

World Service Conference Report

Report from a Conference Participant for the March 1997 Conference Agenda Report

The following is a memo from the WSC Administrative Committee that was sent to conference participants on April 15, 1997. Two papers from a conference participant are included following the memo.

To World Service Conference Participants

As the *1997 Conference Agenda Report* was being prepared, several discussions took place between members of the WSC Administrative Committee and the RSR from the California Inland Region concerning Motion #17 in the *1997 CAR* and the region's intent for the motion. Included in the discussions were the region's opinion about the RSR only voting issue and also the inclusion of regional pro arguments along with their motions and intents in the *CAR*. These discussions resulted in an agreement that their motion and intent would be printed in the *CAR*, and that opinion papers about the specific issues, if written and submitted, would be printed in the *March Conference Report*.

Two papers were submitted by the region and received at WSO. Unfortunately, an error was made in the placement of the two Issue papers in the *March Conference Report*. Regrettably, the papers were published in the regional report section of the *Conference Report* instead of immediately following the committee and board reports. Even though the regional report section is one of four sections that comprise the *March Conference Report*, we realize that these papers might easily be overlooked where they were placed, and we are sending them to you for your convenience.

We are committed to ensuring that regions have access to the *Conference Report*. We regret this error and any inconvenience it has caused to the California Inland Region or other conference participants.

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WHY REGIONAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES ONLY...

There is a motion (#17) being presented to the World Service Conference that will change the voting policies of future conferences. This motion is being made by a region that is representing the conscience of the Areas that are representing the Groups they serve. This is the embodiment of the First Concept. The motion that will be before you at the 1997 World Service Conference states, "To create a World Service Conference where voting is conducted by Regional Service Representatives only." This motion intends to put the decision making process of Narcotics Anonymous into the hands of the groups, *as represented by the Area Service Representatives, as represented by Regional Service Representatives (RSRs)*. These trusted servants attend meetings and Area Service Committees within their own regions. The World Service Conference boards and committees do not have this same intimate relationship to groups.

"N.A. service is a cooperative effort of trusted servants receiving guidance from *the Groups*, not a rule enforced by a *governing body* (Twelfth Concept, from Twelve Concepts of N.A. Service, page 28)." The group conscience is the foundation for all guidance within the service structure of Narcotics Anonymous. If the group conscience is carried from the groups to the Area, and the Area conscience to the Region, then RSRs carry the Group Conscience to the World Service Conference. When it concerns *new business* who will know the preferences of their groups and what their needs are better than their elected RSRs. A structure based on this foundation can only be one of service, and not government.

"Most projects depend as much on ideas, information, *conscience*, and members time and willingness as they do on money...In responsibly planning our service efforts, we must consider the total resource picture, not just our finances...In setting priorities we may be tempted to look only at our own needs tightly holding on to funds, spending money only on our own projects, and neglecting our role in providing needed funds to *all* levels of service (Eleventh Concept from Twelve concepts for NA Service, page 25)." When voting on motions before the World Service Conference, the RSRs are capable of looking at the big picture and making responsible decisions. The groups as represented by the Regional Service Representatives are Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

"Together. our groups have created a service structure to meet their common needs and help them fulfill their common purpose. The effectiveness of the service structure depends on the continued unity of the NA groups and their continued support and direction (Eight Concept, from the Twelve Concepts for NA Service, page 17)." The unity of the groups is of utmost importance. Without the unity of the groups, the NA Service structure crumbles. The RSRs are able to communicate the needs of the individual groups and maintain the unity called for in the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts.

"All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for the body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision making process (Seventh Concept from the Twelve Concepts for NA Service)." This does not state that everyone votes. The world level boards and committees involved have many arenas for expressing their views and opinions: the *Conference Report*, the *Newsline*, articles in the *N.A. Way*, and the *Conference*

Agenda Report, and regular reports to the conference. The Groups' main area for expressing their concerns and conscience is through vote of the elected Regional Service Representatives; the Groups, through their regions, do not even have an opportunity to include rationale with their motions in the *Conference Agenda Report*.

"Because the groups have created the service structure, they have final authority over all its affairs...they also provide direction to the service structure...The most important resource contributed to the service structure by an NA group is almost exclusively spiritual: its ideas and its conscience... the groups provide the ideas and direction needed to guide the service structure in fulfilling its responsibilities (Second Concept, from Twelve Concepts for NA Service, pages 4-5)." The Groups have final authority, this seems exceedingly clear. The RSRs who were elected through the Group, Area, and Regional votes of conscience, voice the ideas and conscience of the Groups.

"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 Second Tradition)." The Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees, the Administrative Committee, and all other World Service boards and committees are Narcotics Anonymous Trusted Servants-they do not govern. The direction given by the Regional Service Representative, who has been entrusted with a vote of confidence to make decisions on behalf of the Groups who elected them, should to be the guiding force for World level decisions. In this way, the spirit of the Second Tradition is more closely followed. The Group Conscience, not the individual's conscience is the foundation for N.A. decisions as they affect N.A. as a whole.

Written and conscientized by
the California Inland Regional Service Committee
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February 14, 1997

Is the Tail Wagging the Dog?

Greetings from the desert. The California Inland Region conscientized and submitted a motion to the '97 World Service Conference (WSC). We are submitting this issue paper to the March *Conference Report*. We hope to spark more conversation on treatment of regional motions in the *Conference Agenda Report (CAR)*. We are concerned about what happened to our motion (# 17), the attitude of the WSC Administrative Committee on this issue, and the role of the WSC boards and committees concerning regional motions.

When the California Inland Region submitted a motion for consideration at the '97 WSC, we sent an intent that actually explained what our intent is. The WSC Administrative Committee (Admin) sent a letter that stated we needed to keep our intent short. We received further communication that Admin would not include our intent as written with our motion in the *Conference Agenda Report (CAR)*. They felt our intent was a pro argument and there is nothing in the *Temporary Working Guide To Our Service Structure* to support our request. If we insisted on that intent our motion would not be included in the *CAR*. One of the suggestions Admin made was to submit a request to them to include our intent as written and explain the rationale for why the protocol be changed to meet our request. We complied and our request was denied with no comment on the rationale submitted.

We realize that not everyone thinks regions should be allowed to even make motions much less speak to the reasons they are being proposed. Admin states "The Administrative Committee feels that a single region alone should not have the ability to move the fellowship into action, for such *individualism* both dilutes the purpose of the WSC and its committees and boards, as well as minimizes the principle of unity found in our first and Fourth Traditions (November 1996, *Conference Report*, page 2)." We feel that statement is divisive. Such an "us and them" statement brings up some troubling questions. Is the WSC's purpose to serve the groups or does it serve the WSC's boards and committees? How can the groups speaking through their regions minimize unity? How many (if any) regions will it take to move World Services? Are not the groups Narcotics Anonymous as a whole? Are we really willing to turn our service structure upside-down? Should the groups and their Regional Service Representatives be second class participants in a service body that was set up to serve them, unable to make motions on behalf of their groups? We feel with statements such as this coming from *our* trusted servants, and the major changes being proposed to our service structure, it is vital that the regions that represent the groups make the most informed and educated group conscience possible.

CIRNA felt that, after carefully examining both the '96 and '97 *Conference Agenda Reports* the reason behind our request becomes apparent. The various WSC boards and committees including Admin, stated their opinions on the regional motions submitted to the Conference. Their opinions in the *CAR* were widely distributed to the fellowship. On several motions more than one committee commented, and they did not limit themselves to only one or two lines.

In the 96 *CAR* the WSC boards and committees submitted 12 motions and the resolutions. There were 14 pages of pro arguments of why they were submitting their motions. The regions also submitted 12 motions. There were only approximately 20 lines of text that stated the intent of the motions. The WSC boards and committees made 24 recommendations using approximately 148 lines of text. On the regional motions there was only one recommendation to approve, 22 to disapprove and 1 no recommendation. The Policy Committee recommended to approve motion 16.

In the '97 *CAR* the WSC boards and committees submitted 15 motions with 11 1/2 pages of pro arguments. The regions submitted 18 motions with approximately 42 lines of intent. The WSC Boards and committees make 66 recommendations using approximately 198 lines of argument. There are 3 recommendations to approve, 24 to reject, 30 to commit to the Transition Group, 3 to commit to other committees, and 6 no recommendations.

Most of the WSC boards and committees' opinions were to not approve. Are not such statements a con argument? If the recommendations from the WSC boards and committees are con to a motion, who speaks pro? One of the explanations now is that the regions are attempting to "micro-manage" the Transition Group. Will the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship be allowed to give concrete direction to the Transition Group? The members of our fellowship, reading the *CAR* will notice one or more W SC boards and committees recommending to not approve a regional motion. Conversely there is not a real explanation why the motion is being submitted or what it hopes to accomplish. The average member is left with very inadequate information to develop an informed group conscience. Is it left to an area service representative or a group service representative to explain a pro to a motion they may not understand?

We want to know what the WSC boards and committees feel about the regional motions being submitted. We value their experience and opinions. That being said, without more information on why the regional motions are being submitted, a balanced and informed group conscience is not possible. Should the regions who have worked on and conscientized the motion involved not be given equal opportunity to voice their opinions? Can one or two sentences really equal up to several paragraphs written by the different WSC boards and committees?

The region that makes the motion would be the natural choice to speak pro for it. They could explain what they hoped to accomplish and why they felt it was necessary. It was suggested that we send our intent to all the regions. To really expect that that it would be distributed to the fellowship as widely as the *CAR*, or be taken as seriously, we feel is unrealistic. We realize that we have barely touched on several complicated issues in this paper. Our intent is to generate discussion. The California Inland Region welcomes any comments from the fellowship on this issue. Thank you for considering the issues involved.

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and conscientized by**

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