

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

II. Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

(A) Review Trustee's Committee Report regarding LinkedIn as a platform for reaching professionals

Preface: The CPC committee has the responsibility of suggesting to the Conference such policies and recommending such activities as may help:

1. Further A.A.'s primary purpose of carrying the message to the sick alcoholic through sharing information about the A.A. program with those professional groups and individuals who have contact with alcoholics.
2. Further mutual understanding and cooperation between our Fellowship and others concerned about the problem of alcoholism and help for the alcoholic.

Background: *At the Conference last year, the 2017 Conference CPC committee discussed a proposal to develop an A.A. LinkedIn page as a platform for reaching professionals. The 2017 CPC Conference Committee requested that the Trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities continue to explore establishing a presence on LinkedIn as a tool for C.P.C. efforts. The 2017 CPC Conference committee requested that the trustees develop a full report that includes a complete exploration of all aspects of this social media tool, and, if feasible within our Traditions, provide an implementation plan to the 2018 Conference that addresses the overall implications of such a presence, including sample content and estimates for implementation cost and maintenance.*

Summary of Full Report: From the very beginning, A.A.'s co-founders set good examples of how to cooperate with nonalcoholic professionals to help alcoholics. Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) helps to carry the message of A.A. by providing information about Alcoholics Anonymous to those who have contact with alcoholics through their profession. This group includes health care professionals, educators, members of the clergy, lawyers, social workers, union leaders, and industrial managers, government officials, as well as those working in the field of alcoholism.

There is a continuing twelfth step need to reach professionals where they are, and on platforms they frequent, to inform professionals about what A.A. is, and to remind them of our presence. An official A.A. presence would raise A.A.'s profile and increase the visibility of our message to professionals who come into contact with potential alcoholics.

About LinkedIn: According to the LinkedIn site, "LinkedIn is the largest global community of business professionals. They come to LinkedIn with purpose and consume a range of professional content. This includes industry news, expert advice, professional learning, peer insights, and recommendations. This is a very different mindset and intent from other social media platforms."

Relevant LinkedIn Statistics for reaching professionals:

- Total number of users (476 million)
- Percentage who use LinkedIn daily (40%).
- Specific professionals include: 138,055 Nurse Practitioners, 90,522 Psychotherapists, 4,443 Parole Board Members, 38,160 Addiction Medicine Specialists, 49,754 Probation Officers. There are also broader classifications encompassing hundreds of thousands of professionals who come in contact with alcoholics.
- There are also professional organizations such as: The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs with 253,840 followers and the Society of Human Resource Management with 231,454 followers

The full report recommends that Alcoholics Anonymous implement a "Company Page" on LinkedIn to enhance A.A.'s cooperation with the professional community:

- It would offer another digital resource in addition to A.A.'s website where professionals could find accurate information about A.A.

- It would broaden the reach of a bout A.A. our newsletter for professionals
- It could offer a venue for our professional friends to recommend us which is significant given the impact of peer to peer communication
- It could reinforce the continuing relevance and effectiveness of our A.A. Program.

Implementation Plan Details Addressing Traditions Concerns:

The recommended plan for a LinkedIn page as a platform for reaching professionals has been designed to insure it will NOT violate A.A.'s traditions of anonymity, affiliation, or promotion. Comments can be disabled on LinkedIn pages and posts. Anonymity can and will be protected. "Promoted content" - third party ads -- cannot be eliminated and generally appears on the far-right column of pages. However, the majority opinion of the Trustees' subcommittee is that professionals on LinkedIn have enough familiarity with digital media to recognize that promoted content is NOT affiliated with the "owner" of the page. The majority also holds that a presence on LinkedIn will not conflict with Tradition 11. To quote one member, "While some may say this is promotion, it appears instead to be moving from invisibility to the possibility of attraction. To be attracted, people need to see us and have a sense of what we are."

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. Do your A.A. Group members think LinkedIn is a suitable platform in which information about A.A. can be brought to professionals who meet alcoholics? Why or why not? And if not, what helpful suggestions do you have for reaching professionals?
2. Should the Conference approve implementation of a LinkedIn page for reaching professionals if feasible within our traditions? Why or why not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

III. Corrections

A. Consider request to create a pamphlet for inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration.

Background: The purpose of the Conference Corrections Committee is to suggest to the Conference such policies and recommending such activities as may help coordinate the work of individual A.A. members and groups who are interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics behind the walls, and to set up means of smoothing the way from the facility to the larger A.A. community through prerelease contacts. This proposal addresses the need for development of a pamphlet for sober alcoholic inmates prior to being released after long term incarceration. The revised pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" gives very little emphasis on the concerns of Inmates being released. The proposal to create a pamphlet for sober alcoholic inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration identifies multiple resources in existing A.A. pamphlets and literature which may be drawn upon and used to create the pamphlet targeting this specific need, including:

- a. Flyer "Prerelease Contact Information" - For A.A.'s on the inside, available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website
- b. Two samples G.S.O. letters to inmates who are soon to be released
- c. Pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in the Cell", available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. Have any of your A.A. Group members participated in "Bridging the Gap" programs, district or area Corrections Committees or with "Hospitals and Institutions" service efforts to help sober incarcerated alcoholics make the transition from penal institution to participation in A.A. on the outside? What is their experience?
2. Do the members in your A.A. Group think there is a need for the Fellowship to provide materials and resources to sober alcoholic inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration? Why or why not?
3. Should the Conference create a pamphlet for sober alcoholic inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration? Why or why not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

IV. Finance

A. Consider developing a method to standardize increases to the limits on voluntary individual contributions and bequests to the General Service Board.

Background: A.A. is self-supporting and does not accept outside contributions. There is no limit on the amount an A.A. group or A.A. service organization can contribute to the General Service Office (GSO). However, in keeping with A.A.'s tradition of avoiding "perilous wealth or power" and the undue influence that could come from dependence on a wealthy class of individual donors, A.A. limits the yearly contributions of its individual members. From the 63rd General Service Conference Keynote Address:

"We have, since the earliest days of A.A., relied on our publishing operations to supplement the financial support provided by our membership, allowing us to maintain our world services and to have a Reserve Fund adequate to assure [A.A.'s] financial health and stability. Although we continue to sell many printed Big Books each year, and have entered the world of digital publishing, the hard reality appears to be that, going forward, we are going to be relying more and more on our Seventh Tradition contributions to meet our financial needs."

The last time GSO raised the voluntary individual contribution limit was in 2007. The limit was raised from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Historically speaking this limitation has been changed on an average of every eight years.

History of increases to the individual contribution limit by GSO:

1957 \$100	1967 \$200	1972 \$300	1979 \$500
1986 \$1,000	1999 \$2,000	2007 \$3,000	

The last time GSO raised the voluntary individual contribution limit (a donation received from the will of a deceased A.A. member) was in 2012. The limit was raised from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Historically speaking this limitation has been changed as follows:

History of increases to the limit by the GSO of donations by bequest:

1957 \$100	1967 \$200	1972 \$300	1979 \$500
1986 \$1,000	1999 \$2,000	2007 \$3,000	2012 \$5,000

The current proposal seeks to tie voluntary contribution limits to some standard annual adjustment to allow the Finance Committee more discussion time for other items, while ensuring that contribution limits keep pace with inflation.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. Should A.A. tie voluntary contribution limits to some standard annual adjustment to ensure that contribution limits keep pace with inflation? Why or Why Not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

V. Grapevine/ La Viña

(C) Review report on 2004 Conference Advisory Action on Outside Sales

Background: The immense spiritual value of Grapevine and La Viña in connecting us to each other and carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous through shared experience is widely recognized by our entire Fellowship -- yet less than one in twenty A.A. members subscribe. The A.A. Grapevine does not accept contributions and is supported solely by subscriptions and sales of Grapevine literature. Currently, due to the 2004 Conference Advisory Action, Grapevine and La Viña magazine subscriptions are restricted to sales by A.A. Grapevine Inc. and by trusted A.A. Servants directly. The 2017 Conference Grapevine Committee agreed that the magazines are important Twelfth Step tools. Recognizing that Grapevine and La Viña cannot accept contributions and are self-supporting only through subscriptions and sales of books and other items, it was suggested that the Grapevine Board create a plan for outside sales of subscriptions, books and other items and report back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Grapevine.

It is not new information that A.A. Grapevine has seen steady declines in magazine subscriptions over the past fifteen years in parallel with industry trends. Although paid subscription levels have remained steady over the past few years, thanks in part to the expansion of Grapevine and La Viña digital sales and apps, the 2004 Advisory Action, as written, limits how Grapevine can think about solutions, limits creative thinking and denies possible opportunities for introducing the message of A.A. to larger and more diverse populations. If A.A. Grapevine can only distribute to and through the Fellowship, then only local outreach is available, and the possibilities of larger national outreach are cut off. The Grapevine Board recommends that Grapevine and La Viña should be wherever these publications may be useful in helping the still suffering alcoholic. Growing the Grapevine and La Viña could have significant value in helping carry the A.A. message through our unique platforms. As the Grapevine community grows, so will its ability to generate content for that community in many ways. The stories and content submitted by A.A. members represent the most recent experience of our current fellowship as a whole. This has enormous spiritual value in representing A.A. to the newcomer through the shared experience of the entire broad cross section that is A.A. throughout North America and the world.

As an example: There is no single larger consolidated audience for reaching the potential alcoholic than in A.A.'s cooperation with the medical community, and treatment centers.

In 2013 out 1,683,451 people age 12 and over admitted to treatment in the U.S. 355,366 (37.5%) were admitted for alcohol only and 276,212 (21.1%) were admitted with alcohol as their primary issue, along with a secondary drug. That's 58.6% of the total admissions having a problem with alcohol. Why wouldn't the Grapevine/La Viña sell subscriptions and literature to and through these large outside organizations that work with suffering alcoholics at a scale beyond the scope of a local Grapevine committee or group Grapevine Representative, provided the pricing and sales tactics remain uniform in all transactions for all purchasers?

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. How many members of your A.A. Group have ever read or used the Grapevine or La Viña? In what ways have you used Grapevine or La Viña? In what ways has Grapevine or La Viña benefitted your sobriety or the sobriety of a fellow alcoholic? Please share your experience.
2. Have any members of your A.A. Group ever submitted their story or letter to the Grapevine or La Viña? If so, please share your experience.
3. How many members of your A.A. Group have ever subscribed to either Grapevine or La Viña? How many members of your A.A. Group currently subscribe to either Grapevine or La Viña?
4. D. Should the 2004 Conference Advisory Action restricting Outside Sales of Grapevine or La Viña be reconsidered to give Grapevine/La Viña the freedom to explore outside sales and implement such a plan to sell Grapevine/La Viña subscriptions and literature? Why or why not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

VI. Literature

(A) - Consider proposed revisions to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous:

- 1. Request to add an appendix reflecting recognition received from the Library of Congress.**
- 2. Request to add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement.**
- 3. Request to add an endnote to Bill W.'s story acknowledging co-founder, Bob S.**

Item (1) From the July 29, 2017 meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee: The committee discussed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature a request (from Area 43, New Hampshire) to add an appendix (as Appendix 8) to Alcoholics Anonymous reflecting the 2012 Recognition received from the Library of Congress.

Background: The United States' Library of Congress, the world's largest repository of knowledge and information, published a list in June 2012 of the 88 most influential books in America. The list, entitled "Books that Shaped America," included the book Alcoholics Anonymous. Founded in 1800, the Library of Congress is the United States oldest cultural institution. Curators and experts from throughout the Library of Congress contributed their choices for "Books that shaped America." The Librarian of Congress hoped the list would prompt people to choose to read and discuss the books on the list. The list was also intended to recognize significant works that had influenced American society. The language of the proposed appendix is secondary to its message. The message and its purpose are twofold. Firstly, this appendix would help readers understand the contemporary significance of a book written in 1939 which contains language that is often thought of as dated. Secondly, like the Lasker Award, this appendix will convey to readers that the program as outlined in the Big Book does indeed work as evidenced by its recognized influence on society.

Item (2) From the October 28, 2017 meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee: The committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature a request (from District 29, Texas) to add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Background: Prior Conference Actions Regarding Proposals to Add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement to Alcoholics Anonymous

1993 - The Conference Literature committee considered a suggestion to add the Preamble to the Big Book and suggested that since most of the Preamble was taken from the foreword to the first edition of the Big Book, that no action be taken.

2011- The Conference Literature committee recommended that the A.A. Preamble be added to the front inside pages of the Big Book. This recommendation did NOT result in Conference Advisory Action (requiring a 2/3rds substantial majority vote of the Conference members):

2012 - The Conference Literature committee considered a request to add the "A.A. Preamble" to the front inside pages of the 'Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, and took no action.

Note: Proposals regarding the Responsibility Declaration pertained to changing the wording; the Conference reaffirmed to leave the Responsibility Declaration as originally published. There have been no previous requests to add the *Responsibility Declaration* to the Big Book. *The Responsibility Declaration* reads: "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible".

Item (3) From the January 27, 2018 meeting of the trustees' Literature Committee: The committee considered and agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Literature a request to add an endnote to Bill W.'s story in Alcoholics Anonymous, acknowledging co-founder, Bob S.

Background: This request came from an individual A.A. Member. Remember, a good idea for improving AA literature, policies or finances can come from anywhere and anyone within our Fellowship. Suggested endnote: "The story of A.A.'s other co-founder, Dr. Bob S., is found on page 171; "Dr. Bob's Nightmare." The requesting A.A. member writes: Since Dr. Bob is one of our beloved co-founders, perhaps a little extra effort to point out his story is well-placed.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

Item (1) – Appendix

1. Do you agree that the proposed appendix reflecting the 2012 Library of Congress Recognition of the Big Book as one of the 88 most influential books in America could help readers understand and appreciate the contemporary significance of a book written in 1939?
2. Could the appendix help convey to readers that the A.A. program as outlined in the Big Book does indeed work as evidenced by its recognized influence on society. Why or why not?
3. Should the appendix reflecting recognition received from the Library of Congress be added to the Big Book? Why or why not?

Item (2) – A.A. Preamble – Responsibility Statement

1. Does the A.A. Preamble accurately describe the A.A. Fellowship? Should it be added to the Big Book? Why or why not.
2. Are you familiar with A.A.'s Responsibility Statement? What does it mean to you? Should the Responsibility Statement be added to the Big Book? Why or why not?

Item (3) – Endnote to Bill W's story acknowledging co-founder, Bob S.

1. Do you think it would be helpful or beneficial to add the suggested endnote to Bill W.'s story in Alcoholics Anonymous, acknowledging co-founder, Bob S. Why or why not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

VI. Literature

(Q) - Consider request for the development of a new pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women alcoholics. (Note: Proposed by our neighbors: SoCal Area 5.)

Background: The Spanish-speaking woman alcoholic has been identified as an under-represented group in our Fellowship. There are many Spanish-speaking groups without alcoholic women members for newcomers to identify with. The pamphlet's purpose would be to extend the hand of A.A. to the Spanish-speaking woman alcoholic by letting her know she belongs in A.A. and that she is not alone.

While the pamphlet A.A. for the Woman addresses women alcoholics, there are issues specific to Spanish speaking women that the pamphlet does not address.

Listing but two of the many examples:

1. There is often a deep rooted cultural shame associated with being a female alcoholic in the Spanish community.
2. Because there are so few women in Spanish-speaking A.A. groups, these women often find themselves alone in the rooms.

. . . This pamphlet would be in line with other pamphlets referred to as "Third Tradition literature" whose purpose is to provide shared experience and reach out to specific groups of people to let them know that they have a place in our A.A. Fellowship. Often, the alcoholics that these pamphlets are written for do not readily find people like themselves when they first walk into our rooms. Therefore, pamphlets providing shared experience can help them to see that they belong, and that we do not have to be exactly alike to share in our common problem and common solution. A pamphlet specifically for the Spanish-speaking female newcomer would greatly help in carrying the message to these alcoholics, especially when no other women are present to welcome them, and hopefully help them to stay.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. Do you remember your first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous? Were you made to feel welcome? Were you able to find others in the room like yourself with whom you could identify? If your answer to these questions is yes, can you put yourself in another's shoes and imagine how it would be for you if the answer was no?
2. Should the Conference develop a new pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women alcoholics? Why or why not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

VI. Literature

(N) - Consider request for the development of a new book combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with Twelve Concepts for World Service. (Note: Proposed by our neighbors: SoCal Area 5.)

Background: An astounding number of our A.A. groups and members have no idea whatsoever about the Twelve Concepts for World Service, A.A. General Service, nor the work of the General Service Office, nor the Conference process that supports and unites and guides our Fellowship, provides the services required to carry the message of A.A. and the services promoting the health, growth and well-being of all A.A. groups and members. Nor do they have any idea that A.A.'s Twelve Concepts provide that the A.A. groups play an integral part and are ultimately responsible for the guidance of our Fellowship.

This suggestion for a new book of 36 Principles is that it be virtually identical to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, except that at the point where the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions ends, the new book would continue with the contents of the book Twelve Concepts for World Service. This proposal does not suggest in any way that the original "Twelve and Twelve" or any other current books be replaced or discontinued.

This agenda item has been proposed before by Area 05 and Area 72 (Western Washington) for the 65th General Service Conference. At the 65th Conference, the Literature Committee took no action, explaining in their Committee Considerations that: "The committee reviewed a suggestion to produce a book combining "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" with the "Twelve Concepts for World Service" and took no action. The committee noted that the Twelve Concepts for World Service are suitably placed with The A.A. Service Manual and in a stand-alone volume."

While the Twelve Concepts for World Service are indeed suitably placed with the A.A. Service Manual and in a stand-alone volume, it would also provide great benefit and access to our entire Fellowship to have them available in the proposed new volume, and that if it were published, the new volume would perhaps become the most suitable place for the Twelve Concepts as a book that would include Bill Wilson's essays on all of A.A.'s 36 Principles. The new book would expose the spiritual principles of the Twelve Concepts to a wider range of A.A. members, including many long-timers, and generate more participation in General Service and interest in the stewardship, growth and common welfare of our Great Fellowship.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. The Twelve Steps guide our Legacy of Recovery, the Twelve Traditions guide our Legacy of Unity, and the Twelve Concepts guide our Legacy of Service. Have you heard of the Twelve Concepts for World Service? Are you familiar with the Twelve Concepts of World Service? Would making the spiritual principles of the Twelve Concepts accessible to a wider range of A.A. members provide any benefit to the health and welfare of our Fellowship?
2. Should the Conference develop a new book of 36 Principles by combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with Twelve Concepts for World Service? Why or why not?

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

VI. Literature

(B) Consider request that A.A. (U.S./Canada) publish “The God Word” (a pamphlet currently published by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, UK).

(C) Consider request for the development of a pamphlet for atheist and agnostic A.A. Members.

(B) – “The God Word”

Background: The trustees' Literature Committee has forwarded a request from both an area in Florida and a group in Kansas to publish or adapt “The God Word” (a pamphlet currently published by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Great Britain).

The area's rationale states: “There is a pamphlet that was approved by the General Service Conference of Great Britain Titled, ‘*The “God” Word*,’ which consists of stories by A.A. members who identify as atheist or agnostic. We would like to have the General Service Conference in North America Consider publishing this pamphlet to be made available for A.A. members in the United States and Canada. The group's rationale states “We would like to include [the pamphlet] in our newcomer's packets, but it is difficult and expensive to order from the U.K. The following is the link to the God Word pamphlet: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/download/1/Library/Documents/Literature/Downloads/326/TheGodWord.pdf>

I understand there is a history of the General Service Conference adopting other pamphlets from Great Britain, and we believe this pamphlet will fill a need among the general membership of Alcoholics Anonymous in North America.”

(C) – Pamphlet for atheist and agnostic A.A. members

Background: The trustees' Literature Committee forwarded a request from Area 93 in California and an individual member or the development of a pamphlet for atheist and agnostic members. The area's request states, “This would not be a rewrite of the Spirituality Many Paths pamphlet, but a brand-new pamphlet.” The full background material contains supportive rationale from Area 93, including:

- The Spirituality Many Paths pamphlet was a good start but that it had detoured from the original intent. The original intention was a pamphlet for the Atheist/Agnostic members and newcomers who had a big problem with “the God thing”.
- The delisting and refusal to list Atheist/Agnostic meetings in certain Central Office directories is not what A.A. is all about -- especially since we are “spiritual and not religious”. The Toronto lawsuit is a prime example of Central Offices doing something that really goes against the principles of The Traditions.
- An A.A. pamphlet like this would go a long way to making sure that A.A. would have something to affirm that we are in fact spiritual and not religious.
- This literature would also go a long way to let those newcomers who come to A.A. that their belief or lack of belief is very much okay, and they are welcome in A.A.

A letter submitted by an A.A. member is included in the full background material.

Some of the points raised:

- The pamphlet “Many Paths to Spirituality,” while addressing some of the issues atheists and agnostics experience when first encountering A. A., still leaves a lot to be desired. First, no atheist or agnostic would pick up (or click on aa.org website) a pamphlet entitled, “Many Paths to Spirituality,” because to an atheist or an agnostic, “spirituality” and “religion” are the same thing
- Creating a pamphlet specifically for atheists and agnostics would go a long way to dispel the misconception that A.A. is a religious institution and would increase the chances that an alcoholic atheist or agnostic will be able to find a path to sobriety.

The background material also includes a reference to past Conference Advisory Actions regarding the development of the Conference-approved pamphlet “Many Paths to Spirituality” which opens with Bill W's

wonderfully comprehensive statement of AA's spirit of tolerance, respect and inclusion: "Newcomers are approaching AA at the rate of tens of thousands yearly. They represent almost every belief and attitude imaginable. We have atheists and agnostics. We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion. In AA we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering. Consequently, the full individual liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy whatever should be a first consideration for us all. Let us not, therefore, pressure anyone with our individual or even our collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way toward the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of AA, so long as he or she so declares."

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. One of AA's very first "group conscience" was reached between Bill W and Jim B with the literary employment of such terms as "power greater than ourselves," later leading to the adoption of AA's Third Tradition: "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."
2. Do you think one's religious affiliation, or lack of it; one's philosophical preferences, or none; one's theistic, or agnostic, or atheistic, or pantheistic, or virtually any relatively held notion or concept of a power greater than ourselves bear any relevance on one's membership in AA's Fellowship of the Spirit? Share and explain.
3. In your opinion and experience, is A.A. sufficiently welcoming to atheists or agnostics or can A.A. do more to emphasize A.A.'s enduring foundational principle of flexibility and acceptance of differing viewpoints on spiritual matters? Share and explain.
4. Should the Conference publish or adapt "The God Word" pamphlet? Why or why not?
5. Should the Conference develop a pamphlet for the atheist and agnostic A.A. member? Why or why not?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

VIII. Public Information

(H) Review the 2017 trustees' Public Information Committee Report on use of Google AdWords and Google Grants to carry the A.A. message.

Background: AA's Comprehensive Media Plan

In 2012, the Trustees adopted a comprehensive media plan that established the overall principles behind our Public Information outreach:

- I. Goal: Increase awareness of what A.A. is and what A.A. can and cannot do, in ways that are measurable and undergo regular review and revision, as appropriate, so that any alcoholic in need can find A.A.
- II. Target Audiences: Individuals concerned about their drinking, professionals who might interact with alcoholics, media professionals, A.A. members involved in Public Information, and the public.
- III. IMessage: "If alcohol is a problem for you, contact A.A. It works." The Plan states: In the spirit of keeping it simple, A.A. should not use social media platforms for promotion. In our current platforms, we do not promote A.A. as the end-all be-all cure-all and we find no reason to start doing that on the internet or in social media. As with our current platforms, we would share information about what A.A. is and isn't and about what A.A. resources are available to help the still suffering alcoholic. As always, the content of our message is the key to ensuring that our communication is appropriate and respectful of all our Traditions.

The Comprehensive Media Plan describes how user interaction with A.A. content on internet platforms might avoid controversy, or the appearance of endorsement or affiliation, and goes on to describe in specific detail how the internet platforms may be utilized (1) while still maintaining member anonymity and (2) while avoiding the appearance of promotion and still allowing our friends to recommend us.

Background: Google AdWords and Google Grants to carry the A.A. message. In 2017, the Conference Committee on PI asked the Trustees to explore the feasibility of A.A.W.S. using Google Ad Words. The report provided as part of the background to this Agenda Item contains a comprehensive explanation of what Ad Words is and how management of Ad Words would work.

To summarize the issue, Google Ad Words advertisements will be familiar to anyone who has used the Google search engine. On Google's search page, they are the marked "Ad" sections that appear before the search results. Companies (and non-profits) can place these ads based on the keywords or key phrases used in the search, as well as the demographics and physical location of the searcher. A.A.W.S. is considering displaying information about A.A. if, for instance, someone searches for the term "stop drinking".

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. How many group members use google as a search engine on a regular basis? What turns up when you google, for example, "stop drinking"? Should a link to the Alcoholics Anonymous official website offering information and help turn up in the search results instead? Why or why not?
2. Should the Conference move forward to implement use of Google AdWords and Google Grants to better reach and carry the A.A. message to those searching for help with their drinking problem? Why or why not?

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

II. Cooperation with the Professional Community

- (B) Consider revisions to the pamphlet "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional."**
- (C) Consider revisions to the pamphlet "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous."**
- (D) Consider revisions to the pamphlet "If You Are a Professional..."**

Background - Reaching Underserved Communities - Active Armed Services & Veterans: The military has a drinking sub-culture and rank and discipline system that makes it difficult for those in the active armed services and veterans to seek and find help for their alcoholism. Hundreds of thousands of are affected.

- 2017 Advisory Actions – CPC: That the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community review the pamphlets "If You Are a Professional," "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous," and "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional," to develop text to include information for professionals who come in contact with veterans and active members of the Armed Services, including information on how to contact A.A. worldwide, and bring back draft texts to the 2018 Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community for review and approval.
-
- 2017 CPC Committee Considerations - Direction to develop service materials to aid and encourage CPC & Treatment/Accessibilities committees to reach out to professionals who come in contact with veterans and active members of the Armed Services.
-
- 2017 CPC Committee Consideration - Suggested updates of the CPC Workbook (a) to include information about carrying the A.A. message to professionals who come in contact with veterans and active members of the Armed Service.

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

X. Treatment and Accessibilities

(A) Review the trustees' committee report on Cooperation with Armed Services Exploration Strategies.

Background: The 2017 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities asked the General Service Office (GSO) to, "... continue to explore strategies to provide more effective services to alcoholics who are veterans and active members of the Armed Services and provide a progress report to the 2018 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities."

- At the July 2017 Board meeting, the trustees' committee agreed, "... to add "A.A. and the Armed Services" pamphlet to the Accessibilities Kit in the fall when all service kits are updated." The trustees' committee also asked the staff secretary to, "...compile shared experience currently on file, literature and service materials along with current experience received from the fellowship and provide a progress report at the October 2017 meeting.
- The committee also asked the staff secretary to, "... review the service kits for opportunities to include additional information on this topic and include this information in the progress report."
- A subcommittee was appointed at the October 2017 Board meeting to, "...research updating committee workbooks as well as developing service material and additional resources for the professional community, veterans, and active duty A.A. members."
- A progress report from the subcommittee was submitted to the trustees at the January 2018 Board meeting. This agenda item is asking the Conference Committee to review that report. The full report from the subcommittee can be found in the background material.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. Are you or any members of your AA group a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Services?
2. How are you or your group members carrying A.A.'s message within the context of military life, to alcoholics who are veterans and active duty members of the Armed Services?
3. If you are an A.A. member who is also a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Services, please share how the A.A. message was effectively carried to you. Within the context of military life, what barriers, if any, did you face in receiving the A.A. message? Please share any additional information you believe would be helpful.
4. Reaching Active Armed Services & Veterans – Discuss and Share - Should the Committees create additions to the C.P.C. workbook and other workbooks? Currently only two committees, C.P.C. and Treatment, include mentions of the military in their workbooks. Others could, such as Accessibilities and P.I.

5. Should A.A. develop sections to existing service pieces like Guidelines or even creating a 'military focused' Guideline?
6. Should A.A. create a Public Service Announcement focused on veterans and active duty members with the hope to draw attention and create discussion for how to carry the A.A. message to this population?
7. Should A.A. consider a national veteran's workshop similar to the National Archives Workshop or the National Corrections Conference? These were established based on widespread expressed need.
8. In your experience and opinion, is there a widespread need to effectively carry A.A.'s message within the context of military life, to alcoholics who are veterans and active duty members of the Armed Services? If so, what suggestions do you have to meet this need?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

V. Grapevine

(D) Reconsider the 2010 Advisory Action regarding La Viña.

- Focus: To achieve greater spiritual parity with the AA Grapevine by publishing La Viña in color.

Historical Background: From the 2010 Advisory Action: "After thoughtful and lengthy discussion, the Committee recommended that La Viña achieve spiritual parity with the AA Grapevine, beginning in the following manner:

- Publishing La Viña as a bimonthly, perfect-bound, black-and-white, 68-page issue at an additional estimated cost of \$21,400 per year for one year beginning in 2011 followed by a year of review and assessment in 2012. The results of this review and assessment will be brought to the 2013 Conference Committee on the A.A. Grapevine.
- Content and substance be of primary importance.
- An announcement will be published in La Viña magazine beginning immediately and throughout the trial year, encouraging increased submissions and subscriptions, moving toward the goal of being self-supporting.

Reference: (From the 2001 Advisory Action)

- That La Viña continue to be published by the AA Grapevine and supported by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship.
- That La Viña continue to be published utilizing AA Grapevine resources in order to achieve efficiencies in production and distribution.

Background: (La Viña publishing format.) La Viña will continue to be published by the AA Grapevine and supported by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship. While the format of La Viña is not a policy matter, publishing La Viña in color on "an equal basis" with the AA Grapevine is a policy matter. That is why the AA Grapevine Board felt that it was important that the requests for reconsideration of the agenda item resulting in the 2010 Advisory Action go forward to the Conference. The 68th GSC is being asked to again reconsider the 2010 Conference Advisory Action regarding La Viña, giving consideration to achieving greater spiritual parity with the AA Grapevine by publishing La Viña in color.

Color Publishing vs Black and White. Additional background is given comparing the costs of publication in black and white to 4-color printing.

- If La Viña were to begin to be published in 4-color the flat fee paid to the art director per issue would not change.
- The printer has estimated that if La Viña interior pages were to be printed in 4-color rather than black and white as they presently are, the cost per bi-monthly issue would increase by \$718.04—or just \$4,302.24 per year.

The GSO & Grapevine staff recognizes the powerful value of La Viña as a unifying force among Spanish-speaking A.A. members and as a twelfth-step tool in prisons, institutions and Spanish language communities. It was initially planned for La Viña to go 4-color in 2011. In addition, the staff fully recognizes the strong sentiment in the Spanish language AA community that La Viña is treated as the "poor sister" publication and that there is strong support of even the modest redesign of the current La Viña.

In the years since the black-and-white design update, article submissions have doubled, with an especially large jump since the update. With an equitable look, content and distribution, the highly engaged Spanish-language AA community has stepped forward to support La Viña both in art contributions and manuscript submissions.

The staff proposed that La Viña be published at its current frequency of six times per year, with perfect binding, at 64 pages, and in full color. The full color recommendation has never been implemented. While the staff understands that true equality would mean publishing La Viña 12 times per year with a comparable staff to Grapevine, the staff recommends keeping the frequency of La Viña at the more sustainable current frequency until the circulation has a chance to grow in response to the magazine improvements.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

1. "Parity" means the state or condition of being equal. What does the term "spiritual parity" mean to you?
2. How important of a consideration is it to achieve "spiritual parity" in the publication of the English Language A.A. Grapevine with the Spanish Language La Viña in relation to cost? In relation to look, attractiveness, readability and appeal? In relation to growing subscriptions, encouraging article submissions and reaching a wider audience of Spanish speaking members and alcoholics looking for help?
3. Should La Viña be published at its current frequency, with perfect binding, at 64 pages, and in full color?

NOTES:

2018 General Service Conference Agenda Questionnaire

(Your Area Delegate is interested in your thoughts on the following matters. A summary of your Home Group Members' reasoning is more valuable than a vote. In A.A. we make decisions only after much loving discussion and a thorough hearing of minority opinions. Thanks, and have fun!)

XII. Archives

(A) Review draft of proposed publication, Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951–1970.

Summary of Actions: 2017 General Service Conference Advisory Action:

- A draft or a progress report of Unity in Action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970 (working title) be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Archives for review.
- From trustees' Archives Committee minutes, July 30, 2017: The committee heard a progress report on the writing project from [A.A.W.S.] managing editor, and reviewed sample archival photographs for inclusion in the new publication. The committee also discussed the use of unpublished archival images in the book.
- From trustees' Archives Committee minutes, January 28, 2018: The committee reviewed and discussed the proposed publication [now tentatively titled] "Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970" and expressed appreciation for the work. The committee agreed to forward to the 2018 Conference Committee on Archives, the proposed publication.

Background: The never-before-collected General Service Conference talks of Bill W. provide a fresh and inspiring perspective on the history of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement and allow interested readers to read and appreciate more of his writing. The talks include important details of A.A.'s early history and later developments in the years following "A.A. Comes of Age" and the development of the General Service structure. Most of his talks (those that can be recovered and that are not wholly repetitive), as well as some key talks by important Class A trustees for historical context and perspective, are to be included in this unique collection – the first time ever in printed form.

A Word About Review of Drafts on the Conference Agenda. Drafts! The proposed draft publication "*Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970*" has now been submitted to the Conference. The draft publication will be sent only to the members of the Conference Archives committee for review. If approved by the Conference Archives committee as "ready for publication", the draft will be "reported out" to the general session of the entire Conference for vote and approval and publication. If more work is required, the draft will be sent back to the Trustees' Archives Committee and to publishing for further work and edits.

This can be frustrating for members of the Fellowship. They often wonder why they see an agenda item that says, "Review draft..." but they don't get to see the draft. There are good reasons why we proceed this way. One is that widespread distribution of drafts of material that will ultimately be copyrighted could compromise our copyrights. The other reason is that it wouldn't be helpful to the Conference committee members to have hundreds or perhaps thousands of editing suggestions from all over the Fellowship. Nevertheless, A.A. Members and A.A. Groups can provide helpful guidance to the Delegate by sharing their input about their level of enthusiasm for the proposed new publication and expectations for the message in the literature that's being developed.

Questions for Discussion and Group Feedback:

The never-before-collected General Service Conference talks of Bill W. and key talks by important Class A trustees for historical context and perspective are intended to provide A.A. Members with a fresh and inspiring view on the history of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement in the years leading up to and following “AA Comes of Age”.

1. Your level of enthusiasm for the proposed new publication. It has been several years since A.A. has published a new Conference approved book, and there has been no history book of the A.A. Movement since “Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: A Brief History of A. A.” was published in 1957. Through Bill W’s Conference talks, and the talks of Class A Trustees for historical perspective, this publication will give readers a unparalleled front row seat to the challenges and triumphs of our movement in the years that followed. **What is your level of enthusiasm and interest in such a publication?**
2. Our Great Responsibility: Please share your expectations for the message in this new piece of A.A. Literature that’s being developed. Do you expect to be informed? Do you expect to learn something new about A.A. and how it works? To be inspired? To be motivated to work with others to support and provide the services required to carry our message of hope and recovery to the millions of alcoholics we have yet to reach – to grow our movement -- and coming together to strengthen our common welfare and shape our Fellowship’s course? Please share.

NOTES: