

## THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

The final part of our service structure is the World Service Conference (WSC). It is the nerve center, the brain, of our fellowship. Our conference is the one time each year when all our service branches come together, forming the complete N.A. tree. Unlike all other branches of N.A. service, the Conference is not an entity; it is an event, the coming together. In the spring of each year the Regional Service Delegates, the Trustees of the World Service Board, and the manager and directors of the World Service Office meet to discuss questions of significance to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

The conference itself can last up to a week; however, the planning and implementation associated with the conference is a year-round proposition. The WSO is responsible for the administration of the conference itself. The Trustees, and directors who attend the WSC, must spend time in preparation: studying problems to be discussed and gathering information upon which decisions can be based. Each delegate must be knowledgeable about the needs and feelings of his region, and be prepared to contribute to the conference.

The conference usually begins with an opening meeting which includes opening ceremonies, an overview of topics to be presented, and a review of the meaning and effect of the Twelve Traditions.

From this general meeting the conference splits up into eight committees at which all suggestions, questions, and problems which have been submitted are discussed. These topics can include anything of major importance to N.A. as a whole.

These committees include: the literature committee, finance committee, World Service Office Committee, World Service Board Committee, public relations committee, institutions committee, conference report committee, and the Conference Planning Committee. Each delegate serves on one committee; each committee contains at least one trustee; and those committees which have equivalents in the WSO or WSB meet in conjunction with them. The purposes of the committees are to discuss all input within their scope; resolve items which do not require major policy decisions; and prepare resolutions for policy items. These resolutions are designed to occupy as little general meeting time as possible, and include a simple statement of the resolution, arguments for and against, and the facts which support these arguments.

After the agenda for the general meeting has been prepared from resolutions gathered from the committees, all conference members get together as a body once again. At this general meeting each resolution is presented and considered. Some resolutions can be acted upon by the conference and some must be taken back to each Region, Area, and Group for group conscience decisions.

The World Service Conference does not speak for N.A. as a whole. The voice of N.A. as a whole can only come from fellowship-wide group conscience. However, the conference can, because of our service structure, initiate action which will benefit all members.

Once the conference has considered all resolutions and decided which required group conscience votes and which were within the realm of conference action, the committees meet once again to plan for the implementation of the conference resolutions. The committees decide which branch--the WSO, the WSB, or the RSC's--can take most effective action. Based on these decisions, directives are drafted and submitted for final approval.

Then, finally, all conference members meet together once again for the closing meeting. At this time the directives are approved and the closing ceremonies take place.

It sounds like the World Service Conference has a lot of power . . . this isn't true. All conference matters are dealt with in strict accordance with our Traditions and the Traditions clearly define the powers of the Conference; each Conference member is a trusted servant and has shown an understanding of our traditions; and all items discussed in conference originate within the fellowship. Due to its very nature, the Conference is the servant of the fellowship.

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Everything that occurs in the course of N.A. service must be motivated by



17

the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. It was for this reason that we began this work. We must always remember that as individual members, groups and service committees we are not, and should never be, in competition with each other. We work separately and together to help the newcomer and for our common good. We have learned, painfully, that internal strife cripples our fellowship; it prevents us from providing the services necessary for growth.

It is probably obvious to you that many of the responsibilities and functions, which we have mentioned, just aren't getting done today. It has not been our intent to condemn the good work which has been done and is being done. Rather, we hope to clarify what needs to be done so that we can provide better service. The service structure of Narcotics Anonymous, as we have described it, does not exist in N.A. today. It is an ideal towards which we can strive, and in so doing, make recovery available to a greater number of addicts.