

San Diego-Imperial Area 08
Delegate's Report
July 20, 2017

As our Area Committee Meeting prepares to take its inventory and has formed an ad hoc committee to review its Structure & Guidelines (S&G), I have been considering the Operating Principles of the San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly. Our operating principles are Concept XII, which is also Article 12 of the Conference Charter except — our area removed the words “plus an ample Reserve” from Concept XII. An examination of how well our area aligns its guidelines to the six warranties (guarantees) of the Conference is, in my opinion, the most significant examination we can make of our practice of the Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The reason an examination of how well our area aligns its practices to Concept XII is found on page 60 of *Twelve Concepts for World Service* where we learn that Article 12 (Concept XII) is “in a class by itself.”

An amendment or a cancellation of any of its vital Warranties would require the written consent of three-quarters of all the directory-listed A.A. groups who would actually vote on any such proposals, and the considerable time of six months is allowed for careful deliberation. Although changes in the Warranties of Article 12 thus have been made difficult, they have not been made impossible.

The text of the essay states that setting the requirements for any change to Article 12/Concept XII indicates it is ranked “as important to AA’s world services as our Traditions are to AA as a whole.” (*Twelve Concepts for World Service*, page 61.)

Below, I have list the six warranties along with one or two key points I took away from reading them on this pass through them. I urge you to review them and discuss them with your GSRs so they can literally get the feel for what we are doing at assemblies.

Warranty One: “The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power.”

On page 62, Bill states that he feels he has explained the reasons why the Conference can never have any dangerous degree of human power. He says that the sort of authority and power which it cannot be without is “the spiritual power which flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish, and dedicated A.A. servants.” These are the ones who lead by example.

Warranty Two: “Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.”

Bill does a great job of mentioning the same objections and long-standing blocks toward self-support. He points out that the large amounts of time we take from business hours to do 12-Step work actually equates to a huge sum of money. He states our contrast in actions by saying, “But when it comes to the actual spending of cash, particularly for A.A. service overhead, many of us are apt to turn a bit reluctant.” (Page 63) Bill then takes great care in explaining the role of the Reserve Fund in maintaining our world services.

Warranty Three: “None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others.”

This warranty is directly related to the Right of Participation. I believe the respect for this warranty is the reason why when any of us have made an inquiry to GSO on a specific matter, we receive a response that only provides examples of the application of Tradition, Concept, or principle to a spread of specific situations. We are never told what to do or what is the right decision. This position of staying out of a position of authority runs constant through allowing an individual the freedom to understand if s/he is an alcoholic, to decide if s/he is a member, to take or not take the Steps, to respect and comply with AA Tradition, as well as whether or not to serve. The examination of unqualified authority is key to service at all levels especially on all our committees and when we develop guidelines that limit or define future decisions.

Warranty Four: “That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.”

This warranty insures that we will debate issues in order to learn and understand all available information and gain more than a simple majority. Bill points out there is a practical and spiritual aspect to the process of obtaining substantial unanimity. I urge you to take a look at Area 8’s document ***How We Do Business***. Make note of the decision processes that require substantial unanimity versus those that need only a majority vote.

Warranty Five: “That no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.”

Because we have already established in Warranty Three the need to greatly respect personal freedom by staying out of a position of authority, it follows that we never exercise punishment of any kind on anyone for a “wrong” decision. This is especially important as we must always respect both personal and group autonomy. On page 68, though, Bill does present a thoughtful reason.

Because our General Service Conference represents us all, this body is especially charged with the duty of setting the highest possible standard with respect to these attitudes of no punishments and no public controversy. The Conference will have to do more than just represent these principles; it will frequently have to apply them to specific situations. And, at times, the Conference will need to take certain protective actions, especially in the area of Tradition violations. This action, however, never need be punitively or aggressively controversial at the public level.

Warranty Six: “That though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in action and in spirit.”

The Warranties provide a significant measure for setting guidelines through which we work together. They work to maintain our society stays in movement rather than tie its own hands with rules. Insuring Alcoholics Anonymous remains in motion and maintains an openness rather than strict adherence is, in my opinion, walking the walk of practicing these principles in all our affairs. This is the challenge to us as trusted servants and is best expressed in the text explaining Warranty Six on pages 72-73:

Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of the Alcoholics Anonymous. May our General Service Conference be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty.

To a man, we of A.A. believe that our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live—the freedom in which we have our being.

I have found the freedom to grow in my work in the Steps. I have become available to **respond** rather than **react** to the changes that move my life. This availability requires that I be armed with certain facts about myself to work Step 10 (which I have learned by carefully working Steps 1-9), taking my questions on what my next thoughts and actions are to be into Step 11, and then begin practicing these principles in all my affairs with the trust that my thoughts and actions are being guided by a power greater than me. The establishment of Concepts XII indicates to me that the practice of these key principles in all the affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous is vital to the ability of our service structure to respond rather than react to the changing needs of our groups for now and in the future.