

An Open letter to the trustees  
concerning the printing of the  
3rd Edition, revised Basic Text

After seeing a copy of the letter put out by the trustees stating violations of Narcotics Anonymous Traditions as a result of the printing of an altered version of the Basic Text, 3rd Edition, revised, I found it necessary to voice another opinion so that the fellowship as a whole is not misguided by the trustees simply because of the "WSO says so, so it must be true" attitude.

The first thing I felt it necessary to do was go through some basic facts from the Basic Text, any edition, in this case the WSO's very own 5th Edition. On page 59, we read in the 1st Tradition, about unity, halfway down, "No one can revoke our membership or make us do anything we do not choose to do." and "...we found that what is best for the group is usually good for us" and on page 60, "This is not to say that we do not have our disagreements and conflicts; we do. Whenever people get together there are differences of opinions. However, we can disagree without being disagreeable. Time and time again, in crisis we have set aside our differences and worked for the common good." The 2nd Tradition talks about the only ultimate authority we have, on page 61. "...we rely on a loving God as He expresses Himself in our group conscience, rather than on personal opinion or ego." "We must be constantly on guard that our decisions are truly an expression of God's will" and that "Direction and manipulation fail. We choose not to have presidents, masters or directors. Instead we have secretaries, treasurers and representatives. These titles imply service rather than control." The 3rd Tradition states that "Desire is our only requirement. Addiction does not discriminate. This Tradition is to ensure that any addict, regardless of drugs used, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual preference or financial condition is free to practice the N.A. way of life." Tradition 4 asks, "Are we truly autonomous? Don't we have service committees, offices, activities, hot lines, and other activities in N.A.?" The answer is that these things are not N.A. "They are services we use to help us in our recovery and to further the primary purpose of our groups". The 5th Tradition then tells us about our primary purpose, but not before adding that "...if we do not dictate to other groups or force anything upon them...then all will be well." "I thought our primary purpose was to recover from drug addiction? For the individual this is certainly true; our members are here to find freedom from addiction and a new way of life. However, groups aren't addicted and don't recover. All our groups can do is plant the seed of recovery and bring addicts together so that the magic of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing, and service can do their work." "What would happen if our groups had another primary purpose? We feel that our message would be diluted and then lost. If we concentrated on making money, many might get rich...If our group purpose was anything other than to carry the message, many would die..." And Tradition six talks about the money, property and prestige issue by saying on page 66, that this tradition "is extremely important to the continuation and g

growth of Narcotics Anonymous." It "goes on to warn us what may happen: 'lest problems of money property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose'. The problems often become obsessions and cut us off from our spiritual aim. For the individual, this type of abuse can be devastating; for the group it can be disastrous. When we as a group waver from our primary purpose, addicts who might have found recovery die." The 7th Tradition tells us how we get our money and why, on page 68. "...members who can afford it give a little extra to help. N.A. services remain in need of money, and even though it is sometimes frustrating, we really would not have it any other way; we know the price would be too high." Tradition 8 warns us about professionals on page 69 of the 5th Edition Basic Text. "If we employed professionals in N.A. groups, we would destroy our unity" and on page 70, as hypocritical as it is, "Our special workers on the other hand, work within our traditions and are always responsible to those they serve, to the Fellowship." The 9th says, "...that we may create service boards or committees to serve the needs of the Fellowship. They exist solely to serve the Fellowship. This is the nature of our service structure as it has evolved and been defined in the N.A. Service Manual." Tradition 10 says that "One of the most important things we can do to further our primary purpose is to let people know who, what and where we are." Tradition 11 says, "...it is important to reach as many people as possible..." and on page 72, the 12th Tradition says that, "The spiritual foundation becomes more important than any one group or individual."

I first quote these traditions to show that the Board of Trustees is totally and completely hypocritical solely to their own means. As long as the end result suits their personal desires the BOT will say anything they want to and because the letterhead reads, "World Service" most people think that it must then be so. The true hypocrisy comes through in the latest letter from the trustees. At the top of the page, by using the copyrighted symbol of N.A. they've violated their own definition of the fourth tradition which says that if it's not a meeting then it isn't N.A. The letter goes on that, "This action contradicts our 12 Traditions" Not the 12 Traditions that I just read. Whose traditions is it violating? Maybe the Boards tradition of using N.A. funds to travel around the country, depleting the cash flow from the services we really need. The letter goes on about how the book is not conference approved. I remember having bought a 3rd Edition revised text straight from the WSO in 1986, and the other parts in approved literature before that. So what, the stories were left out in this version. The "Fat Addict" didn't do a thing for me anyway. I'm trying, also, to figure out how the Trustees had the audacity to write "as a result of broad consideration within the N.A. Fellowship" when the 5th Edition was a quick cover-up for the riff-raff 4th Edition that was spit out. This was WSC approved, but not "Fellowship as a whole" approved as is our structure as it has evolved and been defined in the service manual. "Without consulting any of N.A.'s worldwide decision making bodies" is a scary thought and an insult since reading the Traditions which say that the Fellowship is the decision making body not the other way around. The services are set up to serve the Fellowship, not to "rule, censor, decide or dictate" as it reads in previous editions of the Basic Text.

Yes, there is truth in the Trustees letter. The Text is sold by the WSO for \$8. \$8 that newcomers and prisoners don't have, and it comes in a hard-cover which prisoners aren't allowed to have and even the limited amount of soft-cover copies is still large enough that most prisons won't allow them anyway, because they "can be used as weapons". Do we keep what we have only by selling it, or by giving it away? Would we have it any other way? I make a donation to the basket wheather I buy a 5th Edition, a 4th Edition or any other edition. I can give this light blue soft cover book to prisoners and newcomers who otherwise may be unable to get this message in print. I can reach as many people as possible by spending \$2 instead of \$8. Four times as many prisoners and newcomers. Four times as many suffering addicts. Our primary purpose. Four times as many, minimum.

The only "support of worldwide services" that sales of "the unauthorized text" will take away is that of the free travel by King George and the boys in the future. As long as I continue to give books away, whatever Edition, no sales are made by those people anyway. According to the 7th Tradition support comes from donations and fundraisers, not sales. "The price would be too high". By telling members, groups and committees to, "just say no" the BOT is in violation of the 4th Tradition of not dictating.

Our Fellowship hasn't been spending that much time over the last fifteen years making the WSC what it is today, they've been doing that themselves by consistantly allowing people who don't represent groups to vote. A full 1/3 of the decision making practice is voted by people representing their own opinion. The Fellowship still believes that the decisions should be made by the Fellowship. That is why every year they ask that RSR's only vote. This could never happen though, because then those who represent themselves alone and no region would lose their "importance" and there's too many of them to allow that.

Furthermore, for the BOT to say that the WSO, which holds the copyright intrust for the Fellowship, is going to sue a member of the Fellowship is appauling. That would be like the trustee of a will suing one of the heirs for spending a part of his inheritance. Boys, I think there is a slight control issue problem here based on a false pride and image thing. If N.A. world services were deprived of income from basic text sales only the "travelers" would suffer. Not the Fellowship. They might have to miss a convention or two.

Likewise, to say that the people who are publishing this book are running on self-will is like the pot calling the kettle black for the BOT. That's what World Services has been doing with our literature for years. The only misinformation and misguiding is being done by the BOT. To say that "we have allowed a vocal few to divert us from our primary purpose far too long" is interesting. "it's time to say, 'enough'" is true. Let's dissolve this world structure and start again. It seems to be a shame to have to right this letter but the "World" has brought it upon themselves. When I was approached by someone who had 2 boxes of the light-blue books, I asked him what he used them for since I knew they were not to be sold in meetings and he said, "I give them away to prisoners, newcomers and people that I sponsor." I said, "Give me a box!" My donations still go