

# WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

P.O. Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409  
(818) 780-3951



To: World Service Conference 1990

From: Bob Hunter  
Chairperson, World Service Conference

Welcome to WSC 1990. I especially welcome those of you who are attending the WSC for the first time. We have a lot to accomplish this week and I feel confident that we will complete the tasks at hand.

This is my sixth conference, and in these six short years I have witnessed a growing maturity at this annual WSC meeting; a maturity in the way we handle business and a maturity in the way we approach elections. I have also observed an ever-increasing sense of respect for one another among conference participants. I believe an atmosphere of respect and love is just as necessary in our business meetings as it is in our recovery meetings.

We are here to work but yet it is also important for us to enjoy ourselves. There may be some tense moments ahead of us this week, and I hope we are able to maintain our perspective; that all we do here will aid us in carrying our message of recovery to addicts all over the world.

And I do mean all over the world. This year has been an unprecedented year in our international growth. At last count, N.A. meetings have been started in over 53 countries. I had to buy a world atlas this year, because N.A. meetings are springing up in places I've never heard of. I get goose bumps every time I look at our international meeting directory.

I had the opportunity to travel to the European Service Conference last July in Barcelona, Spain. I then went on to Finland and Sweden to meet with N.A. members in those countries. I have been to N.A. meetings outside of the U.S. before, and I have met many of our international members at this conference and at N.A. conventions, but I experienced feelings during this trip last summer that I have never experienced before. I experienced a sense, or call it a feeling if you like, at the very core of my being that the N.A. message of recovery truly transcends all cultural and language barriers. I cannot describe this experience further, except to say that my faith in the steps as a means of recovery was deepened to a level within myself that I have never experienced before.

I believe the major issues that we will need to face in the next few years will be centered around our international growth. We, the more established N.A. communities, need to take the steps necessary to maintain the integrity of our

fellowship worldwide, but yet we also need to let go and allow our newer, developing N.A. communities the pains and joys of growth. By attempting to take these growing experiences away, we will weaken N.A. in the long run. I hope that in the upcoming years, we discuss our international growth as it affects us emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

These past four to six months, I have become increasingly aware that we, as a fellowship, may be headed towards a financial crisis. I've received more phone calls this year with regards to N.A. finances than any other issue. Money getting ripped off, N.A. events losing money due to poor planning, funds accumulating and not being passed on, and other such issues. I've been involved in finances in Narcotics Anonymous since I was ten months clean; I've come to the conclusion that as a fellowship, we generally have a dysfunction when it comes to fellowship funds. Most of us are either in denial, or we develop an attitude that our "Higher Power will provide." Well, I also believe our Higher Power will provide, but that does not give us a license to be irresponsible.

We all seem willing to jump on a bandwagon when someone wants to screw with the literature process, but not a question is asked when one of our fellow members stands before us admitting that he or she has taken fellowship funds. Instead, we immediately put them back into a situation where they are handling money again--and we expect different results.

Most of our organized service efforts require funds in order to operate. When funds "disappear," there is that much less available to further our primary purpose. There are solutions to our financial dilemma. First, we can elect responsible members to positions in which funds are handled. Ask yourself this question: would you want this person handling your personal finances? We can get involved and support our treasurers by asking for reports and bank statements, and by assisting in any way we can. We cannot abandon our treasurers. We can promote the passing on of funds; accumulation of funds beyond our immediate needs diverts us from our primary purpose.

These are just a few suggestions. There are other measures we can take to safeguard our funds and instill integrity in our fund flow system. As leaders, we need to take the initiative to talk about our financial issues and work towards viable solutions.

I would like to change directions now and talk about this year's conference. Some new procedures are being implemented this year, and I hope we make an attempt to integrate these new procedures into our business routine. I believe patience and flexibility will be necessary to guide us through these changes.

I think we all pretty much agree on our primary purpose for being here at the conference: to better carry our message of recovery to addicts. However, I know we don't all agree on how our message is developed and how to best carry it. Disagreement doesn't bother me. I believe it is through our disagreements that we find solutions. Sometimes, being disagreeable doesn't even bother me. It's okay to express anger here, and it's okay to feel and express fear here. Our anger can sometimes be our strength, if we couple it with love, and our fear can sometimes be our wisdom, if we couple it with faith. Being disrespectful does bother me. No one in this room, or anywhere for that matter, deserves to be abused. I trust that we will treat each other in a courteous and respectful manner. I ask that we be ever

mindful of the presence of a loving power, greater than ourselves, that will guide us in our efforts here.

This has been an interesting year for me, to say the least. It's been one of my most confusing years in recovery and one of my most exciting years in service. I've asked more questions this year than during any other year of my recovery; just ask my sponsor or those who have worked closely with me this year as conference chair. I've also learned many lessons this year about chairing groups of people, and hope that I am able to integrate those lessons into this week ahead of us.

I believe my weakness this year has been poor communication with my fellow administrative committee members. Ed, Reuben, and Shari have been great to work with, and if I have one regret it is that I did not consult with them more often.

I believe my strength this year has been my ability to listen. This is a skill which I have just recently developed, out of necessity more than for any other reason. I believe that in listening I have learned a great deal about you and about myself.

Thanks to all of you who have supported me throughout this year. I could easily spend an hour or more thanking each one of you individually. I especially thank the staff at the World Service Office. I don't know what I would have done without their support, patience, and love. I also thank the members of the Joint Administrative Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Directors who have served with me this year. I constantly felt support from those with whom I served.

I've also had the privilege to meet many RSRs and their local members and I thank them for their encouragement and love. But most of all, I thank my friends and family back home. These are the people I live, work, and recover with on a daily basis. They see me at my worst and at my best, and they continue to love me and I them. I hope I never lose that sense of awe I experience when I reflect back to what it was like for me when I was using drugs, contrasted with what it is like for me today. I thank the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous and my Higher Power for that.