you do not believe it, just watch what happens when self-willed politicking runs into group conscience at informed service meetings.

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In the early years of the Conference, the most frequently discussed and hotly debated issue was the determination of who was eligible to vote at meetings of the Conference. It was decided very early in the evolution of the Conference that the experience, strength and hope of the world level trusted servants was an important element to have as voting participants. The Trustees, the Conference officers and subcommittee chairpersons were found to have important knowledge and wisdom gained from their experience and service that was vital to the future of the Fellowship. Some had argued that these members should be excluded because they did not represent a constituency of specific Fellowship areas and groups. The feeling was that only regional service representatives should vote.

This approach reduces our spiritual Fellowship down to the common denominator of a representative democracy. While the Fellowship does manage its affairs in a democratic manner (allowing for equal participation in debate and a voting procedure) the Fellowship is not a governmental agency nor is the Conference comparable to a legislative body. The Conference is indeed a deliberative assembly, but on a higher spiritual level than a governmental legislature.

The basis for resolution of this dispute is in a full appreciation of the Second Tradition, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." The phrase "our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern" was the operative slogan used in the argument against allowing anyone to vote except for RSR's. The feeling was that having Trustees or conference subcommittee chairpersons vote amounted to an exercise of having trusted servants govern the Fellowship. This concept is greatly incorrect and fails to fully understand the value of experienced trusted servants.

Another perception of this issue was that the Fellowship should indeed be organized in a pyramid fashion and that the pyramid did not make provision for a trusted servants participation at the world level who were not directly elected by a region. This unfortunately would leave the Fellowship "organized" in the fashion that Tradition Nine speaks against. This pattern of thought includes the seeds of discontent nurtured by jealousy, envy, pride and prestige frequently felt by those who had not served at the world level as trusted servants.

It should be emphasized that the Conference is not a political body, demanding a completely rigid formula of representation. If this were the principle followed, each voting participant would have to represent an equal number of members or groups or in other ways reflect the representative equality that such "direct representation" concepts would call for. Not only is this scheme impractical, it is also unnecessary for a spiritual Fellowship. What our experience has revealed is the Conference needs always to have RSR's to afford a reliable cross section of the Fellowship plus enough world level trusted servants to balance the regional and sectional influences that many RSR's tend to carry in their thinking. Experiences revealed that trusted servants new to world level service tend to have sectional and regional bias when they start their terms of office. Usually when their year is completed they have lost that bias and reflect a broader understanding of the Fellowship.

The Fellowship has learned that lengthy cleantime, broad experience in service and a good personal understanding of the Steps and Traditions are the best foundation for world level service. The requirements for election to various service positions at the area, region and at world level attest to the importance of that experience, strength and hope. The Fellowship very early recognized the importance of retaining that experience as part of the decision making that does occur at the World Service Conference.

Accordingly the Fellowship has retained as voting participants of the Conference trusted servants who currently serve as chairpersons of subcommittees, the administrative subcommittee members, Trustees and a representative from the World Service Office. These members of the Conference usually have years of experience and service in particular fields of service that play an important part in the discussions and actions by the Conference. The Fellowship has long recognized that to exclude these members with valuable experience, would doom the Fellowship to repeat mistakes periodically and impede efforts to carry the message of recovery. Experience has shown that these trusted servants tend to provide positive balance in their actions at the Conference by their exercise of positive judgment and moderate participation.

Concerning the argument that the non-RSR's control the rest of the Fellowship, time has shown this is not the case. Some had feared that they

would make decisions that were contrary to the best interests of the Fellowship because they were interested primarily in protecting their positions and personal prestige. An example of the fallacy of that argument is the record of the participation of the Trustees in the development of the Fellowship.

For more than ten years the Board of Trustees existed without any direct or indirect control from the Fellowship. The Trustees selected their own members and handled the general matters affecting the Fellowship as a whole. During this period the Fellowship continued to grow and the message of recovery continued to grow and the message of recovery continued to be carried to addicts. The Trustees were instrumental in the creation of the Conference and have been a valuable settling influence of the Conference and the Fellowship as a whole. The Trustees are now selected by the Conference and they still provide wisdom and guidance as they did before. If anything can be gained from the experience of the Trustees and their relationship to the Conference, it is that they provide insight to the failures resulting from past experience and serve as a beacon toward positive solutions to our problem.

These trusted servants with nine years or more of clean time and service experience usually have a more even disposition about the controversies that seem to repeat themselves periodically. The Fellowship has relied upon these trusted servants to counter balance the newness to world service that many first time Conference participants have.

Most RSR's are relatively new to the Fellowship and nearly always new to world level service. Although the prior Service Structure suggested that an RSR's should have five years clean time in the program, it was often difficult to find a member in each region with that amount of time who was interested in serving. Consequently many RSR's have arrived at the Conference with about three years clean time, and some with less. This was unavoidable in growing areas where there had been no Fellowship, but as these newer areas matured, they more frequently sent members with five years and more. This trend has brought added maturity to the Conference and decreased the recurrence of arguments resolved in previous years.

When the Conference first began there were more Trustee and subcommittee chairpersons than there were regional service representatives. This changed with the addition of three or four new regions each year. By

1985 there were more than thirty five regions, while the number of Trustees and subcommittee chairpersons remained about the same. As the Fellowship continues to add RSR's the voting impact of the Trustees and the subcommittee chairpersons will continue to diminish numerically.

It is not likely however, that their indirect influence will generally be dismissed, regardless of the number of voting participants. The Trustees and conference chairpersons generally travel to more places within the Fellowship in the conduct of their duties and have a broader perspective of the Fellowship from that experience. They are the members most directly involved in the Fellowship wide work being done by the Conference and usually have more specific knowledge of the issues being presented.

Trustees always have more than eight years clean time and conference subcommittee chairpersons usually have more than five years at the time they are elected to their positions. Their lengthy clean time records usually provides additional balance in their judgment and clarity in their thinking.

Because the Fellowship created a World Service Office to be separate from the Fellowship, yet be subject to the Fellowship to handle the business activities, there needed to be some place for the World Service office and the Fellowship to interface. To provide for adequate interaction of the World Service Office with the Fellowship, a representative of the Board of Directors of the World Service Office is included as a voting participant of the Conference. This has been found to be a valuable and productive arrangement. The office directors and staff have the experience and service knowledge that impacts many of the decisions the Conference needs to make. With a representative of the Office as a member of the Conference there is the ability to have that experience and knowledge easily accessible to the Conference and provides opportunity for closer service by the Office.

The conference participants therefore (those who may make motions, participate in debate, address the Conference and vote on motions), are the RSR's, the Conference Chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, subcommittee chairperson, the Trustees and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the World Service Office. The Chairperson of the World Service Conference Administrative Subcommittee usually is the presiding officer of the Conference, he/she similarly does not vote except to make or break a tie vote or cast a vote in a roll call vote. Other individuals are not authorized

to participate in the Conference without a 2/3 vote of approval by the Conference, except for the participation of a parliamentarian, the manager of the World Service Office and quest speakers. These exceptions have been found to be essential for reasonable and proper operation of the Conference. In the absence of the election regional service representative from any region, the alternate regional service representative is authorized to perform the duties of the RSR' and to participate and vote in place of the RSR.

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Inclusion of historical material is not only interesting but necessary to understanding the application of our principles to our structure. The current form of the "Guide" unfortunately leaves some important information out.

Comparisons to A.A. are inevitable and valid. When we adapted the steps and traditions we had no need for an elaborate structure; besides, theirs was still evolving. It didn't stabilize until the early sixties. Our efforts at a world service structure didn't really begin until the seventies, and possibly our greatest weakness in those early efforts was our failure to adapt A.A.'s Twelve Concepts to our purposes. The concepts of right of decision, right of participation, right of appeal, leadership and others are particularly applicable to our needs.

When we decided, presumably for the sake of distinct terminology, to use the term "group" service representative instead of "general" service representative, we set the stage for a complete ignorance of the concept of general service which we are only now beginning to correct. We also gave credence to the seemingly logical progression of "only GSR's represent a 'group conscience'; therefore only GSR's should vote; therefore only ASR's should vote; therefore only RSR's should vote." This has been one of our greatest sources of controversy and a tremendous hindrance to our understanding the application of our traditions to our structure.

When we decided that an assembly of GSR's in N.A. would be too "chaotic", we were saying in effect that somehow we couldn't work together as well as A.A. does in that setting. The anecdotal evidence for this was compelling at the time, but are we now to base supposedly spiritual guidelines on expected immaturity and irresponsibility in our GSR's?

Removing the vote of any elected member of our service units is not a step to be taken lightly. When we removed the votes of the GSR's at the region we further separated them from our world service branches, creating the potential for disunity. Our "fund flow" idea, while seemingly logical, served to separate the groups even more. This separation does not exist in A.A. where world services depend directly on the groups for contributions, which their budgeting policy calls for amounting to about half of their entire budget for world services. This of course gives the groups a direct, practical authority over world services -- holding the purse strings.

It is unclear where or why the "only GSR's vote" idea took root. Again, all we have is anecdotal evidence, however, emotionally compelling, of irresponsible trusted servants at an area or regional level voting as a block and outnumbering the GSR'S's. While we need a mechanism to protect the groups' right to issue flat directives to service boards or committees they create, we don't need to ignore spirituality or sound administrative practices because we fear disease. After all, we've got a loving God in charge here, no less than in A.A. who will provide us with the necessary leaders and workers to get the job done.

We need some historical explanation for the contradiction of our failure to apply the concepts of participation and decision at the area and regional levels while continuing to use them (thank God) at the world level.

There is no mention of the "Green" service manual. The changes in wording in the first thirteen or fourteen pages didn't seem significant at the time; at least

not as compared to the radical changes proposed for world services. However, this service manual was designed out of whole cloth, with the WS changes the point of the whole work. Some of us felt the color green signified bile, and the WS changes were rejected by the WSC, but the bile remains -- rooted in ignorance or rejection of the concepts of participation and decision.

Some mention of the fact that some of the early literature and policy committees were largely self-appointed, with almost no elective base in group conscience, ought to be made. These committees were the source of some of our greatest controversy and disunity.

As we try to re-invent the wheel according to our experience, we need to carefully examine that experience in accordance with our Tenth Step. Many changes that seemed to be a good, or at least acceptable, idea at the time have turned out to have disruptive long range effects. We ought to note this in our historical material in the "GUIDE".

CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS:

As previously mentioned, terminology changes have in some cases created misunderstanding and controversy that out weight the benefits of distinct terminology. In addition to eliminating the concept of delegation of authority from the RSR's title. Also, A.A.'s idea of a "District Committee Member" (having a vote, naturally, as a member of an "area" committee), contributed to their understanding of how group conscience is expressed in their service structure. Using the word "representative" for our equivalents (ASR's) distorts the understanding that those elected by GSR's or ASR's (pr RSR's) are also representatives of our group conscience. Substituting "RSR" for "Delegate" was a great loss for us.

This is not necessarily suggesting a change in titles now, only an observation that many of our attempts to be "different" need very careful, mature consideration. Also, because of misunderstandings fostered by terminology, we need to apply extra effort to overcome these problems, through thorough exposition of the missing concepts, at every level of service.

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To Whom it May Concern:

I would like at this time to speak pro to the motion "to make RSR's the only voting participants at WSC."

We have here an existing situation that I believe is creating a spiritual paradox in our service structure and has created an obstacle to our common welfare, a common conscience. As it exists today, our statements of conscience are drawn from a systematic source that is so obvious in its imbalance that it ridicules its own existence. Our principles of Fellowship have only one provision for the gathering of statements of conscience, the group. Our service structure, developed from the directions implied in our Ninth Tradition, grants us the gathering or accumulation of these provisions at the regional level. At times these accumulated statements of conscience are the voice of hundreds of groups, a sizable accumulation. To award or burden, as it seems is the case, any individual a responsibility that is equal to this voice, is not only out of balance with any implication of logic or reason but disallows any equanimity or even relative thought and in relationship to anonymity.

The custodial principle is one that is grounded in anonymity and example, and for us to place a responsibility on any group of addicts and harness them at the same time with a responsibility that denies them the opportunity to fulfill this responsibility, is out of keeping with good practice of our Second Step and is self-defeating to anyone who is burdened with this responsibility.

I have yet, in seven years of recovery, been able to find any implication or indication in anyone of our principles, except for the gathering of individuals into groups, that the individual has any authority except in sharing on a group level. This is obvious, not only in our principles of Fellowship, but in our principles of personal recovery, the steps. Just once, and that is in the commentary on our Twelfth Tradition, does our basic recovery text use any form of individual pronoun, and that is the word I, in reference to the I disappearing into we.

I have no alternative but to state that any individual votes or vote, in an exercise of accumulation of our statements of group conscience, are not in keeping with our Second Tradition, with our personal recovery, and are totally out of context with the spiritual foundation of our traditions and our Fellowship.

To award statements of conscience to a service committee in the seeking of conscience allows the

possibility or even opportunity for a committee conscience to be in opposition to the conscience of the groups and seems counter productive to the principle of service. It is totally out of keeping with the principle of direct responsibility. Recovery begs this voice be stilled in the seeking of recovery, the premise our service structure was created on. Our Ninth Tradition is not served by the existence of this obvious paradox.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my thoughts.
Love is only obvious in effort. Loving gratitude serves.

Mac McFadden, RSR, B.R.S.C.

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