

BOT Open Forum Notes
August 17, 1991
Tulsa, OK

Trustees Present: Jack B., Becky M., Chuck L., Jamie S-H., Stu T., Bob McK., Garth P., Greg P., Steve B.

WSO BOD: Bob McD., Mary Kay B.

WSO Staff: Hollie A., George H., Anthony E.

The forum was opened at 9:20 A.M. with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Jack welcomed everyone and opened the floor for comments and questions.

The RSR from San Diego/Imperial Region presented a series of questions. He handed out a Spanish translation of the group conscience section of Tradition Two from the *It Works: How and Why* review material. This translation was done by the fellowship in Tijuana, Mexico. He related that his region would like to see "for our group purpose" addressed in the traditions work. He also suggested that efforts be undertaken to translate the H&I and P.I. handbooks in Spanish. He related some concern regarding the BOT discussion of the concepts from the June minutes, especially in relation to delegated authority and the right of participation. He questioned whether everything has to go back to the group or do committees deal with committee business. His next questions had to deal with funding and fundraisers, and how this relates to the philosophy behind the Seventh Tradition. He also had a suggestion that the proposed BOT paper on the Seventh Tradition include discussion of the WSC not being dependent on WSO for financial security. He then suggested that the IDF format be focused on presentations on different topics instead of geopolitical areas of the world, so that sharing ideas can take place on service, with the focus on discussing problems and solutions.

The trustees responded to the questions about the Seventh Tradition by asking about a rhetorical question on how much of WSC funds really come from Seventh Tradition donations. Also, the trustees reminded those in attendance of the WSC priorities being set by the conference regardless of WSO's financial picture. There is a need to have the WSC Boards and Committees involved in setting priorities for the Conference keeping in mind the support these priorities require from WSO.

This led into a discussion of tax questions and a perceived need to have our fellowship either incorporate or get a "special ruling" from the IRS. The suggested fund flow from TWGSS and the Treasurers Handbook was raised with questions about whether work is being done on the Handbook. Also, whether any investigation had been done on event insurance with a national carrier through

the WSO. The topic of Zonal Conferences rather than National Conferences was also raised so that travel costs could be reduced along with better meeting the needs of the area and geopolitical boundaries.

Considerable discussion was then held on taxes and whether filing for a special exemption would infringe on group autonomy. The general feeling from the those in attendance was that tax exempt status be pursued. Jack indicated this is being investigated, but cautiously. All the members in attendance were encouraged to send any information they might have on taxes and tax exempt status to the WSO.

The discussion then shifted to several questions and concerns from the Chicagoland RSR, beginning with a focus on the Multi-National Development Forum. There was a strong suggestion that this event be held as part of the WSC, not as a separate event or during a quarterly meeting. He also suggested that to encourage fundraising for the WSO, a two page document should be put together describing what the WSO does for the fellowship. He also related his feelings that the TWGSS doesn't describe the fellowship and the service structure, especially regarding the need for better information and communication. He sees there is a need for function, not form, as is discussed in the *Guide to Service*. He also suggested that work be done on streamlining services, such as placing the BOT over the WSC Literature Committee as small groups seem to work better than large groups.

Jack encouraged the RSRs to share information between their regions and the WSO, so that our members can better understand the benefits of increased communications. He sees that an increase in communication will assist in informing the fellowship of the benefits received through sharing information which educated the ASCs and RSCs several years ago and that these same benefits are now being felt by non-U.S. countries.

The discussion then focused on translations and the use of internal fellowship resources for these tasks. Jack informed everyone that the Interim Committee approved \$15,000 for the Multi-National Development Forum and that some of these funds will be applied towards translations. He also shared that the Conference Digest is being translated into three or four languages. There was general agreement that we need to determine what our internal resources are for translations, so that we know what is available for our use. Some concern was expressed as to what body could coordinate the collection and utilization of this information with some of those in attendance stating they felt the WSO coordinate this task. The suggestion was made to include questions on the WSC resume forms about whether members nominated for positions had any skills, such as languages. This would assist in developing a data base of resource information. It was also suggested that lists of volunteers be developed through ASCs and groups. Some concerns were voiced regarding the accuracy of translations when using volunteers. There was the feeling that our resources can be better utilized on local level, as in the San Diego/Tijuana translations, which will assist in taking care of local needs. The difference between informational communications

(Conference Digest, reports from Boards and Committees) and recovery literature was also discussed. The final feeling was that world services needs to be more creative in using available resources.

On returning from lunch, the Internal Committee members were involved in the remainder of their meeting and were not in attendance. Also, the trustees who had previously been involved in working on the Literature Trust Document were also in a meeting. The only trustees present at the beginning of this portion of the forum were Jack B. and Greg P. with Steve B. in attendance for the latter portion of the afternoon session. The same BOD members and WSO staff were present from the morning session. Jack reopened the floor for questions.

The RSR from Indiana raised some concerns from his RSC about multi-national development. They perceive that when visits are made to other countries, an American focus is presented. He wondered about how the visitors present themselves, and how visitors are perceived (prejudicial, dictatorial). Both Jack and Greg shared that visitors have, at times, been perceived as arrogant and dictatorial. The important thing to remember during any visit is to treat each other with the same respect and consideration as we would normally, both in and out of meetings. Visitors have also been doing everything they can to prepare themselves for the cultural differences between different countries, although there are always surprises. Some sensitivity to the differences has been developed but must be maintained. It was also explained that U.S. practices are not forced upon non-U.S. communities, rather these members are encouraged to adapt the U.S. service experience (TWGSS, H&I Handbook, P.I. Handbook) to their culture. This does not encompass making any changes or adaptations to the steps, traditions or recovery literature.

The next item of discussion was questions and concerns regarding Hazeldon and the literature discount schedule. Jack asked that these questions be directed to the WSO BOD during their portion of the open forum later today. This concern led into questions about the WSO credit policy and discount policy. The RSR from Mid-Atlantic wondered if, when a line of credit is extended to a Regional Service Office, where is the point that it becomes enabling or violates the "spirit of the Seventh Tradition?" He also asked if the discount policy discriminates against those areas that can't purchase the amount needed to qualify for a discount? Bob McD. indicated that these are questions that the WSO BOD is asking itself and will also be asking the fellowship for input.

The RSR from S. CA. then asked the trustees present what their view is on becoming less of a philosophical board and more of a working group. Also what is their view of becoming "one board" and how this board would relate to WSC? Greg indicated that the BOT is fairly representative of the fellowship with a variety of views, both positive and negative, so that there is not a unified viewpoint on this question. The S. CA. RSR then asked if the BOT could assume more of an oversight role by developing position papers, etc? Jack reminded the group that the BOT has permission from the WSC to write and distribute position papers as long as these papers have a 2/3 approval from all the BOT members. He also

indicated there is a wide range of opinions on the one-board concept and the relationship of the BOT to conference committees. Greg related that most of the impetus for change in the role of the BOT is coming from the WSC, not internally. Steve B. related that the BOT is only doing what is acceptable and demanded by the WSC. He also is reticent to give an opinion that could be supported by the entire BOT due to the divergence of opinions by trustees.

The open forum was closed at 2:40 P.M. to allow the members to attend the WSC open forum.

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