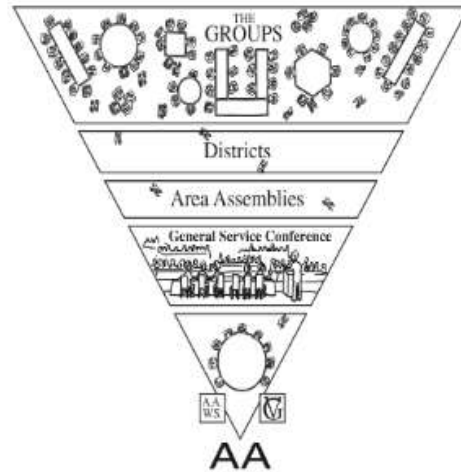
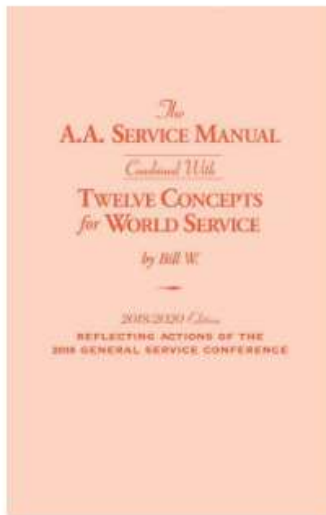


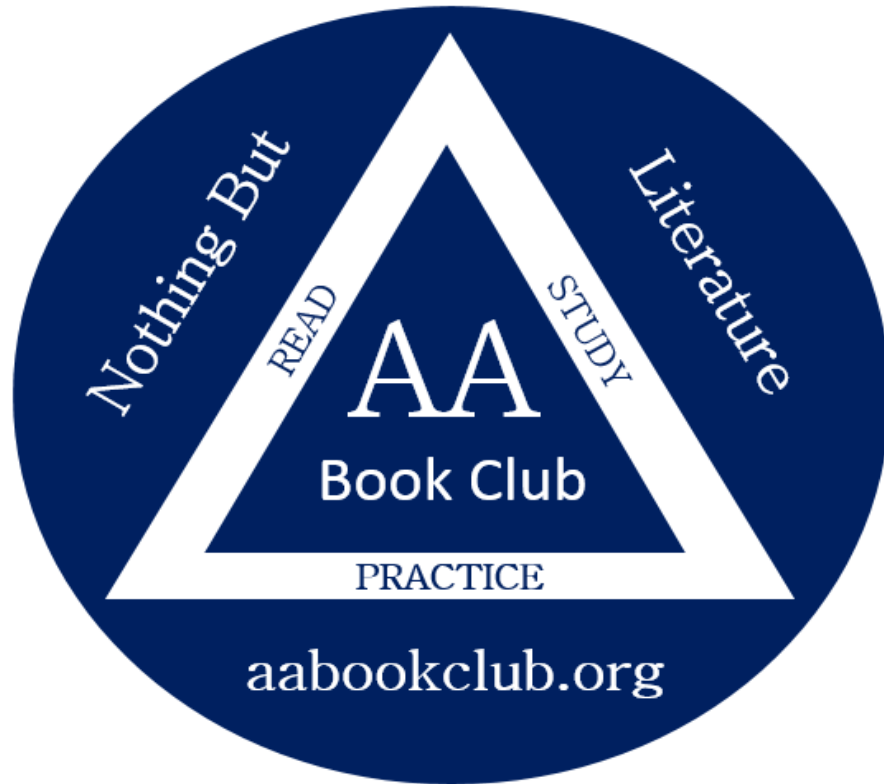
Twelve Concepts

for World Service



for ~~Dummies~~ Smart People®

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Introduction

It is often said, with some justification, that the best way to hide something from an alcoholic is to put it in the Big Book. However, if one really wants something to go unnoticed, the place to put it is in the A.A. Service Manual. Though they are now listed in the Big Book (on the last two pages!), it is to the largely unknown and unread Service Manual one must go to find the equally unknown and unread essays exploring the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

In these pages we hope to provide an introduction to the Twelve Concepts for those who are not yet familiar with them. A full and complete examination is not possible merely through writing, for these principles are not a theory, they are meant to be practiced. But we can provide a simplified (we hope not 'dumbed down') explanation of the Concepts - a Cliff's Notes version, if you will. We will start by discussing some A.A. history and the Twelve Traditions, as the former will provide some perspective and the Concepts cannot be understood without a good working knowledge of the latter. We believe that understanding the rationale and purpose behind the Twelve Concepts as a whole will make them more comprehensible individually.

The vital importance of the Steps in personal recovery is self-evident to any sober alcoholic. The Traditions, intended to promote unity of the groups which foster recovery, are perhaps not quite so deeply felt. However, they can potentially arise in any A.A. meeting as groups practice them in all their affairs, and the Traditions do sometimes apply to A.A. members' everyday lives (personal anonymity, for example).

On the other hand, The Concepts concern A.A.'s Third Legacy, service outside of A.A. groups and in the world at large. Although all are welcome to attend periodic meetings with the GSR's and delegate from their Area, various regional conferences and the annual General Service Conference meeting in New York, few do unless actively involved. The ultimate practical aim of this type of service is to help the group fulfill its primary purpose of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers, but it is largely done out of sight of the typical A.A. member. Therefore, the practical application of the Concepts appears to most A.A.'s seems as remote and hidden as the essays which explain them. There is a spiritual purpose behind the Concepts in addition to helping groups spread their message, a purpose derived from the Traditions. As Bill writes in the Twelfth Concept, the Concepts provide the Fellowship "protection against needless errors and against our very natural human temptations to wealth, prestige, power, and the like."

There was once a proposal at the yearly meeting of the General Service Conference to combine the Twelve Concepts essays in the A.A Service Manual with the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, an action which would bring all three of A.A.'s Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service together in print for the first time, and in the process increase awareness of the Concepts. Such a book, if it is ever approved, might be nicknamed the "Twelve and Twelve and Twelve."

The proceedings at these annual General Service meetings, with their committees, motions, reports and the like, may seem abstract and far removed from the original fellowship which stated, in the Forward to the first edition of its primary text, that "We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word." Such an impression could reinforce the idea that the Twelve Concepts are irrelevant to sobriety in A.A., and discourage their study. But it is important to note that the Alcoholic Foundation (precursor to the General Service Board), with its board of trustees, and an office with a full time secretary devoted to A.A. affairs, both predate the Big Book. (See A.A. Comes of Age, and Pass It On for this history.) It is thus clear that A.A. has had a service structure of sorts virtually since it was founded.

The Ninth Tradition, the only one to mention A.A. organization or structure in any way, in its modern form does state: "A.A., as such, ought never be organized;" However, the second clause explicitly permits the sort of service structure to which the Concepts apply: "... but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." The original, lesser-known Long Form of Tradition Nine (1946) even mentions trusted servants at the national level: "The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York." The seeming contradiction is resolved when we read the accompanying essay in the Twelve and Twelve. In it, we see that 'organized' is used to mean established authority and hierarchy, which are to be avoided: "Power to direct or govern is the essence of organization everywhere." **(Page 172)** In fact, no fewer than four of the Twelve Traditions deal with this subject and all limit or deny some aspect of power and authority within A.A. (Traditions Two, Three, Four and Nine) Such was the importance of these issues in the years of growth after publication of the Big Book. Tradition Nine, we see, discourages the creation of a power structure, while permitting the creation of a service structure.

It is clear now that we ought never to name boards to govern us, but it is equally clear that we shall always need to authorize workers to serve us. It is the difference between the spirit of vested authority and the spirit of service, two concepts which are sometimes poles apart..

A.A. has to function, but at the same time it must avoid those dangers of great wealth, prestige, and entrenched power which necessarily tempt other societies. Though Tradition Nine at first sight seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only by the spirit of service — a true fellowship. **(Page 174-175)**

The tension Bill perceives between authority and service and between practical and spiritual concerns will play a part when we explore the Concepts.

As the Twelve Concepts for World service are meant to guide Third Legacy activities, in reading about them one would naturally expect to encounter discussion of the Ninth Tradition, which has as its topic the A.A. service structure. However, there does not appear to be any explicit mention of this Tradition in the essays on the Twelve Concepts. The primary justification and motivation for the Concepts cited in the essays is actually the Second Tradition, which concerns itself with the ultimate authority embodied in the group conscience as well as trusted servants who carry it out through their delegated (and temporary) authority. Seven of the Twelve Concepts explicitly mention Tradition Two, including each of the first five, and another quotes from the Twelve and Twelve on this topic without citation. Just as Tradition One's invocation of unity provides a theme and purpose for all the others, defining and balancing the ultimate and delegated authority envisioned in Tradition Two sets the theme and purpose for the Concepts.

We have more than just this documentary evidence, however. Nell Wing, Bill W's secretary and A.A.'s first archivist, writes in her autobiography:

From the very first time I met him when I came to work, until his death, he [Bill W.] devoted a large part of his energy and time to trying to divest himself of power and authority, instead of trying to hang onto them. This idea was an integral part of the Twelve Traditions. Tradition Two states:

For our group purpose, there is but one
authority - a loving God as he may express
Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders
are but trusted servants, they do not govern.

The General Service Conference grew out of this same idea, and Bill had to struggle long and hard to educate the groups to accept this responsibility and authority. **(Grateful to Have Been There, Page 28-29)**

Those well versed in the Traditions already know that the Short Form of Tradition Two is actually longer than the original Long Form. The second sentence of the Short Form, quoted in the previous paragraph, is a paraphrase of a segment of Tradition Nine's Long Form, which reads in part:

"All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern."

Just as the practice of nightly personal inventory migrated from the Eleventh Step in the Big Book to the Tenth Step in the Twelve and Twelve, the idea of trusted servants moved from the Ninth to the Second Tradition. Nevertheless, these two ideas remain

part of the A.A. canon regardless of which Tradition or Step is said to contain them. A decade or so after the Short Form Traditions were adopted, the updated and enhanced Tradition Two would become the basis of the newly-written Twelve Concepts. It is clear from our observations here and above that Tradition Nine is also relevant, but its influence is more inferred than stated outright.

Relations between the ultimate authority envisioned in Tradition Two and the delegated authority of trusted servants are a regular theme in the Concepts. In defining roles within the A.A. service structure, Bill hoped to prevent it from becoming organized on the basis of power rather than service. Special attention is paid as well to preventing any authority, ultimate or delegated, from ever becoming absolute. Thus we see checks on power and authority, and efforts to balance different interests and concerns within A.A.

In addition to defining the working relations among trusted servants, which promotes the unity envisioned in the Traditions as well as smooth operations, Bill conceived a spiritual value in balance, in avoiding extremes. According to Nell Wing, he felt that balance and moderation promoted humility:

I've listened many times as Bill explained his own view of humility, similar to the early Greek "Middle Way" philosophy. As Bill expressed it, we need to follow a middle road, to strike a balance - neither wearing the Uriah Heep cloak of false humility, which he called "force-feeding of humble pie," nor straying into material achievements and admiration of one's own importance. Bill's definition of humility was willingness to seek God's will.

(Grateful to Have Been There, Page 44)

And in Bill's own words:

Guilt aims at self-destruction, and pride aims at the destruction of others.

This is why I see humility for today as that safe and secure place midway between these violent emotional extremes. It is a quiet place where can keep enough perspective, and enough balance, to take my next small step up the clearly marked road that points toward eternal values.

(The Best of Bill, Page 47)

The personal virtues of Honesty, Open-mindedness and Willingness - and Humility - are of course, essential for personal recovery. Four of the Long Form Traditions contain the word 'spiritual' or some form of it, and the topic of humility, among other virtues, is prominently mentioned throughout the Twelve and Twelve when discussing the updated Short Form Traditions.

There is no mention of virtue or spirituality in either the Long or Short Form of the Concepts. A word search reveals a mere four uses of 'humble' or 'humility' in all the related essays, and there appear to be few overt references to virtue or spirituality. The word 'God' appears around twelve times in the entire set of essays, five of them in Concept Twelve, leaving a mere seven uses in the first eleven Concepts which spell out the details of A.A. service relations. However, as we shall see when we delve into those essays, there are many references to balance and moderation, qualities which Bill clearly believed promoted humility and virtue. Though he never states or implies this, it is quite possible that Bill's thinking on these qualities influenced his writing on the Third Legacy. Though it is unstated, it is not unreasonable to suppose that through the Concepts, spiritual values are inherent in the relations between the parts of the A.A. service structure, as are the balance and moderation which support and maintain those relations. Spiritual values are as much an invisible but vital ingredient of the Twelve Concepts as the Ninth Tradition, enabling its World Services to live up to the motto of another great A.A. figure, "Love and service."

The Essays on the Twelve Concepts for World service can be found in a separate section in the back of the A.A. Service Manual. Those who already own a copy can read that alongside our summary of the Introduction and each of the Concepts. Otherwise, please consult this PDF from the official A.A. website (<https://www.aa.org/aa-service-manualtwelve-concepts-world-services>). A.A. also offers this pamphlet on the topic (<https://www.aa.org/twelve-concepts-world-service-illustrated>); we hope to explain the former and augment the latter.

The evolution of Bill's thinking on A.A.'s service structure can be found in the A.A. book *Our Great Responsibility*, a collection of his General Service Conference talks both before and after adoption of the Twelve Concepts in 1962.

The Twelve Concepts (Short Form)

I Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

The Ultimate Responsibility for A. A. World Services Belongs to the A. A. Groups.

II The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

The A. A. Groups Have Delegated Complete Administrative and Operational Authority to Their Conference and Its Service Arms.

III To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. — the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives — with a traditional “Right of Decision”.

The “Right of Decision” Makes Effective Leadership Possible.

IV At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “Right of Participation,” allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

“Participation” Is the Key to Harmony.

V Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

The Rights of “Appeal” and “Petition” Protect Minorities and Insures That They Be Heard.

VI The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

The Conference Acknowledges the Primary Administrative Responsibility of the Trustees.

VII The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness

How the Legal Rights of the Trustees Are Related to the Traditional Rights of the

Conference.

VIII The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

The Trustees Function as the Direct Managers of Over-All Finance and Policy: Also as the Custodians but not as the Immediate Managers of the Active Service Corporations.

IX Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

Good Personal Leadership at All Conference Levels Is a Primary Necessity. In the Area of World Service, the General Service Board and Its Leaders Must Necessarily Replace the Founders of A. A. This Is the Most Critical Structural Problem That We Still Face.

X Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

Service Authority Should Equal Service Responsibility Executive Authority Should Always Be Single: "Double-Headed Management" Should Be Carefully Avoided.

XI The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

A Description of the Primary Committees and Service Corporations of the General Service Board: The Personal Status of Corporate Directors, Executives and Staff Members.

XII The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

The Spiritual Foundation for A.A.'s World Services – "article 12" of the Conference Charter

A Summary of Bill's Essays on The Twelve Concepts for World Service

The "Twelve Concepts for World Service" to be described in this Manual are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure. They reveal the evolution by which it has arrived in its present form, and they detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today. These Concepts therefore aim to record the "why" of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost.

The Big Book and Twelve and Twelve each have Forewords which detail the purpose and goal of those books. The Introduction to the Twelve Concepts gives a similar overview, and begins with this opening paragraph. Just as the Traditions are said to have been hammered out on anvils of experience, the Concepts were born from practical concerns. In the Twelve and Twelve Bill cites examples of past experience which helped bring about several of the Traditions. Dropping the pretense of anonymity, Bill now writes of his own and sometimes Dr. Bob's hopes, concerns and motivations in the formation of A.A.'s Third Legacy. In doing so, he often reveals more historical detail and gives greater context in these examples than he did while writing anonymously in the Twelve and Twelve. As abstract as the Concepts often appear to be, they are every bit as grounded in practical experience as are the Traditions.

We see one of these motivations when Bill writes, "The Concepts try to design a structure in which all may labor to good effect, with a minimum of friction. This is accomplished by so relating our servants to their work and to each other that the chances of personal conflict will be minimized." This goes hand-in-hand with the Big Book sentiment that "We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action." Though he doesn't say it outright, in this way Bill is also promoting the unity envisioned in the Traditions.

"In the A.A. services we have always had to choose between the authoritarian setup, whereby one group or one person is set in unqualified authority over another, and the democratic concept which calls for 'checks and balances' that would prevent unqualified authority from running unrestrained." Here we come to the heart of the matter, for Bill brings up the two major issues through which our analysis seeks to explain the Twelve Concepts: Power and balance. The spiritual value of balance and moderation, as we have deduced from Bill's other writings, can be seen as inherent in the relations within the parts of A.A.'s service structure. However, the issue of concentrated power is explicitly a major concern of Bill's and not need not be guessed at, as seen in this passage from his introduction:

[I]deas like the following pervade the Concepts: "No group or individual should be set in unqualified authority over another," "Large, active and

dissimilar operations should be separately incorporated and managed, each with its own staff, equipment and working capital," "We ought to avoid undue concentration of money or personal influence in any service group or entity," "At each level of service, authority should be equal to responsibility," "Double-headed executive direction should be avoided." "These and other similar provisions define working relations that can be friendly and yet efficient. They would especially restrain our tendency to concentrate money and power..."

Bill writes that each Concept is a "*group of related principles*" (his emphasis). We will attempt to analyze the Twelve Concepts in terms of the principles of power/authority and balance/moderation, and how the Concepts relate to each other - and to the Traditions. Though Twelve Concepts for World Service is roughly the same length as the Traditions portion of the Twelve and Twelve, most of the essays here are shorter - nearly half the pages in this work are on the last three Concepts alone. These principles are relatively complex, however, as Bill himself notes. Just as there is a promise at the end of each Step in the Twelve and Twelve, Bill expresses experience, strength and hope at the end of each Concept essay.

We shall see that like the Steps, there is an order to the Concepts in that the later ones tend to flow from the earlier ones and serve to qualify them. The Traditions are certainly numbered, but do not appear to be ordered in the same way as the principles in the other two Legacies.

Concept I

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

The A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services — those special elements of over-all service activity which make it possible for our Society to function as a whole. The groups assumed that responsibility at the St. Louis International Convention of 1955. There, on behalf of Dr. Bob, the Trustees and A.A.'s old-time leaders, I made the transfer of world service responsibility to our entire Fellowship.

Bill begins the First Concept with this statement of the core principle and its ultimate realization. This principle can be found in the first part of Tradition Two. He then gives a brief summary of a crucial decade in A.A.'s history, beginning with the creation of the Alcoholic Foundation in 1938, the year before the Big Book was published. We emphasize once more that the beginning of the fellowship's service structure came before its program of recovery had been definitively formulated by the pioneers. During this time, as now, the trustees operated largely out of sight of rank and file A.A. members, though for their benefit and with the advice of the Co-Founders. Dr. Bob's

illness forced a reconsideration of this arrangement. Bill continues his thoughts on Concept I:

The fact had to be faced that A.A.'s founders were perishable. When Dr. Bob and I had gone, who would then advise the Trustees; who could link our little-known Board to our thousands of groups? For the first time it was seen that only a representative conference could take the place of Dr. Bob and me...

Tradition Two, like all the A.A. Traditions, is the voice of experience, based upon the trials of thousands of groups in our pioneering time. The main principles of Tradition Two are crystal clear: the A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only. These principles of authority in A.A. and trusted servants, and the balance between the two are recurring themes, as we shall soon see. The following Concepts largely serve to describe aspects of this balance.

The final paragraph summarizes the theme of this Concept:

Hence it is with a sense of great security that we old-timers have now fully vested in A.A.'s General Service Conference the authority for giving shape — through the labors of its chosen Delegates, Trustees, and service workers — to the destiny that we trust God in His wisdom is holding in store for all of us.

Concept II

The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

This is the first of three Concepts to directly involve delegation of authority to trusted servants - the topic of the second half of Tradition Two (the other examples of delegation are in Concepts VI and VIII). Such delegation is needed due to a practical limitation to the previous one: "It is self-evident that the thousands of A.A. groups and the many thousands of A.A. members, scattered as they are all over the globe, cannot of themselves actually manage and conduct our manifold world services." The final authority of the groups cannot be effective on its own, and they must delegate actual operational authority to act on their behalf. "Hence the principle of amply delegated authority and responsibility to 'trusted servants' must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active structure of service. This is the clear implication of A.A.'s Tradition Two."

Bill again gives examples, thereby showing that this type of delegated authority is not only a practical necessity but has long been established in A.A. history. As early as 1937, the two existing groups delegated authority to the Founders, Bill and Bob, who

then delegated authority in some areas to the Trustees of the newly-formed Alcoholic Foundation the next year. This arrangement is consistent with the future Ninth Tradition, which envisions creation of service boards and committees, and the Eight Tradition permitting the hiring of workers for certain A.A. tasks. For reasons of necessity and practicality, the trustees were given more and more responsibility over time. A.A.'s current organization evolved from this pattern:

Exactly as Dr. Bob and I earlier had found it necessary to delegate a large part of our active authority to the Trustees, so have the A.A. groups since found it necessary to delegate these same powers to their General Service Conference. The final say — the ultimate sanction in matters of large importance — has not been given to the Trustees alone. By the Conference Charter, confirmed at St. Louis, this authority is now delegated to the A.A. groups and thence to their Conference, a body which is a representative cross section of our entire Fellowship.

Bill concludes the essay with this thought:

In making this momentous transfer, we old-timers deeply hope that we have avoided those pitfalls into which societies have so often fallen because their originators have failed, during their lifetimes, to properly delegate and distribute their own authority, responsibility and leadership.

Concept III

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. — the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives — with a traditional “Right of Decision”.

We have seen how the A.A. groups, under the concept of the “group conscience,” are today holding the ultimate authority and the final responsibility for world services. We have also noted how, by reason of the Conference Charter and the “trusted servant” provision of Tradition Two, the groups have delegated to their General Service Conference full authority to manage and conduct A.A.'s world affairs.

Bill summarizes the first two Concepts in this passage before describing in the next three Concepts certain rights trusted servants enjoy which help define the scope of their delegated authority.

In proposing this Right of Decision, he lists some practical reasons why trusted servants should be given discretion in carrying out the will of the group conscience. These reasons also illustrate the necessity for the examples of delegation listed in the previous Concept.

It would be possible, he writes, for the groups to give precise and comprehensive instruction to their Conference delegates, or for that matter, for the Trustees to give similar orders to workers in the board and committees they control. On the other hand, to give complete and unbridled freedom to act at will. The Conference and General Service Board Charters, the written guidelines under which the Conference operates, are general in nature, and do not give precise directions in these matters.

"Therefore some traditional and practical principle has to be devised which at all levels will continuously balance the right relation between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility." (Emphasis in the original) In a nutshell, Bill writes that Concept III, with its Right of Decision, is an attempt to find a middle ground between the extremes of trusted servants at every level being given complete and precise instructions, or none at all.

In conclusion, Bill hints at the spiritual while putting the 'trust' in 'trusted servant':

Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other. Therefore we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The "Right of Decision" that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence.

Concept IV

At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

Like the Third Concept, the Fourth is concerned with the scope discretion given to trusted servants in the A.A. service structure. However, the focus here is not on undue restrictions imposed by the groups from above, but on constraints imposed by others within the service structure.

Every skilled element to do the allotted job is present. No class is set in absolute authority over another. This is the corporate or "participating" method of doing business, as distinguished from structures so common to many institutional, military and governmental agencies wherein high-level people or classes of people often are set in absolute authority, one over the other.

Just as the delegates have relative freedom to act with delegated authority without excessive limitations, the Trustees also have relative freedom, as do officers of the various service boards within the General Service Conference. Once again, Bill illustrates the need for this principle with potential scenarios of abused power, as well examples from A.A. history. Participation by all responsible parties, that is, the right to vote on policies and other matters, is a check on excessive power by groups or

individuals within the Conference. Bill then makes a rare overt reference to spirituality:

There is another good reason for “participation,” and this one has to do with our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. We want an A.A. relation of brotherly partnership. It is our shining ideal that the “spiritual corporation” of A.A. should never include any members who are regarded as “second class.” Deep down, I think this is what we have been struggling to achieve in our world service structure. Here is perhaps the principal reason why we should continue to ensure “participation” at every important level. Just as there are no second-class A.A.’s, neither should there be any second-class world service workers, either.

Bill once again gives us his hope for this Concept, and shows that it, like the others, is based on Tradition Two:

The “Right of Participation” is therefore a corrective of ultimate authority because it mitigates its harshness or misuse. It also encourages us who serve A.A. to accept the necessary disciplines that our several tasks require. We can do this when we are sure that we belong, when the fact of our “participation” assures us that we are truly the “trusted servants” described in A.A.’s Tradition Two.

Concept V

Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Having carved out areas of freedom for trusted servants through the rights to decide and vote, Bill now endeavors to ensure that the latter right does not devolve into a method of domination by any group or faction over smaller ones: "In the light of the principle of the 'Right of Appeal,' all minorities — whether in our staffs, committees, corporate boards or among the Trustees — should be encouraged to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error." Added to this is a Right of Petition, enabling any group or individual to initiate action against a policy or decision. Bill argues that such Rights act as a check on unbridled power - a constant theme throughout his writings on the Concepts. He considers also that an impassioned minority will sometimes be right, and even when wrong can help foster a more thorough examination of various issues.

On a different note:

The Rights of “Appeal” and “Petition” of course aim at the total problem of protecting and making the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion. This has always been, and still is, a central problem of all free governments

and democratic societies. In Alcoholics Anonymous individual freedom is of enormous importance. For instance, any alcoholic is a member of A.A. the moment he says so; we cannot take away his right to belong. Neither can we force our members to believe anything or pay anything. Ours is indeed a large charter of minority privileges and liberties.

The last part of this passage paraphrases language from Tradition Three, and is reminiscent of the emphasis on individual rights seen in Tradition One. Transitioning from this veiled spiritual reasoning to A.A. history and even citing De Toqueville, Bill considers the evils of autocratic rule, writing that "All around us in the world today we are witnessing the tyranny of majorities and the even worse tyranny of very small minorities invested with absolute power." It would seem that this Concept helps prevent the former, and the Rights of Decision and Participation in the previous two combat the latter. In steering a course between these extremes, Bill has designed a method of instilling his vision of balance and moderation in the A.A. structure.

He concludes with this hope:

Hence we believe that we shall never be subjected to the tyranny of either the majority or the minority, provided we carefully define the relations between them and forthwith tread the path of world service in the spirit of our Twelve Steps, our Twelve Traditions, and our Conference Charter — in which I trust that we shall one day inscribe these traditional Rights of "Appeal" and "Petition."

Concept VI

The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

This is the shortest of all the Concept essays, and can largely be summed up by the opening paragraph:

Just as the A.A. groups find themselves unable to act decisively respecting world service affairs unless they delegate a great amount of active authority and responsibility to their Conference, so must the Conference in turn delegate a liberal administrative authority to the General Service Board, in order that its Trustees may act freely and effectively in the absence of the Conference itself.

Like Concept Two, the Sixth involves delegation of authority to trusted servants under Tradition Two. Where the groups delegated authority to the Conference, we now see the Conference delegating to the Trustees. Given the large range of duties performed by the Trustees under this arrangement, what with managing A.A. World services, the Grapevine, A.A. finances and the like, Bill argues for an equal amount of discretion.

This is not unlike the principles in Concepts Three and Four concerning Rights of Decision and Participation, which protect the discretion of trusted servants.

Bill concludes with an analogy:

From top to bottom, our whole service structure indeed resembles that of a large corporation. The A.A. groups are the stockholders; the Delegates are their representatives or proxies at the “annual meeting”; our General Service Board Trustees are actually the directors of a “holding company.” And this holding company, the General Service Board, actually owns and controls the “subsidiaries” which carry on our active world services.

This very real analogy makes it even more clear that, just like any other board of directors, our Trustees must be given large powers if they are to effectively manage the principal world affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Concept VII

The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the Trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

This Concept is essentially a qualification of the previous one. As has already been discussed in previous essays, any entity in A.A. which delegates some or all of its authority can theoretically reclaim it and override actions by its trusted servants. In practice, and in view of the Right of Decision in Concept Three, this will only happen in special cases. Perhaps because of the enormous responsibility granted to the Trustees in Concept Six, Bill felt a need to devise this Concept specifically to underscore the fact that such authority is not their own - it has been delegated by the Conference (which, in turn, has been given delegated authority by the groups). Perhaps the relations in the Second Tradition (mentioned twice in this Concept) between final and delegated authority have no greater test than in this relationship between the Conference and the trustees.

Up to the present time our experience shows that this balance of powers between the Trustees and the Conference is thoroughly workable. We have taken great pains to reserve final authority to the Conference by practical and traditional means. By legal means we have delegated ample functional and discretionary authority to the Trustees. We believe this balance can be maintained indefinitely, because the one is protected by tradition and the other by law.

Once again, balance is the key to resolving an issue. Bill writes that other options were considered, such as incorporation, trustee elections or appointment of Trustees

by the Conference. However, there were practical objections and difficulties with each of these ideas, leading to this notion of the Conference consulting with the Trustees, and checking them if need be. Bill is hopeful about the long term workability of such watchful cooperation as he concludes the essay:

If, therefore, in the years ahead, the Conference will always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities and legal status of the General Service Board, and if the Trustees in their deliberations will constantly realize that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority, we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to make a “rubber stamp” out of the other. We may expect that in this way grave issues will always be resolved and harmonious cooperation will be the general rule.

Concept VIII

The Trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

This Concept, like the previous one, is related to the Sixth in that it also concerns the Trustees' use of their delegated authority. This Concept suggests that due to the scope of the activities it oversees, the Trustees not only can, but should delegate everyday management of policy, finance, group relations and public relations to service entities that report to them. This is the third level of delegation (the 'trusted servant' principle of tradition Two), for the groups have previously delegated authority to the Conference in Concept II, and in turn the Conference has delegated responsibility to the trustees in Concept VI. The delegation here is undertaken for the same practical reason as before:

Our Trustees, as a body, cannot be burdened with a mass of lesser matters; they must not concern themselves with the endless questions and difficulties which arise daily, weekly and monthly in the routine conduct of the World Service Office and of our publishing enterprises. In these areas the Board cannot possibly manage and conduct in detail; it must delegate its executive function.

Bill spends some time discussing other scenarios for overseeing and conducting A.A. affairs, noting the practical difficulties with each. The Trustees, therefore, delegate to separate entities, which are then endowed with the Rights of Decision, Participation and Appeal/Petition, giving them a measure of independence. Another advantage of this arrangement is the avoidance of concentrated wealth and power - a major theme in the Concepts.

There is always a powerful connection between money and authority.

Whenever we concentrate money, we shall inevitably create the temptation for the exercise of too much executive authority, an undesirable condition for us. Therefore we should strenuously avoid placing too much money or too much authority in any one service entity. These are potent reasons for maintaining separate incorporations for each of our active services.

Excessive power and money are a concern not only in the Concepts, but in the Traditions as well. We noted at the beginning of this essay that no fewer than four of the Traditions have power as their topic; three of them (The Sixth through the Eighth) deal with different aspects of money, making that the next most potential problem addressed by the Second Legacy. Moreover, the Sixth and Seventh Traditions in the Long Form both specifically mention "money, property, and authority" together as likely areas of conflict.

Bill's experience, strength and hope on this Concept:

These observations are not intended to bar any future needful change. It is urged only that we avoid unnecessary repetitions of those painful experiences and mistakes of the past which sometimes resulted from too much concentration of money and authority. It can only be left on the record that we still see no workable way to convert the Board of Trustees into an active, "all-purpose" service corporation.

Concept IX

Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

We now come to the principal theme of this particular Concept: How can we best strengthen the composition and the leadership of the future Board of Trustees, the Board which in years to come will have to exercise A.A.'s primary leadership in world service administration, the trusteeship which will in fact have to assume most of my former duties and responsibilities in connection with A.A.'s world services?

The second half of the Concept IX essay consists of part of a previous Grapevine article on leadership qualities. Bill begins by borrowing a key phrase from Tradition Twelve, and then uses it to illustrate a set of extremes between which A.A. needs to find a middle ground:

We are apt to warp the traditional idea of "principles before personalities" around to such a point that there would be no "personality" in leadership whatever. This would imply rather faceless automatons trying to please

everybody, regardless.

At other times we are quite as apt to demand that A.A.'s leaders must necessarily be people of the most sterling judgment, morals, and inspirations; big doers, prime examples of all, and practically infallible.

Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles of hoped-for excellence.

The subject of this portion of the essay, the hoped-for middle ground which Bill saw as a key to humility and virtue, appears intended as guidance and inspiration for A.A. leaders at all levels. Quoting from Tradition Two before illustrating ideal qualities of leadership and the extremes and pitfalls to be avoided, Bill could almost be writing this as an add-on to that earlier essay.

As in earlier essays, balance and moderation are important for good leadership. "When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own — well, he really isn't a leader at all." A 'politico' gives the people everything they want, and the other extreme is to oppose for the sake of opposition. Give and take, or compromise, is the middle ground here. "Nevertheless we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled."

Bill discusses a further element of leadership: "Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence, an essential virtue if ever there was one." He compares this leadership quality, now seen as vital to this Concept, as equivalent to the foresight which helped produce the Traditions themselves.

The conclusion to the Grapevine essay and this Concept is the shortest of all: "We thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in all of its affairs."

Concept X

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

This Concept can perhaps be best summed up:

The influence of ultimate authority must always be felt, but it is perfectly clear that when delegated authority is operating well it should not be constantly interfered with. Otherwise those charged with operating responsibility will be

demoralized because their authority to do their work will be subject to arbitrary invasion, and because their actual responsibility will be made greater than their real authority.

Bill spends some time listing the levels of delegated power within A.A., and considerable time describing potential scenarios in which this Concept may come into play. But the twin concerns of efficient operations and worker morale - one practical and one spiritual - that underlay the Third Legacy and this Concept are apparent in this passage. As we have seen, the relationship between ultimate and delegated authority has been designed through the concepts to promote these values. As Bill himself notes, this Concept, in helping define the scope of delegated authority, compliments Concepts V (Right of Appeal and Petition), and overlaps a bit with the subject of Concept XI immediately below. And, as this one concerns protecting the freedom of trusted servants in the performance of their duties, we also see an apparent relationship to Concepts III and IV (Rights of Decision and Participation, respectively).

In the conclusion, we see explicit mention of the two roots of the Concepts, Tradition Two and balance:

To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities.

All of this is fully implied in A.A.'s Tradition Two. Here we see the "group conscience" as the ultimate authority and the "trusted servant" as the delegated authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a right and harmonious working balance.

Concept XI

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

This Concept, with its lengthy and detailed essay, is an elaboration of Concept VIII in that it discusses the service entities to which the Trustees delegate their authority. Bill names five major committees, and spends several pages describing their functions and areas of operation: the Nominating Committee, Finance and Budgetary Committee, Public Information Committee, Literature Committee and General Policy Committee. "[S]o far as the routine direction of our established services is concerned, the Trustees have fully delegated their executive function in these constantly active

service areas."

Far more than most of the Trustees, these servants will be in direct contact with A.A. world-wide, and their performance will be constantly on view. They will perform most of the routine labor. They will carry on most of our services. They will travel widely and will receive most visitors at the Headquarters. They will often originate new plans and policies. Some of them will eventually become Trustees. Because this group will form the visible image of world service, most A.A.'s will measure our service values by what they see and feel in them. Members of this group will not only support the world leadership of the Trustees; in the nature of the case they will be bound to share world leadership with them.

The practical need of having A.A. matters delegated to bodies capable of performing them daily has already been discussed in Concepts II, VI and VIII. The spiritual advantage of delegation at this level, in keeping with the overarching goal of the Traditions and Concept Twelve, is that the very large amount of authority granted to the Trustees is divided among several committees, preventing an unchecked central power within A.A. Though they report to the Trustees, the executives and members of these service entities enjoy the rights of Decision, Participation and Appeal/Petition. These rights apply to any individual or entity performing service in A.A., allowing them relative freedom to use their own discretion. It is worth mentioning again at this time that, as Bill wrote while explaining the first one, these rights serve to balance authority and delegated responsibility and steer a course between the extremes of unlimited freedom for service members and giving them precise instructions.

Bill then discusses A.A.'s two service corporations, A.A. World Services and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. These perform different types of services, and are kept separate for this reason, and to avoid concentration of money and authority as well.

The last section of the essay discusses principles concerning A.A. service workers. Executives of the various boards and committees need certain leadership qualities, as described in Concept IX. Paid workers are the subject of the remaining three points Bill discusses. Salary considerations for paid workers were previously covered in Tradition Eight. Participation by paid workers is very important, including both the Right of Participation and independence from financial pressures from above, for "[i]n human affairs authority and money are deeply linked."

The one entirely new principle here is that of rotation, a practice that is also widely practiced in A.A. groups. This is accompanied by identical pay for workers with the same length of service. Bill writes, "Our primary reason for the adoption of rotation and equal staff pay was the security and continuity of the office." In the A.A. service structure, periodic rotation of personal in and out of various functions promotes flexibility in daily operations, ensuring that no one person is ever entrenched in a given position or becomes indispensable. Pay parity helps reduce considerations of money

and prestige, and, Bill writes, because of this policy "many of the temptations to destructive competition and office 'politicking' were also removed."

After these reflections on service workers Bill concludes:

Such are the realizations which we can all use every day of our working lives. Add to these the further thought that no organization structure can fully guarantee our Headquarters against the depredations of clashing personalities, that only the sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs can accomplish this, and we shall never need to have any fear for our future harmony.

Concept XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

A.A.'s Twelfth Concept encompasses the eleven which precede it, as do the Twelfth Step and, to some extent, the Twelfth Tradition. And, like that of the Twelfth Step, this essay is quite lengthy. Each clause in this Concept is a promise or guarantee to the Fellowship, which Bill calls 'Warranties'. The essay consists of a brief overview followed by an exploration of each of the six Warranties named in the Concept itself. Because the Twelfth Concept has these Warranties as its very essence, it could barely be condensed and reads the nearly the same in both the Long and Short Forms.

These Warranties can rightly be compared to the Bill of Rights in the US Constitution, for they similarly guarantee certain freedoms and establish standards for leadership. Indeed, the process outlined in the essay makes it even harder to amend these Warranties than the Constitution itself. The Twelve Traditions and the first eleven Concepts, which are intended to promote the ideals embodied in the Warranties, do not contain a single "Don't" or "Must". The Twelve Steps themselves are called "suggestions" a number of times in the Big Book. However, of the Twelfth Concept's Warranties it is said that they "Shall" be observed: They are stated categorically, not conditionally. Such is the importance of these principles that Bill wrote, "We have ranked them therefore with A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, feeling that they are quite as important to A.A.'s world services as the Traditions are to A.A. as a whole."

Dr Bob famously said that the Twelve Steps "resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.'" In discussing the Warranties, the embodiment of A.A.'s Third legacy, Bill adds another quality:

There are significant aspects of these Warranties which should be considered. Notice, for example, that all of them are counsels of prudence — prudence in personal relatedness, prudence in money matters, and prudence in our relations with the world about us. For us, prudence is a workable middle ground, a channel of clear sailing between the obstacles of fear on the one side and of recklessness on the other. The moderation and balance of a course between two extremes, mentioned explicitly or easily inferred in several of the Concepts, is now shown to be the result of practicing these principles, just as a spiritual awakening is the 'result of these steps'. Thus, Bill's personal vision of the root of virtue and humility is part of both the means and the end of the Concepts.

With fruits such as these, it is now apparent that the Concepts are not the dry, abstract exercises they are sometimes thought to be - if they are thought of at all. The Warranties of Concept XII "are the sum of our protection against needless errors and against our very natural human temptations to wealth, prestige, power, and the like."

The Six Warranties

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

"The principal protection against the accumulation of too much money and too much authority in Conference hands is to be found in the A.A. Tradition itself." Borrowing the topic of tradition Seven, Bill writes, "Since it is certain therefore that we shall never become too wealthy through group contributions, we need only to avoid the temptation of taking money from the outside world."

A strong protection against excessive power in A.A. comes from "rotation, by voting participation, and by careful chartering." Not only the Right of participation, but other Conceptual rights such as Decision, and Appeal, which serve to dilute and limit power. Trusted servants' true power is their spiritual power. Quoting from Tradition Two yet again, Bill reminds us that "They do not drive us by mandate; they lead us by example."

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

This Warranty, of course, comes directly from the Long Form of the Seventh Tradition, and overlaps a bit with the first one. Bill writes here that the main activity of A.A., working with the newcomer, is conducted on a individual and voluntary basis. Little

financial investment, in terms of infrastructure or staff, is needed. "I am sure that the voluntary contributions of our A.A. groups, supplemented by many modest gifts from individual A.A.'s, will pay our world service bills over future years, in good times at any rate."

He briefly discusses some World service Office budget figures from his day as an illustration of the Fellowship's fiscal prudence. After bringing up the topic of book revenues, he offers a brief defense of the royalties paid to him for writing the Big Book, Twelve and Twelve and other A.A. books. Payments of different types to him and Dr Bob had been thorny issues in the past, and apparently still raised some questions, even by the early 1960's.

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

The discussion of this Warranty is the shortest, and shares part of the topic of Warranty One. "We have learned that this principle is of incalculable value to the harmonious conduct of our Conference affairs. Its application in our structure has already been extensively discussed under the Concept entitled 'The Right of Participation.'" Codifying this Right makes it harder for any potential tyrant to overcome, and this warranty broadens the scope beyond mere participation. Bill himself compares this Concept, which copies part of the Conference Charter, to the Bill of Rights for the reasons we cite above.

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

"Here on the one hand we erect a safeguard against any hasty or over-bearing authority of a simple majority; and on the other hand we take notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision that we are called upon to make in the Conference. The increased debate and discussion fostered by the principle of substantial unanimity serves to strengthen the authority behind Conference decisions, better satisfy the minority and help prevent future recriminations should expected results not occur. There may, however, be urgent situations which demand a shorter debate and quicker decision by a simple majority.

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

Of all the Warranties, this one has by far the longest discussion. Its two parts can be summed up thus:

Of all societies ours can least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts which would result were we ever to yield to the temptation to punish in anger.

For much the same reason we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense... Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the world-wide good will which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

In other words, resentment is still the 'number one' offender, whether it is felt individually or collectively. Bill writes with great confidence that internal 'threats', such as perceived Traditions violations and the like, cannot harm A.A. in the long run. Individuals or groups may just be exercising their 'right to be wrong', as he put it in Tradition Four. External issues, including criticisms of A.A., are the subject of Tradition Ten, though Bill does not cite it here. This discussion could almost be a continuation of that essay. In the event that one of these internal or external issues should occur, he advises here, "[w]ithout anger or coercion we would need only to watch and to wait upon God's will."

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.

This Warranty reiterates the principles in the previous Warranties concerning power and authority. Bill cites the freedoms mentioned in the Twelve and Twelve essays on several of the Traditions: no conformity or dues are required, membership is the individual's choice, no one can be expelled, groups are autonomous in their internal affairs. A.A. is perhaps the freest organization on Earth:

Therefore we expect that our Conferences will always try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love — one member for another. In turn, this sign signifies that mutual trust should prevail; that no action ought to be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action should ever be personally punitive; that whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.

The Third Legacy ends on a especially uplifting note:

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.

Appendix: Letter from Bill and Dr. Bob proposing the Third Legacy and A.A.'s new Service Structure

Your Third Legacy Will You Accept This

By Dr. Bob and Bill W., October, 1950

(NOTE: This is a proposal to form "The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous" – a small body of State and Provincial A.A. Delegates meeting yearly, who could assume direct responsibility for the guidance of the A.A. General Service Headquarters at New York City – not to be confused with the 1950 Cleveland International Conference.)

We, who are old in A.A., bequeath to you who are younger, these three legacies—the "12 Steps of Recovery," the "12 Traditions" and now the "General Services of Alcoholics Anonymous." Two of these legacies have long been in your keeping. By the 12 Steps you have recovered from alcoholism; by the 12 Traditions you have we are achieving a fine unity.

We now wish to deliver the members of A.A. their third legacy. Since 1938 we and our old friends have held it in trust. This legacy is the General Headquarters Services of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Alcoholic Foundation, the A.A Book, the A.A. Grapevine and the A.A. General Office. These are the principal Service assets which have enabled our Society to function and to grow.

Dr. Bob and I ask that you – the members of A.A.—now take these assets, use them, and guard them well. The future growth, the very survival of Alcoholics Anonymous may heavily depend on how prudently you administer these Arms of Service in years to come.

May we share with you a fragment of history? Twelve years ago, warmly aided by great friends, Dr. Bob and I established a Headquarters for our then obscure Fellowship. We named it the Alcoholic Foundation and it consisted of a simple Board of Trustees dedicated to serve our cause. The Board was formed of alcoholics and non-alcoholic friends, who today number fifteen. When in the spring of 1938 our Foundation was born, A.A. was three years old. We had only 50 members. The book Alcoholics Anonymous was just an idea. None could then guess the magnificence of the gift which Providence had begun to bestow.

In the twelve years since, those 50 early members have spawned 120,000 more. A.A. stretches world-wide. Religion and medicine have approvingly raised us out of that No Man's Land where we once floundered between them. We have no enemies, our friends are beyond count. Like gleaming coral islands our thousands of Groups build themselves upward out of the alcohol sea. What a God-given, miraculous circumstance!

Through this glowing, feverish infancy, the Alcoholic Foundation Board, unseen by many, quietly played a great part in the formation and spread of our well—loved Society. Acting through our General Service Office, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and latterly the *Grapevine*, the Foundation became directly responsible for half our growth and effectiveness—both in quality and quantity. There can be no question of that.

Suppose then, all these years, we had been without those fine services. Where would we be today minus the A.A. book and our standard literature which now pours out of Headquarters at the rate of three tons a month? Suppose our public relations had been left to thoughtless chance. Suppose no one had been assigned to encourage good publicity and kill the bad. Suppose no accurate information about A.A. had been available. Imagine our vital and delicate relations with medicine and religion left to pot luck. Then, too, where would thousands of A.A. 's be today if the General Office hadn't answered their frantic letters and referred them to help? (Our New York Office received and answered 28,000 letters of all kinds last year.) Or in what shape would hundreds of distant A.A. Groups now be if that Office hadn't started them by mail or directed travelers to them? How could we manage without a world Group Directory? What about those foreign Groups in 28 countries clamoring for translations, proved experience and encouragement? Would we be publishing the A.A. book at Oslo, Norway and London, England? What of those lone members on high seas or in far corners of the earth, those prisoners, those asylum inmates, those veterans in service or in hospitals? Where might we one day be if we never had the A.A. *Grapevine*, our mirror of A.A. life and principal forum of written expression? How grateful we are for those faithful Secretaries, those painstaking volunteer Editors and those able Trustees who have stood sentinel all these years over our principal affairs. Without all these things, where would we be? You must have guessed it. We'd be nowhere; that's sure.

So it is that by the "Steps" we have recovered, by the "Traditions" we have unified and by our Headquarters Services we have been able to function as a Society.

Yet some may still say – "Of course the Foundation should go on. Certainly the Foundation should go on. Certainly we' 11 pay that small expense. But why can't we leave its conduct to Dr. Bob and Bill and their friends the Trustees? We always have. Why do they now bother us with such business? Let' s keep A. A. simple." Good questions, these. But today the answers are quite different than they once were.

Let's face these facts:

First — Dr. Bob and Bill are perishable, they can't last forever.

Second – Their friends, the Trustees, are almost unknown to the A.A. Movement.

Third – In future years our Trustees couldn't possibly function without direct guidance from A.A. itself. Somebody must advise them. Somebody, or something must take the place of Dr. Bob and Bill.

Fourth – Alcoholics Anonymous is out of its infancy. Grown up, adult now, it has full right and the plain duty to take direct responsibility for its own Headquarters.

Fifth — Clearly then, unless the Foundation is firmly anchored, through State and Provincial representatives, to the movement it serves, a Headquarters breakdown will someday be inevitable. When its old-timers vanish, an isolated Foundation couldn't survive one grave mistake or serious controversy. Any storm could blow it down. Its revival wouldn't be simple. Possibly it could never be revived. Still isolated, there would be no means of doing that. Like a fine car without gasoline, it would be helpless.

Sixth — Another serious flaw: As a whole, the A.A. movement has never faced a grave crisis. But someday it will have to. Human affairs being what they are, we can't expect to remain untouched by the hour of serious trouble. With direct support unavailable, with no reliable cross-section of A.A. opinion, how could our remote Trustees handle a hazardous emergency? This gaping "open end" in our present set-up could positively guarantee a debacle. Confidence in the Foundation would be lost. A. A. 's everywhere would say: "By whose authority do the Trustees speak for us? And how do they know they are right?" With A.A. Service life-lines tangled and severed, what then might happen to the "Million who don't know." Thousands would continue to suffer on or die because we had taken no forethought, because we had forgotten the virtue of Prudence. This must not come to pass.

That is why the Trustees, Dr. Bob and I now propose the "General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous." That is why we urgently need your direct help. Our principal Services must go on living. We think the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous can be the agency to make that certain.

SECTION II

Our Proposed Plan

Here is our over-all plan. To start the General Service Conference, the Foundation Trustees will invite one Delegate from each State of the Union and one from each Province of Canada. States and Provinces having large A.A. populations will be asked to send additional Delegates. (Subject, of course, to A.A. 's willingness to finance full representation.)

These Delegates will serve in two rotating panels. Panel No. 1 will be formed by

inviting representatives from the 28 States and Provinces having, by our Group Directory, the largest A.A. populations. Panel No. 2 (which will start in the second year) will be created by inviting Delegates from the remaining 28 States and Provinces plus additional representation from densely populated regions.

Delegates to the General Service Conference at New York are to be selected by Group representatives who will usually meet in the largest A.A. center of each State or Province, on dates to be set every two years by the Alcoholic Foundation working with appropriate State or Provincial Committees.

A non-controversial method has been devised for the selection of State Committees and Conference Delegates. It will be seen that this method carefully avoids our usual political troubles. No Delegate so chosen could possibly consider himself a political victor. He will feel himself a servant, but not a senator. (Details in Section III)

Each Delegate will serve a two-year term, will always be available for mail or phone consultation with A.A. Headquarters, and will twice attend the General Service Conference which will ordinarily be held in New York City to coincide with the regular April meeting of the Foundation. At the Conference, these Delegates will sit with our Trustees, General Office Secretaries and Grapevine Staff Members. Thus, we shall constitute the "General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Now what will our General Service Conference do?

A. It will here the Annual Reports of the Foundation, General Office, Grapevine, and Works Publishing (the A.A. Book Company); also the report of our C.P.A.

B. It will fully discuss these reports, offering needed suggestions or resolutions respecting them.

C. The Trustees will present to the Conference all serious problems of policy or finance confronting A.A. Headquarters, or A.A. as a whole. Following discussions of these, the Conference will offer the Trustees appropriate advice and resolutions.

D. Special attention will be given to all violations of our Tradition liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole. The Conference will, if it be deemed wise, publish suitable resolutions deploring such deviations.

E. Because Conference activities will extend over a three-day weekend, Delegates will be able to exchange views on every conceivable problem. They will become closely acquainted with each other and with our Headquarters people. They will visit the premises of the Foundation, Grapevine and General Office. This should engender mutual confidence. Guesswork and rumor are to be replaced by first-hand knowledge.

F. Before the conclusion of each year's Conference, a Committee will be named to render all A.A. members a written report upon the condition of their Headquarters and

the state of A.A. generally.

On a Conference Delegates return home, his State or Provincial Committee will, if practical, call a meeting of Group representatives and any others who wish to hear his personal report. The Delegate will get this meeting's reaction to his report, and its suggestions respecting problems to be considered at future Conference Sessions. The Delegate ought to visit as many of his constituent Groups as possible. They should have direct knowledge of their A.A. Headquarters.

How best to finance our Conference expenses is a moot question. The General Service Conference will function for the benefit of A.A. as a whole. Its entire cost ought to be a charge against those "Group Contributions" now sent to New York for the support of the General Office. But this method is quite impossible now. Group Contributions are not meeting General Office expenses. Nor can the "Reserve" or the Foundation's A.A. "Book Income" carry the Conference.

We therefore propose that all A.A. Groups be asked for a gift of \$5. each, yearly, at Christmas. The Foundation Trustees would deposit these sums in a special account marked "Conference Funds."

If even one-half the A.A. Groups made this annual \$5. gift to the Foundation "for the benefit of the million who don't yet know," we estimate that the resulting income would absorb the total yearly Conference overhead, plus all Delegates' transportation to New York in excess of \$100. each. (See Section IV for details)

One more word about money. A.A. Headquarters recently sent out its semiannual appeal for voluntary contributions, remarking that of late the Groups had donated much less than the traditional "\$1. per member a year." The present condition is only natural. The larger A.A. grows, the less the average Group is apt to know or care about the Foundation. It's not surprising that interest lags. But the General Service Conference should change all that. A brand new channel of participation and understanding will be wide open. No doubt hundreds of Groups not now giving to the Foundation will commence to do so. Meanwhile, our great thanks go out to all those who have supported Headquarters in past years, especially to Groups whose gifts have far exceeded the traditional "\$1. per member" yardstick. Without them we'd never have got by; there would be no Foundation Office or Grapevine today. But it should be noted that foreign, institutional or quite new A.A. Groups need never feel obligated.

The A.A. General Service Conference will be an informal gathering. Resolutions passed by a simple majority will be advisory only. But the Trustees will traditionally favor all resolutions passed by a two-thirds vote. When Trustees of the Foundation retire, the remaining Board members will traditionally consult the Conference, or a committee thereof, before naming their successors. Above all, it ought to be understood that the General Service Conference will never become a government for Alcoholics Anonymous. Though it may publish resolutions respecting deviations from

A.A. Tradition, it is agreed that such acts will never be personal, punitive or governmental in their character.

So concludes our general outline of the General Service Conference plan.

The Trustees, Dr. Bob and I rest in sure confidence that this—your third legacy—will never be lost; that your new responsibility will be carried without faltering. By its complete willingness to serve God in all weather, may the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous ever merit the worthiness to endure.

SECTION III

A.A. State And Provincial Assemblies:

Their Committees And Delegates, How Chosen

Without great expense or friction, how can States and Provinces select their General Service Conference Delegates and suitable State or Provincial Service Committees? This is the "\$100." question. But we believe there is an answer. On one of Bill's western trips, experiments were tried which proved it possible to do these things. The following concrete plan is the result. At this stage we urge the need to be definite to avoid confusion. Later on you may wish to amend the plan to suit local needs or iron out flaws. Here we are:

- A. With Foundation help, meetings of A.A. Group representatives will be organized in each State and Province, these to be called Assemblies.
- B. Each assembly will cast separate written ballots for each of its State or Provincial Committeemen; three, five, seven or more of them.
- C. Committeemen so selected will be automatically placed in nomination as candidates for the post of Delegate to the General Service Conference for a two—year term.
- D. If, on a trial ballot, no one of these Committeemen can be elected Delegate by a two-thirds vote, they then draw lots between them to name the Delegate.
- E. Each State or Provincial Assembly naming a Delegate pays his plane or railroad fare to New York. But not to exceed \$100. yearly per Delegate. Money to defray this expense will be raised at the Assembly meeting where the Delegate is chosen. Two years, paid in advance, is preferable. For the benefit of distant regions, the Foundation "Conference Fund" will pay any yearly transportation expense in excess of \$100. per Delegate (See Section IV)

For the clear guidance of those States and Provinces who send Delegates in 1951 and 1952, we urge this detailed procedure:

By January 1, 1951 the Foundation will ask the A.A. Group within each State and

Province comprising Panel No. 1 how many of them wish to participate, as outlined above. Each Group expecting to help chose a Delegate will immediately select an experienced A.A. Representative. He (or she) will be ready to attend the State or Provincial Assembly. A date (not later than March 15th) will be announced. Much care ought to be given such selections. Any one of them may become Committeemen or the Delegate. Old-timers and former Group or Intergroup Officers ought to be considered possibilities.

Assuming that a minimum of 10 Groups in each State and Province of Panel No. 1 has volunteered to participate, the Foundation, in cooperation with the Groups, (or Intergroups) of the largest local centers, will arrange suitable State or Provincial meetings. The Foundation will then advise all participating Groups of the places and dates of their respective Assemblies. (In following years State and Provincial Committees will of course assume this duty.)

By this process we shall create a series of State and Provincial Assembly meetings, the Panel No. 1 Assemblies to gather in early 1951.

Now a very important question. Just how will State or Provincial Assemblies be conducted? For these key meetings we urge this procedure:

Let's assume that the Foundation, cooperating with a Temporary Committee* appointed at a typical "host city", has already named the date, hour and address of a given Assembly meeting. Group Representatives, "out of town" and "in town" have arrived. What happens then?

1. Registration: Each Group Representative registers his, and his Group's name and address in the Registration Book provided. He also has brought a copy of this pamphlet so he can follow the Assembly procedure.
2. Registration Completed: Chairman of the Temporary Committee opens the Assembly and reports the number present from the Registration Book. Those who have not registered do so.
3. Tellers Appointed. Local expenses covered: Temporary Chairman appoints one or more tellers. He names the sum spent by his Committee in arranging the Assembly meeting and asks the tellers to pass the hat to cover it.
4. First Business — Determining size of State or Provincial Committee: The Temporary Chairman then determines the size of the Committee desired by asking whether Assembly will have three, five, seven, or more Committeemen. He requests a show of hands on these figures in succession, until a majority names the proper number.

* The temporary "host committee" will only be needed for the very first meeting, after which State or Provincial Committees will take over.

5. Election of State or Provincial Committee: Tellers pass blank ballots. The Temporary Chairman then points out that all Committeemen ought to be experienced A.A.'s well known in the area, who would be willing to give close attention to Conference affairs for a two-year period. Temporary Chairman then requests a written ballot for Committeeman No. 1. Tellers count the ballots and report the high man. Unless he declines to serve, he becomes State Chairman at once and takes over the meeting. Similarly the next ballot produces a Treasurer, the next a Secretary, and further ballots the remainder of the Committee. If there are declinations, the process continues until there is a full Committee elected for a two-year term. (Note that this method avoids personal nominations, hence personal controversy.)

6. Trial Attempt to Elect a Delegate by 2/3rds Vote: The Chairman reminds the Assembly, that according to plan, the election of the State (or Provincial) Committee has automatically placed all its members in nomination for the post of Delegate also explains why, to assure unanimity, the election should be by two-thirds vote. Therefore the Chairman asks for a show of hands on this question — “Will this assembly, on a single written ballot, attempt the choice of its Delegate by a two-thirds vote?” Should more than two-thirds of the meeting indicate a desire to try this two—thirds method, a ballot is cast. If one of the Committeemen receives two-thirds or more, he becomes the Delegate for two years. Otherwise the method of election is discarded.

7. Delegate Chosen by Lot: The Tellers then place in a hat the names of each Committeeman willing to serve as Delegate. The first man (or lady!) out of the hat becomes State or Provincial Delegate for two years. The remaining Committeemen become alternates according to the order of their election. The State Secretary records the result together with the names and addresses of his Committee.

8. Duty of Treasurer: The Chairman then directs his Committee's Treasurer to name the sum required from each Group Representative present to cover the newly chosen Delegate's traveling expenses for two years. (This is determined by dividing the number present into the total estimated expense, or \$200., whichever is lower.) The Chairman asks the Assembly for a show of hands whether it wishes to pay one year's traveling expense, or two, in advance. The Treasurer then receives the agreed payment from each Group Representative and issues such Representative a receipt by which he may reimburse himself from his Group's treasury.

Secretary's Report: The Chairman instructs the Secretary to prepare a brief written report of the meeting, listing the names and addresses of Committeemen and Delegate, copy to the Alcoholic Foundation.

Final Business: The Chairman then throws the meeting open to discussion. Questions respecting the Conference, or instructions to be given the new Delegate, may be brought to the floor. Finally, the Chairman announces the date of an Open Meeting to be held after the Delegates return from New York. There the Delegate is to make his personal report to all A.A. members who wish to hear it. Adjournment is then in order. Such is our concept of the typical State or Provincial Assembly. We hope it proves a

successful model for future years. We can only try and see.

Though it may prove desirable, it will not be absolutely necessary to hold Assembly meetings in "off-election years." But returning Delegates in those years ought to make their usual report to Open Meetings held in large centers and should visit as many of their constituent Groups as they can.

Should travel money be lacking for a Delegate in his second year, his State Chairman may circularize the constituent Groups, or his Committee may raise this sum as they deem wise.

When, in the judgment of a State or Provincial Committee, a Delegate becomes incapacitated through alcohol, or otherwise, the Chairman will attend the General Service Conference in his place. If the Chairman cannot attend, he will offer the post of Delegate to his fellow Committeemen in the order of their seniority as determined at the time of their election.

It is hoped, too, that State Chairmen will keep in close contact with the Alcoholic Foundation, addressing their correspondence to the A.A. General Office where one of its secretaries will be named to look after Conference matters.

A special word about Panel No. 2. To place the General Service Conference on a rotating basis, no Delegates can be invited from Panel No. 2 regions until 1952. These States and Provinces will then be approached in precisely the same manner as above described for Panel No. 1.

Since it is felt that Panel No. 2 may be more thinly represented, it seems right to invite additional delegates from those States or Provinces having an A.A. population of more than 2000 to round it out. On Panel List No. 2, attached, a number of cities which can act as "assembly" points for such additional representation are suggested. Provided "Conference Funds" prove adequate, additional cities in heavily populated regions may make application for representation.

Though no Panel No. 2 Delegates can be chosen until 1952, we hope that all States and Provinces will generously contribute to "Conference Funds" during 1951. For unless ample funds are in sight, we shall have to limit the total number of Delegates invited to the Conference. We much hope that won't happen as ultimate success for the Conference will depend upon wide-spread representation.

On the following list, each State, Province or special locality may discover the Panel in which it belongs. These selections were based upon the 1950 Group Directory. In suggesting cities for additional representation, we have been obliged to consider convenience as well as population.

Naturally these arrangements are tentative, experimental. Defects will show up. But we can mend these as we go. We shall begin thus.

IMPORTANT — We hope and believe that we shall be able to invite Delegates from every locality listed, but it might not work out that way at first. Should there be a limited response from all the A.A. Groups when asked for the \$5. Christmas contributions to the “Conference Fund,” we would have to limit out invitations accordingly. We may have to start on a smaller basis than we anticipated. So please don’t feel disturbed or disappointed should we have to limit representation at the start. We’ll do the best we can.

NOTE – Where large centers are near State or national boundaries, there seems no good reason why Groups in adjoining areas may not cross these lines to elect Delegates. For example, at Detroit, Kansas City, Missouri, Buffalo, New York, etc.

SECTION IV

Financing The General Service Conference

How to finance our General Service Conference is a plain guess. We’ll have to make the best estimate we can and try it out. There’s no other way.

First, some background. Lacking close contact, the Foundation has grown remote from the Groups. They have lost the feeling that our Foundation is really theirs. A.A. General Office expenses have soared because of inflation, even though that office isn’t half as big, in relation to A.A.’s size, as it used to be. For these reasons the A.A. Groups haven’t been meeting their current Headquarters expenses; 2000 Groups who could well give a hand, still abstain. The entire burden falls on the remaining 1500 Groups; they carry the load. Nobody is specially to blame for this, it’s simply a condition. One important Conference purpose is to stabilize and correct this very situation. When the A.A. Groups are given direct participation and know the score, they will handle the matter. We are sure of that. Then Conference expenses can be deducted from routine contributions; the difference will scarcely be felt. But that time hasn’t arrived.

Therefore Groups who already contribute, plus those who may soon be interested, are the ones who will make our Conference a success.

Naturally we can’t place the entire financial responsibility upon those Groups who happen to take part in choosing Delegates, either. Many Groups at long distance from State or Provincial “Assembly” points might not be able to help choose a Delegate. Nevertheless we’re positive that hundreds of them, considering this new set-up, would like to make a direct contribution to its success.

Bearing these facts in mind, our tentative financial plan is this:

1. That we ask every A.A. Group in the United States and Canada to contribute \$5. annually, this special gift to be made to the Foundation at Christmas for the benefit of “the millions who don’t know.” Since the Conference would insure the continuance of

A.A. Headquarters, which is our principal lifeline to all those yet to come, this would be the thought.

Such a Christmas-time appeal would create an annual income somewhere between \$5,000. and \$10,000. for Conference purposes. If interest is small, we can invite but few Delegates. If interest is large, we can invite all those who are listed in Panels Nos. 1 and 2. This income will be deposited in a special Foundation account devoted to Conference purposes only and titled "Conference Funds."

Just how would these \$5. Christmas—time contributions be used? Save one exception the Foundation would pay the total expenses of the General Service Conference, the year round. This would include:

- (a) Full hotel bills and meals for as many as 60 Delegates for three days.
- (b) The cost of a suitable meeting place.
- (c) The printing of an annual Conference report to be sent to all A.A. members.
- (d) The cost of secretarial help, correspondence and special mailings.
- (e) All round—trip plane and railroad fares exceeding \$100. in any one year to assist distant Groups with transport of their Delegates.
- (f) Organization expense— distribution of 100,000 copies of this plan, possible travel by Bill, etc.

Each Group Assembly sending a Delegate would pay his round-trip fare to New York not exceeding \$100. per year. Any excess would be chargeable to the Foundation "Conference Fund." Eastern Groups would seemingly have an advantage but it's not great. Because of their numbers, the Easterners would be the principal \$5. Contributors to the "General Funds." Hence their's would be the lion's share of paying all Western fares over \$100. Therefore approximate justice would be done.

Quite obviously, full representation at our General Service Conference is going to depend squarely upon the generosity of some 2000 Groups Contributing \$5. each a year for this very special Conference purpose. It is a responsibility which you—the members of A.A.—will need to take if you are to receive and guard well your Third Legacy, The General Services of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dr. Bob and I have the deepest faith that you are going to accept that responsibility.

SECTION V
Temporary Charter
for the
General Service Conference

“12 Suggested Principles”

We here present a precise statement of “12 Principles” upon which the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous can be founded; principles upon which it may be experimentally assembled, financed and operated during a four-year trial period beginning, if possible, in April 1951.

If in four years the Conference proves its usefulness and has gained wide A.A. acceptance, it may then amend these principles according to the dictates of actual experience. But any such changes in the Conference Principles should, of course, conform to the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous. Meanwhile, we only commit ourselves to giving the Conference – a thorough trial.

On this basis the Trustees, Dr. Bob and I offer you – the members of A.A. -this temporary “Charter” for your General Service Conference:

The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous (North American Section)

1. Purpose: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is expected to become the basic guardian of our A.A. Tradition and World Services. It is especially hoped the Conference will lend guidance to, and perpetuate the Alcoholic Foundation and the A.A. General Headquarters at New York City. The Conference will be a service body only; never a government.
2. Composition: – The Conference will be composed of A.A. State and Provincial Delegates, Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, and Staff members of the General Service Office and Grapevine.
3. Conference Relation to A.A.: The Conference will serve as a vehicle through which the A.A. Movement can effectively express its views upon all matter of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition, thus providing Alcoholics Anonymous with a reliable guide to right thought and wise action upon these serious subjects.
4. Conference Relations to A.A. General Headquarters: The Conference will also be expected to serve as a dependable guide for The Alcoholic Foundation, whose Trustees are the Custodians of A.A. general funds, the book “Alcoholics Anonymous,” the General Service Office and the Grapevine. As such, the Trustees can be expected with favor upon any Conference resolution relating to vital A.A. policy passed by a two-thirds vote of the Conference. In filling vacancies on the Foundation Board the Trustees should be empowered to consult the Conference or a Committee thereof. It must be remembered, however, that the Conference will be informal and

unincorporated and that the Alcoholic Foundation is alone authorized to make contracts, conduct public relations in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous, and insure the financial and managerial integrity of the A.A. General Headquarters. But if the Conference, following a reasonable trial period, becomes a vital and accepted Service of the A.A. movement it should then be entitled to shape and mould its own final form.

5. State and Provincial Delegates — Term of Office: State and Provincial Delegates will be chosen for terms of two years each.

6. Conference Rotation: This will be effected by two panels of State and Provincial Delegates. First Year, Panel No. 1: To be composed by inviting one Delegate from each of those 27 States or Provinces having the largest A.A. population. Second Year, Panel No. 2: To be composed by inviting one Delegate each from the 28 remaining States and Provinces. Panel No. 2 will also invite extra representatives from those States and Provinces having an A.A. population of more than 2000. (See Section III)

7. Conference Delegates – Points at Which Selected: Conference Delegates will be selected at the largest centers of A.A. population within their respective States and Provinces. But Panel No. 2 will ordinarily include Delegates from the next larger centers of each State and Province having more than 2000 A.A. population (See Section III)

8. State and Provincial Delegates – Method of Selection: State and Provincial Conference Delegates will be chosen by Assemblies of A.A. Group Representatives meeting at such dates and places as may be jointly arranged by The Alcoholic Foundation and suitable State and Provincial Committee according to the principles of Point No. 7.

Delegates and alternates will be chosen by election or by lot, or by a combination of these methods. But if elected, a Delegate ought to be chosen by a majority of two-thirds because all Delegates should feel themselves servants of world A.A. rather than marginal victors of troublesome political contests. (See Section III for method of choosing Conference Delegates and State or Provincial Committees.)

9. – The General Service Conference — How Financed: General Service Conference total costs will be apportioned as follows:

(a) Once yearly, each A.A. Group interested will be asked to make a \$5.00 contribution to the Alcoholic Foundation “Conference Fund”

(b) Those Groups within each State or Province who actually participate in naming Delegates will pay their Delegates traveling expenses to and from New York City, not to exceed, however, \$100.00 a year each. It is estimated that any excess above this figure can be absorbed by the “Conference Fund.” (See Section IV for detail.)

10. Conference Meetings: The Conference ought to meet yearly at New York, or

specially if there be an emergency. And two-thirds of the State, Provincial and A.A. Headquarters Delegates registered should constitute a quorum.

11. Ordinary Procedure: The Conference will hear the reports of The Foundation and its related Headquarters Services. The Conference will then advise with the Trustees and Headquarters Staff concerning pending and important matters of finance or general policy affecting the Headquarters or A.A. as a whole, making such suggestions or passing such resolutions as it may deem desirable. The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action concerning serious deviations from A.A. Tradition, or harmful misuse of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous." The Conference will elect its own officers and pass suitable by-laws. Before adjournment the Conference will authorize a Committee to draft a full report on its proceedings and the state of A.A. generally, which will be furnished the Alcoholics Anonymous Groups throughout the world.

12. General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings the General Service Conference ought to observe the spirit of our A.A. Tradition, taking great care: that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds plus ample reserves be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion and vote; that no Conference resolution ever be punitive in character or an incitement to public controversy; that the Conference never attempts to govern Alcoholics Anonymous, and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference ought always remain democratic in thought and action. Perhaps, now, certain questions are coming to mind. For instance:

Q. Why should our Trustees and Headquarters Staff be voting members of the Conference.

A. As the ones most experienced in the conduct of our overall Services, they are obviously entitled to full Conference participation.

Q. Why is a "cross-section of A.A. opinion" so necessary?

A. Future Trustees must have sound advice and vigorous backing. Without that they never could speak for A.A. in years to come. A.A., too, must have a definite means of knowing its own mind. Otherwise serious issues of the future will certainly bring us endless controversy and confusion. A Society such as ours cannot permanently function on emotion, rumor or guesswork; it cannot be well advised by the clamors of small or self-appointed minorities.

Q. Why, on important matters, should a two-thirds vote of the Conference be needed?

A. Since the Conference will meet briefly, and but once a year, our Headquarters Staffs must be given some latitude for independent judgment. Hence they ought not

be too firmly bound by a bare majority. To be binding, a Conference resolution ought to be reasonably unanimous.

Q. Why shouldn't the Conference elect the Foundation Trustees?

A. This would introduce a difficult and unnecessary political problem. It seems better that the Trustees continue to name their own successors, subject to consultation with the Conference or a Committee thereof. Should circumstances warrant, the Trustees would unquestionably look with favor on any advice offered by two-thirds of the Conference respecting the composition of the Foundation Board.

Q. What is meant by "two year rotating panels?"

A. This means that only the Delegates described in Panel No. 1 will attend the 1951 Conference. In 1953 the original Panel No. 1 will be replaced by a new Panel No. 1 chosen from the same area. And so on, ad infinitum. This will make for continuity because only one-half of our out-of-town Delegates will have to be replaced each year. (See Part III, Selection of Delegates.)

Q. Why shouldn't our Conference be a government for Alcoholics Anonymous?

A. Each A.A. Group is autonomous; our only "authority" is a Higher Power. Practically speaking, no A.A. Group will stand for a personal government anyhow; we're built that way. Though the Conference will guide A.A. Headquarters, it must never assume to govern A.A. as a whole. While it can publicly deplore misuse of the A.A. name or departures from Tradition, it ought never attempt punishment or legal restraint of non-conformists—in A.A. or out. That is the road to public controversy and internal disruption. The Conference will give us an example and a guide, but not a government. A personal government is something, God willing, that Alcoholics Anonymous will never have. We shall authorize servants to act for us, but not rulers.

This is the basic structure of our Conference to be. Its framework has long been under study and consultation. We trust that it will commence to meet our evident need; that it will be regarded by all A.A.'s as a safe and suitable beginning.