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Recordings



District6AA.org

JANUARY 28TH, 2024

Concept I

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

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 . . ."

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We feature a Concept a month, while highlighting A.A. Conference Approved Literature. Hosted online by the Literature Committee of District 6 in Area 15.

LAST SUNDAY OF MONTH - 6PM ET



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The Twelve Concepts for World Service

How Bill W. explained the spiritual principles that undergird A.A.'s structure and how the parts work together.

This is a pamphlet about the Concepts; it is NOT the Concepts themselves. They are found in the book *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, and should be read by every "trusted servant."

As A.A. grew up, it began with the groups — first only a few, then hundreds and then thousands. Very early an Alcoholic Foundation, later renamed The General Service Board, was formed to be responsible for our affairs. And with Dr. Bob's death and Bill's facing up to his own mortality, a General Service Conference assumed the leadership which had fallen to the co-founders. Meanwhile, a tiny publishing operation and service office had grown in size and importance to the Fellowship, and a monthly journal, the AA Grapevine, was being published.

Which of these entities was supposed to do what? Little wonder there was confusion! What was their relationship? Who was in charge? What were their respon-



sibilities — and what were their rights? Bill W. himself was sometimes part of the pulling and hauling that took place, and so he saw the need to "reduce to writing" his concepts of the "why" of the whole structure, the lessons to be drawn from experience, the relationships and, above all, the spiritual principles.

As Bill set them down, the Twelve Concepts are a potpourri: Concepts III through V, IX and XII deal with spiritual principles; the remainder, though they have spiritual overtones, are devoted to describing the relationship of the various service entities and how they work together.

What follows in this pamphlet is an illustrated introduction to the Twelve Concepts. If it is answers or guidance you are seeking, go to the Concepts themselves.

Throughout this pamphlet, wording from the Twelve Concepts themselves (subject to some editing for clarity) is indicated by quotation marks; the rest of the text is either descriptive or explanatory.



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CONCEPTS SCHEDULE 2024

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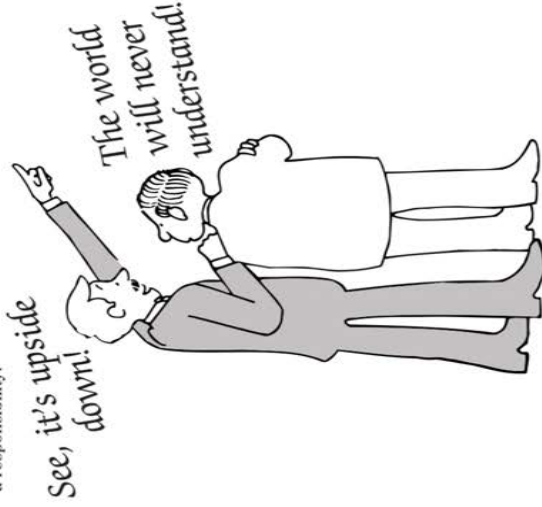
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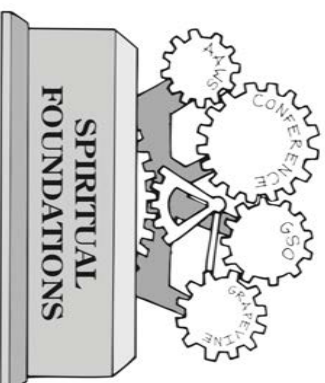
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