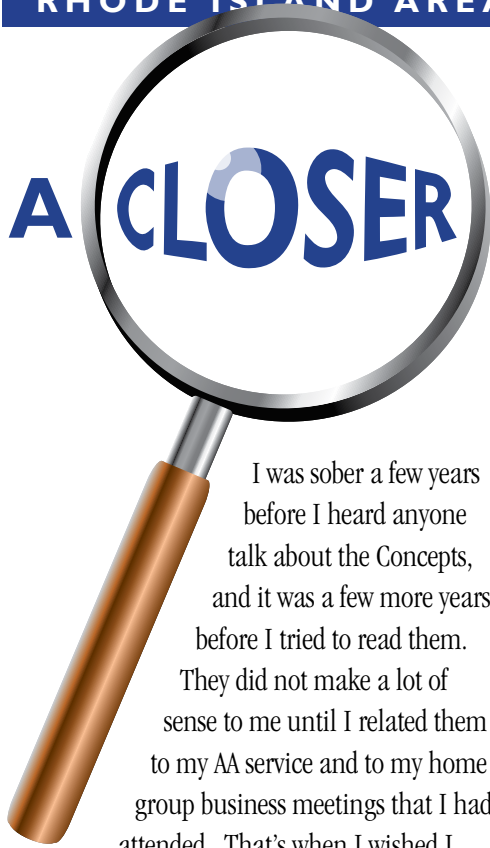


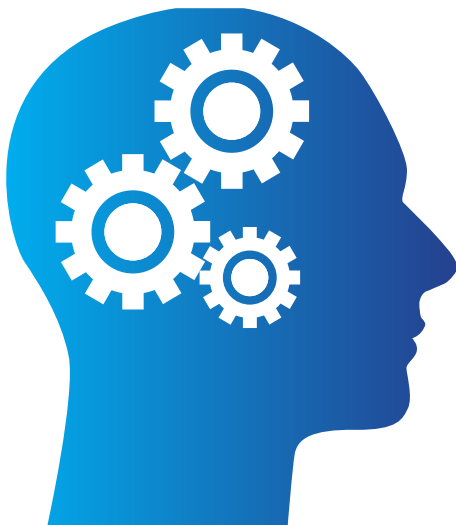
A CLOSER LOOK AT CONCEPT ONE



I was sober a few years before I heard anyone talk about the Concepts, and it was a few more years before I tried to read them.

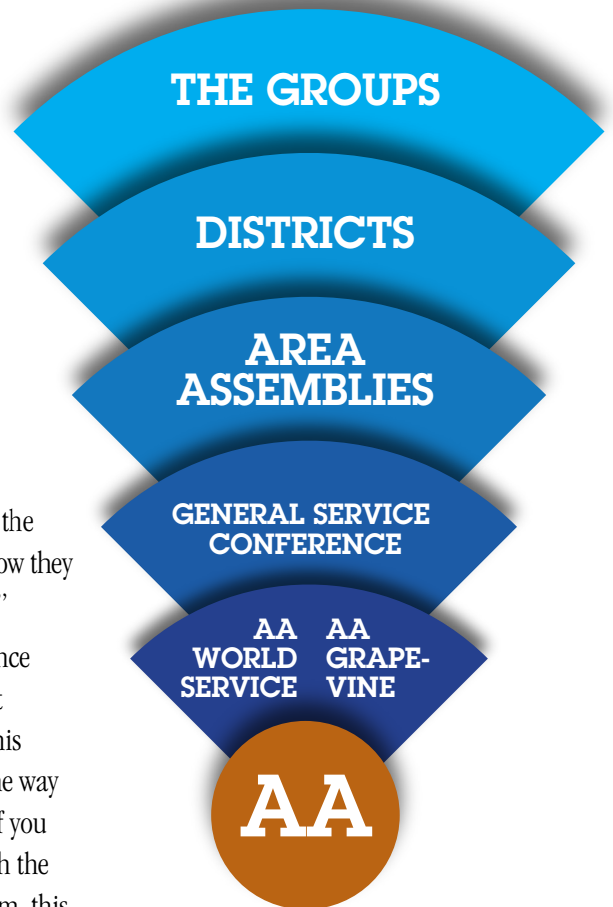
They did not make a lot of sense to me until I related them to my AA service and to my home group business meetings that I had attended. That's when I wished I had read and understood the Concepts (and Traditions) earlier in my AA life. I may have been able to better help guide my group, sponsees, and fellow GSRs.

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



The Concepts took shape when Dr. Bob became ill and he and Bill realized they would not be here forever to guide AA. At the time the Trustees were guided by Dr. Bob and Bill. When Bob and Bill, passed who would help guide them? This is what led to the creation of the Concepts. The Traditions had already been created to help the Groups and the Concepts were needed to help with the functioning of the GSO (General Service Office in NY). Bill felt Concepts should be used to "address the relationship of the service entities and how they could function together most effectively."

When Bill stated "The collective conscience of our whole Fellowship" he truly meant to include our ENTIRE membership. This includes the newest member of AA, all the way down to the General Manager of GSO. If you look at the "Upside Down Triangle", with the Groups on the top and GSO on the bottom, this concept is pretty well explained. The group elects a GSR, the GSRs elect a Delegate, the Delegate goes to the General Service Assembly once a year in April to help guide the General Service Office. The Delegate's work is not done without input from the GSRs (Tradition Two, now you need to read the Concepts and the TRADITIONS). The GSRs, through the attendance at the Area Assemblies, give direction to the Delegate on how to vote on the agenda items at the General Service Conference.



(Again, you need to look in the Service Manual if you are unsure of what the General Service Conference agenda is.)

I could have rewritten Concept I here, but I think Bill did a better job explaining what his plan was. My suggestion to you is get YOUR OWN copy of The Twelve Concepts for World Service or a Service Manual for a more in-depth explanation of the Concepts. The Service Manual has the job descriptions for most AA

(Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

jobs and explains how the AA service structure works. My car has a Service Manual stored in it so that when a question is asked that I'm unsure about, I can try and help.

Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside-down organization because the "ultimate responsibility and final authority for . . . world services" resides with the groups — rather than with the trustees of the General Service Board or the General Service Office in New York.

In Concept I, Bill traces how this came to be. The first step in 1938 was "the creation of a trusteeship," first called the Alcoholic Foundation, renamed in 1954 the General Service Board. Why? To perform the services the groups could not do for themselves: e.g., uniform literature, uniform public information about A.A., helping new groups get started, sharing with them the experience of established groups, handling pleas for help, publishing a national magazine, and carrying the message in other languages and in other countries.

A service office was formed to carry on these functions under the board's direction. Both the board and the office looked

to the co-founders, Bill and Dr. Bob, for policy leadership.

In the midst of the "exuberant success" of early A.A., Dr. Bob became fatally ill and Bill asked, "When Dr. Bob and I are gone, who would then advise the trustees and the office?" The answer, Bill felt, was to be found in the collective conscience of the A.A. groups. But how could the autonomous, widely scattered groups exercise such a responsibility?

Over great resistance by trustees and members devoted to the status quo, Bill managed to "sell" the idea of calling an A.A. General Service Conference (see Concept II), and eleven years later Bill was able to declare, "The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations." This Concept is rooted in Tradition Two, which states:

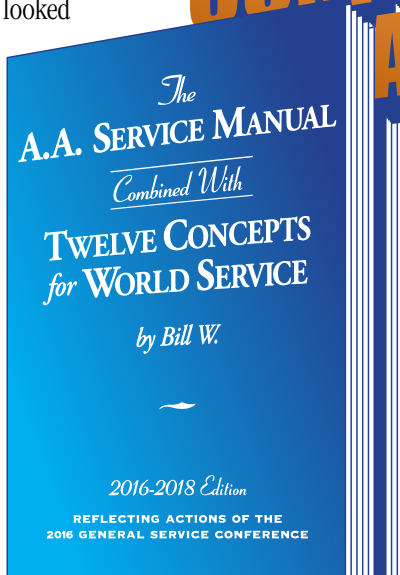
"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

The principles of Tradition Two are crystal-clear, Bill asserts: "The A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities

only." The outside world cannot imagine an organization run this way, but Bill calls it "a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility, and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work."

-- John H.

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE AGENDA



Area Officers

Delegate Mary K.
AreaDelegate@ainri.com

Alternate Steve L.
AreaAltDelegate@ainri.com

Area Chair Alison H.
AreaChairperson@ainri.com

Secretary Gary D.
AreaSecretary@ainri.com

Treasurer Tricia I.
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Convention 2018 Chair Ken D.
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Information Services Phil C.
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Corrections Greg M.
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Grapevine Chair Hope M.
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Treatment/Accessibilities John D.
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A CLOSER LOOK AT CONCEPT TWO



“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.”

In Concept 1 we see that Bill W. turned the business world upside down and created a service structure that held the groups themselves as the ultimate authority and gave them final responsibility for all world services. The group conscience is out there among them and so are the needed funds. The operation is theirs; they really own it. And this has been true since Bill and the old timers gave us the “keys to the Corvette” at St. Louis in 1955.



But in Concept 2 we see that the groups had to delegate the actual operational authority to chosen Trusted Servants, aligned with our 2nd Tradition, who are fully empowered to speak and act for them. This is not a new thing for us. As far back as 1937, the fledgling Akron and NYC groups gave Bill and Bob the authority to create and manage world services. As time went by, Bill and Bob had to find Trusted Servants to help them and so they delegated their authority and formed the Alcoholic Foundation in 1938. At first, they were given the authority to control the money, but that soon expanded to office operations, Public Relations, and the Grapevine. Thus it went for every one of our world services until the Alcoholic Board was in full legal charge of all our affairs.

By the mid 1940s, however, it became apparent to Bill and Bob that they were not going to live forever and their “ultimate authority and final responsibility” should never be given to “faceless” Trustees who the fellowship at large had really no connection. So when, in St Louis in 1955, they gave the fellowship that ultimate authority, they also had to figure out a way

for the fellowship to delegate the operational authority or they would never meet their new responsibilities. It was precisely in order to meet this need that the General Service Conference



“faceless” Trustees

of A.A. was given the general responsibility for the maintenance of A.A.’s world services and so became the service conscience for A.A. as a whole.

Just as Bill and Bob found it necessary to delegate a large part of their active authority to the Trustees, so have the A.A. groups found it necessary to delegate these same powers to the General Service Conference, a body which is a representative cross section of our entire Fellowship.

In my opinion, when Bill passed the torch to us in St Louis in 1955, it was an incredibly selfless and humble act. By setting up a conference and properly delegating and distributing their own authority, responsibility and leadership, he enabled us to take the reins when he was gone and gave us a general service structure that has forged the way for us for over almost 80 years.

--Ken D.



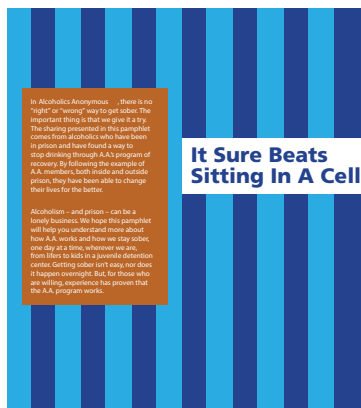
MEETINGS ON THE INSIDE

Below are copies of letters from inmates about their struggles with Alcoholism and what meetings can mean in Correctional Facilities

“Thankfully, we have a few wonderful volunteers who allow us to have a weekly A.A. meeting. I’m an alcoholic and drug addict of 35 years who now has three and half years of sobriety. Without A.A. I would not be able to maintain sobriety in a place like this.” — Chad L., East Central Region

Feeling “A Part Of”

I was introduced to A.A. while in prison the first time, but then it wasn’t for me, or so I thought. ‘It’s for winos and bums!’ Of course, I was just like them, but I did not know it. In the end it didn’t matter how I got to A.A. At first I came for the donuts and coffee, whether my mind was opened or closed to the possibility of getting help in A.A. Then I discovered the pamphlet ‘It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell.’ I thought I was alone with my suffering, but I found people who were just like me, people who had struggled with alcoholism but who found a way out. By listening to what these people had to say I was able to recognize many of the problems that alcohol had caused in my own life. For me, it was the first step toward recovery.” — John T., Pacific Region



Meetings on the Inside

“I am in prison and attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. We meet once a week for two hours, on Fridays. I’ve been in prison almost 20 years now, with five and a half years left to do. I’ve been sober now for almost all of those 20 years. My sobriety means everything to me, and I must stay sober if I am going to make it when I get out. I am 61 years old and I don’t want to die in prison.” — David H., South East Region

Ready to Change

“I would wake up and think about how long I should wait to drink a beer or some liquor. I reasoned with myself that 9 a.m. was not too early. I turned myself in this year for a DWI in 2013, an accident involving an 18-wheeler with my daughter and stepdaughter in the car. They are fine and didn’t get hurt, but I was in ICU for a while and had physical therapy for over a year. You would think that would sober me up! My husband left me and won’t let me see my daughter, and my family has stopped talking to me. I heard about A.A. for years but never thought I had a problem. During my reception into the state prison, I picked up an A.A. book that seemed all right. I’m trying everything I can to get better for my daughter so I can be in her life. I’ve been drinking since I was very young, and I do want to stop. I received my desire chip last night at my first meeting ever. Although this is a long way from who I believed I was, I want to see if A.A. will work for me. I’m ready to change my life.” — Jessica L., South East Region



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HELP WANTED

Below is a listing of open service positions in Area 61. The chief requirements to fill these positions are a desire to carry the message and a willingness to serve.

Archives Committee

- Chair
- Alternate Chair

Grapevine Committee

- Alternate Chair

Treatment and Accessibilities Committee

- Alternate Chair

Information Services Committee

- Alternate Chair

Districts 2&4

- District Committee Member
- Alternate District Committee Member

District 8 (Hispanic)

- Alternate District Committee Member

Corrections Committee

- Men’s ACI Meeting Coordinator: This member works with the Men’s ACI Clearance Coordinator to place new volunteers into meetings that need it and fit into the volunteer’s schedule. The Coordinator also keeps in contact with AA volunteers and our ACI contacts about meeting needs and issues.



**Area 61
Rhode Island
Alcoholics
Anonymous**

**Area 61 has
a new website!**

aainri.com

**Meeting list, Maps, Calendar,
Committee Info
Register for the Convention**

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