

Errata spreadsheets for *On What Slender Threads: A.A.'s Twelve Traditions from a Historical Perspective* by Lyn S.

Errata in three parts:

1. First Errata spreadsheet March 2023
2. Second Errata spreadsheet March 2024
3. Revised portions of Traditions Eight and Nine

Interior Changes Form

Title:

Title Name Here

Change Number	Interior Proof Page	Paragraph Number	Line Number	How the <u>Incorrect</u> Text Currently Appears	How the <u>Corrected</u> Text Should Appear	What's Changing?
Example:	3	5	4	The cow, dog and cat jumpd over the moon.	The cow, dog, and cat jumped over the moon.	Add a comma after dog. Correct the spelling of jumped.
1	xi	1	3	The Big Book and the moved on	The Big Book and then moved on	"the" is changed to "then"
2	xi	3	7	and Colin; all who	and Collin; all who	"Colin" changed to "Collin"
3	xi	3	9	Catherine, Erica, Ian	Catherine, Erika, Ian	"Erica" changed to "Erika"
4	xiii	4	1	I began my research with	I began my study with	"research" changed to "study"
5	xiv	1	1	pain-filled mistakes become	pain-filled missteps become	"mistakes" changed to "missteps"
6	1	4	2	of the mid- to late 1880s,	of 1840 to late 1880s	"the mid-" changed to "1840"
7	9	3	6	of articles in 1940 causing	of articles starting late 1939 and continuing into 1940 causing	"in late 1940" changed to "starting late 1939 and continuing into 1940"
8	11	5	1	the chaos and confusion	the turmoil and confusion	"chaos" changed to "turmoil"
9	20	1	2	been sober 11 ½ years	been sober 15 ½ years	"11 ½ " changed to "15 ½ "
10	20	Footnote	li	from 1957 to 1956	from 1957 to 1966	"1956" changed to "1966"
				Changes below for future edit		

11	22	2	4	anxiety of its 2000 readers	anxiety of some of its 2000 readers	"of its" changed to "of some of its"
12	Xi	3	6	Stacy	Stacey	"Stacy" changed to "Stacey"
13	42	2	5	The Keys to the Kingdom	The Keys of the Kingdom	
14	44			First black group by Jim S./First black group may be in St. Louis	Check <i>Heroes of Early Black A.A.</i> by Glenn C.	
15	42			Dispute about whether Florence died of alcoholism - but she did relapse?	Check resources	
16	xii, 52, 206			Road to Happy Destiny	Road of Happy Destiny	
17	150	bottom		Teibout	Tiebout	
18	115			Dr. Towns'	not Dr.	
19						
20						

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
Preface			
xi	3/6	Stacy W., road to Happy Destiny	Stacey W., "Road of Happy Destiny"
Tradition One			
4	First/1	forty-one	forty-ish
7	4/1	first one-hundred men and women	early members of the Fellowship
8	1/7	After the book's unquestionable merit was established, both men submitted their stories for the Second Edition fifteen years later.	Fifteen years later, after the book's unquestionable merit was established, both men submitted their stories for the Second Edition.
8	Last /1	Four months after	A little over four months after
9	3/4	forays into their evolving	forays into its evolving
13	5/2	which lasted into the late forties.	which lasted through the late forties.
13	7/3	identify as a single Fellowship	identify as a unified Fellowship
14	4/4	be part of general service for groups in the United States and Canada.	be a working part of all A.A. groups.
14	4/5	Groups do this by having an active General Service Representative.	Having a General Service Representative is a good beginning.
15	4/2	as a group and when the groups	as a group to carry the message when groups
Tradition Two			
18	1/all	Eliminate first and second paragraphs including restatement	"For our group purpose." is almost a throw-away phrase. It deserves a moment of reflection in that the phrase ensures A.A.'s unity and protects the common welfare of its members. It binds the First Tradition to the Second Tradition. And, it follows that every Tradition is "For our group purpose."
18	3/1	Upon closer examination,	However, upon closer examination,
18	3/5	did Bill add "Our	did Bill add to the Second Tradition, "Our
19	1/2	Dr. Howard (remove footnote)	Footnote removed
19	3/1	Still, Bill was	Bill was
20	2/1	Bill less-than-	For example, Bill less-than-
20	6/2	which was the primary reason	which was one reason
22	2/2	terminology	phraseology

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
22	2/4	of its 2000	some of the 2000
22	4/3	alcoholics a path	alcoholics throughout the world a path
23	3/3	"sales job"	sales job'
23	5/2	authority'	authority
24	2/5	members'	members
24	2/11	a charge he found himself repeatedly denying	a charge he denied
24	3/8	themselves as cofounders of A.A. its self-supporting philosophy and financial	themselves as cofounders.
25	3/3	transparency protections.	its philosophy of self-support and financial transparency.
25	4/2	he drank four months	he drank a little over four months
27	5/4	Bill does not	Bill did not
28	3/1	that of the co-founders'	that of giving the co-founders'
29	2/1	to resist this idea.	to resist the idea of a representative body of A.A. group members.
30	top	five-year test run.	five-year trial.
30	4/1	first trial run	first Conference in the trial
31	1/1	A.A. shaped policy	A.A. shaped, and continues to shape, policy
31	1/2	test run	trial
31	1/2	of its annual General Service Conference attended by Delegates, hereinafter referred to as the 'Conference.'	of the annual General Service Conference.
31	1/5	groups. Furthermore,	groups (see Tradition Nine in this study). Furthermore,
31	2/2	Canada.	Canada. As of 2024, there are 62 other General Service Conferences representing A.A. groups in different countries.
31	bottom	What is an Informed A.A. Group Conscience?	(deleted)
32	3/1	An effective group conscience is the spiritual principle of	An informed group conscience is a spiritual practice of
32	3/2	practice unity and prioritize the	promotes unity and prioritizes the
32	3/6	govern."	govern." This important sentence certainly applied to the A.A. groups, but was intended also for the Trustees and all other members of the Conference.

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
Tradition Three			
36	4/6	life.(endnote 6)	life(endnote 6).
37	1/8	open up until	open for meetings until
39	1/4	Oxford Group's tenets	Oxford Group
39	4/1	reinforced that part	reinforced part
41	5/4	travelled	traveled
42	1/5	Keys to the	Keys of the
42		he came around to the realization that women	
42	3/3,4	needed	he realized that women, like men, needed
42	4/8	relapsed and died	relapsed. Florence died
43	5/3	Bobbie B. said	Bobbie B., (and footnote) Mentioned several times in this study, Bobbie B. was a major contributor to the success of A.A. through her tireless work at Headquarters during the 1940s. Read Gary Neidhardt's Bobbie B. The Untold Story of A.A.'s "Fantastic Communicator."
44	3/all	Rewrite "According to Pass It On, many black . . . first black group."	Many black alcoholics found sobriety and each other by the mid-1940s. St. Louis and Chicago boasted the earliest recorded black alcoholics groups in the first months of 1945. A few months later, Jim S., whose story, "Jim's Story," is in in the Second, Third, and Fourth Editions of the Big Book, began a black group in the Washington, D.C. area.
45	4/1	Third	recounted the portion of Bill's Third
46	4/4, 5	next day so that it was the only item for that day.	to continue the debate.
Tradition Four			
52	6/2	"trudge the road to happy destiny"	"trudge the Road of Happy Destiny"
53	3/4	doom for A.A's	doom for A.A.'s
54	2/4	Bill and Ruth Hock faithfully	Bill, Ruth Hock, Bobbie B., and others faithfully
56	2/9	Headquarters getting letters of thanks from	letters of appreciation to Headquarters from
58	2/4	However,	Over time,

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
58	2/5		Insert "Forming special groups as a discriminatory practice gave way to particular populations seeking the comfort of being with others who shared their common experiences or professions." after "such groups shifted."
58	3/1	First sentence moved per above row Consequently, the	Subsequently, the
59	3/7	<i>themselves and A.A. group</i>	<i>themselves an A.A. group</i>
59	4/4	A.A.'s conference approved	A.A.'s Conference approved
62	3/5	enough to lead A.A.	enough to assume fiscal responsibility for A.A.
63	line 2	Teibout	Tiebout
63	3/4	1955 themed <i>Coming of Age</i> Conference, a 15- year battle	1955 <i>Coming of Age</i> Conference, an almost 10-year battle
64	line 1	availability of other meetings for different populations	availability of special meetings might be
64	3/1	Finally, in the spirit of the First Tradition, On such issues our common welfare is paramount.	Finally, invoking the spirit of the First Tradition, "On such issues our common welfare is paramount."
65	2/5	conceited Irishman'	"conceited Irishman"
66	3/3	the fact	the important fact
66	4/5	share the good news	share the message
67	line 1	forty-one	forty-ish
73	2/2	were	was
75	3/4	Delete starting with: The General Service Office (G.S.O.) staff first identified - and ending with :possibly inappropriate	The General Service Office (G.S.O.) staff first traced crosstalk to a 1992 central office newsletter for World Service[1]. The newsletter stated that, "Any comments negative or positive, about another's share, experience, life, program or remarks" constituted crosstalk or interference. In short, the only acceptable comment is "Thank you for your share." Then, for emphasis, the newsletter added, "Even comments such as 'When you talk about...it reminded me of my own experience...' are possibly inappropriate

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Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
75	3/4	"World Service"	World Service footnote: [1] World Service is an unincorporated association of service structures of Alcoholics Anonymous in various countries.
76	3/4	anarchy,'	anarchy,
77	Line 4	Women Suffer Too,'	"Women Suffer Too,"
77	4/3,4	(Delete) Why was she reluctant to seek the comfort of her group? Worst of all, was she affecting the National Council on Alcoholism, her creation.	Was she . . . (Previous sentence deleted)
77	5/2	creation.	affecting her creation, the National Council on Alcoholism
79	1/4	However, in the Fifth	However, in his Fifth
79	1/6	"primary" at all.	"primary purpose" at all.
80	4/1	Finally, in Bill	Finally, Bill
82	3/1	Notice, Bill	Bill (delete Notice)
84	2/2	"Fellowship" feet	Fellowship feet'
85	3/3	<i>The Living Church</i>	<i>The Living Church</i>
86	1/3	redirecting	reshaping
89	1/3	Nonetheless, he	Nonetheless, Towns
89	4/2	A.A.'s working in and being paid for their work	A.A.'s being paid for work
90	Line 6	A. A.	A.A. (no space)
90	1/1	<i>AA Tradition</i>	<i>A.A. Tradition</i>
90	3/1	The issue of Clubs	The issue of clubs
92	4/5	of the pamphlet	of the <i>A.A. Tradition</i> pamphlet
93	2/3	the years, without affiliating	over the years, by not affiliating
93	3/2, 3	The old adage that money is the root of all evil certainly contributed to	The early Fellowships's chronic problems with money certainly contributed to
Tradition Seven			
96	2/7	oversight in the form	oversight first in the form
97	2/1	As an aside, Hank had some foresight about the need for businesses to include support for employees struggling with addiction.	Hank's vision to include outside entities that benefited from the program did not come to fruition.
97	3/4	soon as direct beneficiaries were independently	soon as the Fellowship was independently

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Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
		Discouraging as this must have been, Hank formally established the Alcoholic Fund on March 21, 1938, and asked a non-alcoholic "disinterested party," Frank Amos, to oversee the contribution from Rockefeller. With his Rockefeller associates' blessings, Amos agreed and continued for many years after to be a hard-working friend of the Fellowship.	Discouraging as this must have been, Hank asked Frank Amos to be the non-alcoholic "disinterested party" to oversee The Fund. Amos agreed, with his Rockefeller associates' blessings, and continued for many years after to be a hard-working friend of the Fellowship. Thus, The Fund was established and the first check was drawn on March 21, 1938
98	1/1	Fellowship.	
		The Fourth Tradition essay's Rule #62 group apparently	The Rule #62 group, in Bill's Fourth Tradition essay, apparently
99	2/1	Hank did a full court press on Albert	Hank pressed Albert
101	2/1	story	store
102	2/8	commiserate	commensurate
106	3/2	the region	that region
		million to billionaire Indianapolis Colts owner Jim I., who	The manuscript's owner generously makes it available for viewing at the G.S.O. archives and other A.A. venues.
108	1/1, 2	to the members. Our A.A. Group	to the group's members. The A.A. Group
108	4/2, 3	of its costs	of their costs
109	1/5	"contribution"	contribution'
109	2/7	begins with our groups	begins with groups
109	3/1	through our District Meetings, our Area Assemblies, and finally our General Service Office.	through District Meetings, Area Assemblies, and finally the General Service Office [See Tradition Nine in this study].
109	3/2	General Service Office	General Service Board
109	3/3	year. Delete last sentence and hyperlink through the Area's	year on the General Service Office website.
109	3/4	such as clubs.	through an Area's
109	4/1	"paid service workers"	such as early A.A. clubs.
112	4/3	Fellowships' ability	paid service workers
113	5/2	services today's paid	Fellowship's ability
113	Line 4		services paid workers currently provide
113	Line 6		

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
114	1/5	battle between the economic	battle for the economic
115	1/2	Hank, and	Hank P., and
			<p>When Bill told the story of Charles Towns' job offer, it was understandable for Bill to consider taking the position especially given his and Lois's dire financial stress during the last years of his drinking and continuing into his early sobriety. While the Fellowship emphasized the altruistic nature of carrying the message, they had not yet fleshed out the implications of a paid A.A. lay-therapist. Hank, via the group conscience, had a great deal of foresight by helping Bill to see the ramifications of that very difficult decision. As Schaberg rightfully pointed out, "This job offer is one of the more fateful turning points in A.A.'s history. Who knows what might have happened if [Bill] had actually become a lay therapist."</p> <p>A short time later, Dr. Bob received compensation from the Rockefeller donation that gave his family some financial relief so that he could continue to carry the message. In contrast to the Towns job offer to Bill, there appeared to be no resistance to Dr. Bob's arrangement. The obvious problem with the lay therapist job was that Bill's results would have benefited and been credited to Towns Hospital. In contrast, Dr. Bob's pay originated from a donation given to the Fellowship for developing the program. That is, Dr. Bob's work directly helped the Fellowship by growing the number of recovered alcoholics, which in turn provided for the book more evidence that the program worked. The distinctions were in the motive for support and the source of income.</p>
115	3/all, 4/all	Delete first two paragraphs after the header Bill's first struggle with professionalism	
116	Line 1	men received pay for	men received contributions for
116	2/4	Ruth Hock were continuing to work	Ruth Hock continued to work
117	1/2	thus, two-thirds	thus, control two-thirds
118	Line 3	the Fellowships' group consciences and he	the Fellowship's group consciences, and he

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Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
119	Line 2	The Alcoholic Foundation	the Alcoholic Foundation
119	Line 5	for paid assistance to	for paid staff to
119	2/1	"flying blind".	"flying blind."
120	1/2	resurrecting	resurrected
121	2/1	<i>AA Tradition</i>	<i>A.A. Tradition</i>
		As the Fellowship's needs for accomplishing Twelfth Step work became more complex, using cheap labor to support those needs was clearly not the answer.	As the Fellowship grew, Twelfth Step work became more complex, and using cheap labor to address those complexities was clearly not the answer.
122	3/2-4	Which brings us to today's paid service workers in A.A.	122-131 rewritten up to Coming up: the Ninth Tradition (see at end of errata list)
135	1/1	an essential resource replace from Nonetheless, the pamphlet on page 135 up to 145, In its early beginnings, A.A. was organized	an invaluable resource Rewritten portionat end of errata sheet following Tradition 8
145	3/2-3	that an organization managed solely by alcoholics would engender from prospective donors.	that prospective donors would have for an organization managed solely by alcoholics.
146	3/2	Trustees and Headquarters'	Trustees' and Headquarters'
147	6/3	reflected in the themes of the	reflected in the themes he chose for the
150	5/4	Teibout	Tiebout
152	2/2	heirarchy	hierarchy
152	3/1	discussion	study
Tradition Ten			
156	3/10	A.A. is at best praised	A.A. at best is praised
156	4/2	when in the A.A. Fellowship, am I	when fellowshipping with A.A.s and prospects, "Is the discussion part of
156	5/2	the Trustees, and Bill, himself.	the Trustees, and Bill.
157	1/7	when, what Bill called, the	when, according to Bill, the
158	3/3	at a personal	at the personal
159	2/2	A. A.	A.A. (no space)
159	3/2	recovery to many	recovery to more
159	4/2	the Tenth Tradition so that	the Tenth Tradition; so that

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
160	3/9-10	techniques, which partially contributed to the demise of the Emmanuel Approach.	techniques.
161	2/7	written by alcoholics'	written by alcoholics
161	3/2	describing the manifestation of alcoholism as informed	its manifestations as informed
161	5/1	section "What A.A.	section, "What A.A.
161	5/2	do not 'Make medical	do not "Make medical
162	3/6	offered a generically spiritual solution.	individual spiritual solutions.
162	3/3	Bill's repeated religious references	Bill's repeated Christian references
162	3/4	that also likened the program to the godlike guidance	associated the program with the religious guidance
163		Put third paragraph before second paragraph	Put Griffin v. Coughlin ahead of Stafford v. Harrison
164	4/2	by including any opinions	and avoid sharing any opinions
165	Line 3	Fellowship to take in all	Fellowship to all
169	2/4	A.A(endnote).	A.A.(endnote).
170	5/3	"hold forth."	hold forth'.
172	2/6-7	Un-indent	(Not part of quote)
172	4/1	Given that we see the importance	Given the importance
Tradition Eleven			
176	5/1-2	at T. Henry Williams' home	at the T. Henry Williams home
179	3/8	like it or not	like it or not.
179	4/2	protests and proffered	protests with proffered
183	3/2	members not revealing	members <i>not</i> revealing
184	First line	a wonderful, must-have pamphlet for all members, <i>Understanding Anonymity</i> .	a helpful pamphlet, <i>Understanding Anonymity</i> , for all members.
184	3/3	in general use.	general use until after World War II.
185	1/5-12	that include: (eliminate next 2 indented paragraphs)	that included the clever point, "Anonymity is so fragile, you can break it with one finger." Today many General Service Offices post guidelines for ensuring anonymity in a digital world. It is worthwhile for groups to explore those resources so that members, especially newcomers, are confident that their anonymity is respected according to their wishes

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
Tradition 12			
189	2/5		publishing their book.
191	5 and 7 para	Fifth and Seventh Paragraph are indented	unindent "She directed her..." and "Her boundless gratitude
192	1/1	point speaks to	point spoke to
192	2/3	and Dr. Bob and A.A. members often ignore it.	and Dr. Bob. Many A.A. members are not aware of this plea.
192	4/4	Regardless, both men had one	Regardless, there was one
192	5	Indent quote beginning "Dr. Bob was . . .	
194	5/5	Based on my own brief reflection,	A simple example of such a reflection might be,
195	Tradition 1	self for unity and common welfare.	set aside self for A.A. unity and the common welfare of all members.
195	Tradition 2	conscience; acknowledging that there are no leaders; only trusted servants.	conscience; leaders serve the group only as trusted servants.
195	Tradition 4	when autonolmy of the group, not the individual, serves only to improve how it serves struggling alcoholics	when the group seeks only to improve how it carries the message.
195	Tradition 7	when self-support is by the group, and not by the individual.	when self-support is provided by the members of the A.A. group.
195	Tradition 8	work but strive	work and strive
196	5/6	"educational" example. Then I had a "Marty moment"	educational' example. Then I had a "Marty Moment"
197	Line 2	in <i>Pass It On</i> , after	in <i>Pass It On</i> , well after
199	Line 7	gifted	<i>gifted</i>
200	2/3	higher power	Higher Power
201	1/3	anonymity, consider adding two reminders:	anonymity, they might consider including a reassurance that:
203	header	Hass A.A. achieved unity?	The practice of A.A. unity today
203	2/1	Add before first sentence	Unity in A.A. is a kindred spirit to the program's reassurance that, in practice, the member seeks progress, not perfection. It is up to each group to conduct a self-examination of how its members have progressed toward the ideal – unity.
206	3/1	This	The

ERRATA SHEET

Location	Paragraph/Line	What it was like ...	What it is like now ...
206	4/1	road to Happy Destiny	"Road of Happy Destiny"

Tradition 8 – From page 122 (*Which brings us to today's paid service workers in A.A.*) up to *Coming up: the Ninth Tradition* on page 131

Which brings us to today's paid service workers in A.A.

When studying this Tradition, it is essential to explore the broad scope of tasks for today's A.A. paid service workers. In specified geographical locations, groups work in partnership to support intergroup or central offices in the U.S. and Canada. The proximity of these offices provides more convenient and effective A.A. services for their nearby groups. Now there are entities similar to intergroup or central offices all across the globe. These offices rely on volunteers, but may be large enough to employ one or two special workers. Among their multitude of tasks, they purchase literature and other materials, answer inquiries, refer new prospects to members, and facilitate committees' activities including local outreach. Generally, per Tradition Nine, a committee of A.A. volunteers manage or have oversight over these important offices' finances and staff.

While paid service workers in intergroup or central offices and other A.A. service entities are possible by the Eighth Tradition, there are also paid service workers at over sixty *general service offices* across the world. Besides being a hub of A.A. services for specific countries, many of these offices support a representative Conference committee in their respective countries. How did such an expanded form of A.A. services across the world come about? When the Alcoholic Foundation Office, or Bill's Headquarters, was renamed the General Service Office in 1955, concurrently the Conference (after successfully completing its five-year trial) became the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous and was established as the guardian of the World Services of A.A. and of the Twelve Traditions. Bill emphasized in the first Conference Charter that the "Conference (North American Section)" would be a service body only, never a government for A.A. Bill also envisaged in the original Charter that there would be other "Sections" of the Conference established in foreign lands to accommodate language and geographical needs. In such an event, the Conference (North American Section) would be the designated "Senior Section."

A.A. continued its rapid international growth necessitating a corresponding change in a revised "Current Conference Charter." The Senior Section was renamed the Conference (U.S./Canada) and the revised Charter acknowledged the creation of autonomous General Service Conferences in other countries "which rely on the Steps and Traditions that are protected by the United States/Canada Conference." As of 2023, there were 63 General Service Conferences across the world and they each have a *general service office* that serves the Conference. These Conferences maintain collaboration with the U.S./Canada Conference.

While there may be structural differences between the *general service offices* world-wide that host their own Conferences, they are similar to the senior office in that they make available a

wealth of information to help groups in their geographical areas to operate effectively within and beyond their meetings. And all rely on the help of volunteer trusted servants and paid staff.

For example, in New York City, G.S.O.'s standing offices support the common needs and interests of most intergroup or central offices, Area Service committees, groups, and other service entities in the U.S. and Canada. The names of some of G.S.O.'s offices should strike a familiar chord with A.A. members who have served on committees in their local areas. These standing offices, sometimes referred to as "Desks," are Literature, Corrections, Public Information (PI), Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Accessibilities and Treatment, Group Services, and Archives. There also are offices that support regular meetings such as the Conference, Regional Forums, and International Conferences. Finally, there are administrative offices essential for running a business operation such as IT Services, and Digital Media.

Much like Bill, Dr. Bob, Ruth Hock, Bobbie B., and others in the Headquarters of A.A.'s early days, G.S.O. staff and staff assistants handle correspondence and databases and assist with presentations and reports. Today, twelve staff, who are also members of A.A., rotate their standing office assignments every two years. These important paid staff use their valuable experiences to help with:

... group problems through extensive correspondence, emails and telephone calls with members sharing G.S.O.'s store of accumulated A.A. experience, archival information, A.A. literature, *Box 4-5-9* articles and other Fellowship resources.

With the help of paid staff assistants, who are not required to be A.A. members, the twelve alcoholic staff members serve around 70,000 groups or 1.4 million members. They also serve an additional 1,500 groups or 38,000 members in corrections facilities.

Conference planning and reporting

The General Service Conference (U.S./Canada) meets every year to discuss and decide on A.A. policy, literature, and other current issues. The 135 members of the Conference include Delegates from 93 Areas in the U.S. and Canada, 21 Trustees who are volunteers (unpaid), six non-Trustee Directors, and 15 A.A. paid staff, all of whom fully discuss issues and then put forward to the General Service Board final decisions (Advisory Actions) or recommendations (Additional Considerations). The A.A. paid staff serve the set of Trustees committees and the corresponding Conference Committees (Literature, Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, etc.). Besides planning the Conference, paid staff prepare all necessary background information, support the committees' meetings, and write their reports. A.A. members may more fully appreciate the scope of this work by reading the Final Conference Report available on the A.A. General Service Office website.

Business portions of A.A. are “special workers” on a large scale and are necessarily incorporated

Hank P. thought that A.A. should separate the spiritual from the material by keeping the publishing company separate from the Alcoholic Foundation. It turns out that A.A. has separated the material, but has retained spiritual accountability through its volunteer trusted servants and paid staff. First, we will look at the two corporate entities under the custodial care of A.A.’s Trustees on the General Service Board. This overview will include the ever-expanding international outreach of our paid service workers. We will then very briefly discuss how Bill crafted the structure of general service, including the Trustees’ custodial care for A.A.’s corporations, so that the material is separate from the spiritual.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc.

A.A.W.S.’s purview is over all services, publishing, finance, archives, and it is responsible for A.A.’s website and broad publishing efforts. Staff coordinate the production of literature in various formats and translations. This includes braille and media in American Sign Language. To get a sense of the span of literature made available by the Publishing Department, peruse the *Alcoholics Anonymous Conference-Approved Literature and other A.A. Approved Material* available online from the A.A. General Service Office. In the back portion of this catalog, there is a list of translations of A.A. literature covering the globe including specific dialects within regions. Translated literature includes Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese, Indonesian, Italian, Punjabi, and Zulu languages to name only a very few.

Among many other assignments, staff coordinate and facilitate a Loners-Internationalists Meeting bulletin for members who are in remote areas, are serving in occupations not tied to a geographic region such as the Merchant Marines, or are culturally restricted from participating in A.A. events. The International Office staff serve as a liaison to *general service offices* in other countries and respond to queries from outside the U.S. and Canada. Finally, G.S.O. staff create a wealth of free service material that are resources based on groups’ experiences, some A.A. historical summaries, and A.A. data capsules. Search for “Service Material” on the General Service website.

There are over 49,000 groups or almost 500,000 members outside of the U.S. and Canada. Overall, A.A.W.S. serves over 120,000 groups or almost 2 million members worldwide. There is A.A. activity in an estimated 180 countries, including aforementioned 62 autonomous *general service Conferences* outside of the U.S. and Canada.

Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc. is a publisher of multimedia content that is accessed directly from the Fellowship. The *Grapevine* carries the message through print, streaming, and other platforms. Embraced as the “international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous,” A.A. Grapevine, Inc. also produces a bimonthly Spanish-language magazine, *LaViña*.

And still, these are only a few of the services A.A.’s paid workers provide to make carrying the message possible.

Separating the spiritual from the material

The Delegates adopted *The Twelve Concepts* at the twelfth General Service Conference on April 26, 1962. Bill defined the *Concepts* as the “twelve principles of service that have emerged from A.A.’s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning.” While portions of the *Concepts* are relevant to the oversight of A.A.’s corporate structures, they also describe the spiritual principles that underscores A.A.’s Legacy of Service through the interactions of A.A.’s members, its various entities, and its service workers:

The General Service Board has custodial oversight over both of these corporations, which it exercises by electing the directors of each. While the General Service Board does not interfere with the daily operation of either corporation, it does have the ultimate responsibility for seeing that both operate in the best interest of the Fellowship as a whole.

The makeup of the two boards of directors, one for A.A.W.S. and the other for *Grapevine*, is a good example of the application of the Concept IV right of participation, which has resulted in *well-informed and highly unified boards of directors, and ruled out authoritarian and institutional operation styles that would conflict with A.A. principles* (emphasis added). In particular, the non-Trustee Directors of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. evidences Concept IV, the right of participation, in that they are voting members of the Conference.

Hank could not imagine a system that would separate the material from the spiritual. Bill created that system through A.A.’s general service structure and the *Twelve Traditions* and *Twelve Concepts*.

Those who labor in service for us are worthy of their hire

Clearly, A.A. members and groups would want paid professionals to oversee A.A.’s web sites and other information technology resources. Pamphlets and publications require good writers and editors. Digital media, translations of our literature, and rigor in keeping A.A.’s

archives require professionals in those fields. Finally, managing an effective workforce is a special talent. A.A.'s paid workers are worthy of their hire!

The A.A. Group pamphlet provides an explanation of how A.A. pays for its service to struggling alcoholics around the world.

Like the expenses of other A.A. activities, those of the General Service Office are met generally by group and individual contributions. Since these contributions do not completely cover the cost of A.A.'s world services, publishing income is used to help offset the deficit.

It seems Bill's choice to over-ride the group conscience about giving the Big Book away may have been a good decision. There is no better illustration of the impact of that decision than the A.A. World Service Meeting.

A.A. World Service Meeting

How do all of our General Service structures collaborate? Every two years, the International Office in G.S.O. organizes and provides the report for A.A.'s World Service Meeting. The meeting is an unincorporated association of service structures of Alcoholics Anonymous in various countries. Information about the meeting is in the pamphlet, *Your AA General Service Office*.

The World Service Meeting (WSM), started in 1969 and now biennial, is held alternately in New York and an overseas country. An A.A.W.S. staff member handles correspondence with members and groups in countries without a structure, works with the Publishing Department on translations of A.A. literature, coordinates the WSM and is responsible for the *World Service Meeting Report*.

The link to the most recent *World Service Report* is available online at the A.A. General Service Office. The 2022 report included a list of the 66 *general service offices* and Literature Distribution centers located across the world. It is a must-read for all A.A. members to appreciate how their contributions ensure A.A.W.S.'s success in making recovery possible everywhere.

As of 2023, the labors of trusted servants who are volunteers and paid staff who help make it possible to carry the message have made recovery possible in the U.S./Canada for 88 years and they sustained the Conference (US/Canada) for 68 years. Similarly, carrying the message beyond the U.S./Canada has been possible only through the dedicated work of volunteers and paid staff so that A.A. in Mongolia could celebrate 25 years, in Mauritius 43 years, in South

Africa 77 years, and in Nicaragua 70 years. In 2023, A.A. Korea had its 22nd International Convention, and A.A. Iran held its 3rd International Convention.

This is but a small snapshot of what A.A.'s Eighth and Ninth Traditions have made possible.

The Eighth Tradition is the foundation for freely given Twelfth Step work while separating the material from the spiritual so that this altruistic service is possible for anyone anywhere. The Eighth and the Ninth Traditions make possible a service structure that allows A.A.'s around the world to share the solution to their common problem, alcoholism.

Tradition 9 – *From page 136 (Nonetheless, the pamphlet distinguishes . . .) up to page 145 (In its early beginnings, A.A. was organized)*

Nonetheless, the pamphlet distinguishes *A.A. groups* from *A.A. meetings*. *A.A. groups* continue “to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide Twelfth Step help.” A group can continue “to exist outside” if it’s members intentionally commit to supporting services that carry the message beyond its own meetings. Such a commitment harkens back to why Bill wrote the Big Book - to carry the message to struggling alcoholics who would not be able to travel to Akron or New York. That hard-fought commitment resulted in a historic service that saved thousands of lives in a few short years; and, it continues to do so today. For a group “to exist outside” the meeting requires a vision of Twelfth Step work that employs a variety of means to reach unseen alcoholics from multi-faceted cultures and diverse perspectives, who may be in the neighborhood or on the opposite side of the globe. Such an effort usually does not provide the direct satisfaction of a Twelve Step call; but combined groups’ potential to reach more suffering alcoholics is without comparison (See Tradition Eight in this study).

A.A.’s tradition of unity and common welfare is demonstrated when combined groups live and work together through Tradition Nine. A.A.’s volunteer service committees, enable groups to carry out the primary purpose of A.A. as the Fellowship’s extended hand. Groups that want to examine the ways they can work with other groups may want to consider the following progression of outreach services, from planning events to participating in A.A.’s general service structure.

Groups or combined groups may want to create special events for reasons they believe will expand their outreach for Twelfth Step work. *A.A. Guidelines* provides, among its many helpful publications, one that is specifically on how to organize “Conferences, Conventions and Roundups.” Based on the shared experience of A.A. members in various service areas, these

recommendations are an invaluable resource for planning anything from special open meetings to conventions. *A.A. Guidelines* address many other topics and are available online from the A.A. General Service Office.

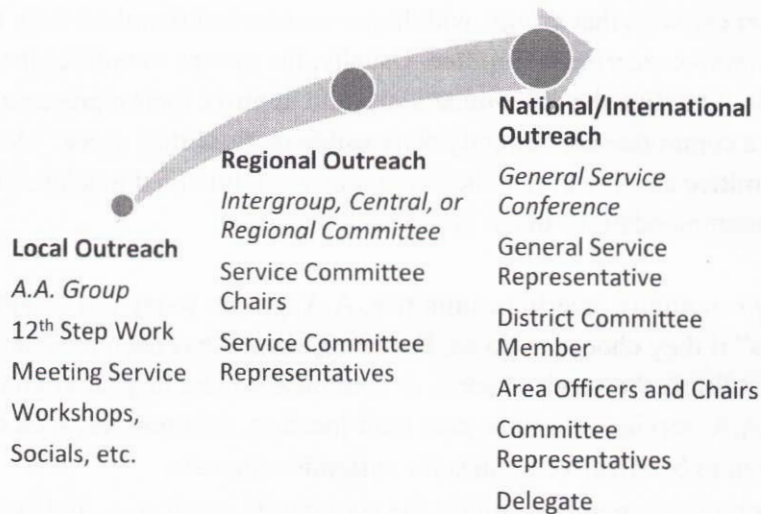
The *A.A. Group* pamphlet explains that groups with larger numbers of members may find it convenient to form a *representative* steering committee. Usually, the groups or entities that the steering committee serves should define the committee's role and approve their representatives. The trusted servants of such a committee are "directly responsible to those they serve." As a subset of the group, the committee can streamline the amount of work involved in addressing issues and then bring their recommendations to the group for a decision.

Using the model of a *representative* steering committee, A.A. groups today can "create service boards or committees" if they choose to do so. However, since it has been over seventy years since Bill wrote this Tradition, the service boards or committees most helpful to groups may already be available in A.A. service structures near their location. Committees, such as the ones listed below, have proven to be effective models for systemic outreach:

- Public Information committee members inform the community about A.A. and carry the message locally using a range of methods that are suitable for letting struggling alcoholics know where meetings and groups are located.
- Archives committee members generate an historical timeline of A.A. in their area and catalogue local groups' histories.
- Treatment Facilities/Corrections committee members serve as liaisons to area treatment and corrections facilities organizing on-site meetings and transition assistance (Bridging the Gap).
- Literature and *Grapevine/La Viña* are usually two separate committees whose members are resources for procuring and distributing their publications to the groups and individual members.
- Cooperation with the Professional Community committee members focus on cooperation, not affiliation, by sending members' to provide information about A.A. at professional organizations' conventions and at other professional venues.

Collaborating A.A. groups have members who serve on these committees (and other service committees) resulting in a cohesive outreach that is broader and more visible for struggling alcoholics in a complex society. As groups consider outreach services, it will help to think about the ripple effect of the service on carrying the message.

The Ripple Effect of Carrying the Message through Service



All of this is to say that opportunities abound for any member who wishes to participate in outreach service beyond the meeting.

The second part of the Long Form of this Tradition presents a model for organizing service offered by combined groups beginning with intergroup, central, or other regional committees. The discussion will extend from these types of committees to an expansive cooperation and outreach that is attained by a *representative* service committee commonly known as a General Service Conference. This particular application of A.A.'s general service structure gives A.A. groups a voice in issues related to A.A. literature, policy, and other A.A. concerns.

Long Form Part 2: The essentials for groups' combined efforts: service in Central or Intergroup Committee

And the groups of a large metropolitan area [may have a] central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary.

Groups in more sparsely populated areas may have intergroup or central committees as well. Today there are similar A.A. entities worldwide that serve specific geographical locales. All of these invaluable centers of resources and services depend on the active engagement of their

surrounding A.A. groups. If there is such an office that operates in an A.A. group's locale, that group may be able to have a member serve, with volunteers from other groups, on a committee that provides oversight of the office's services and finances. An additional advantage of this cooperation is that it provides a venue for groups to participate in the aforementioned outreach service committees (Public Information, Literature, Treatment Facilities, etc.) enhancing the potential for more effective outreach beyond groups' usual bounds.

Not all A.A. groups are in locales that can sustain an intergroup, central, or regional office, even in the U.S. and Canada. However, all A.A. groups in the U.S., Canada, and abroad have access to the services offered by the General Service Office, a component of Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc. (A.A.W.S.), in New York. Additionally, there are now 66 General Service Offices and Literature Distribution Centers located around the world. These service offices provide support that establishes more opportunities for volunteers to join "service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." General Service Offices usually require oversight by a *representative* steering committee known as the General Service Conference.

The first Concept in A.A.'s Legacy of Service states, "The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship."

Wait a minute! How can one A.A. member or one A.A. group be part of such an all-encompassing, *voluntary* effort to help alcoholics anywhere? More importantly, how can alcoholics – children of chaos – be responsible for and authorities of A.A.'s world services?

A part of the answer, and only a part of the answer, lies in the General Service Conference. Thus, the Fellowship's accountability begins with individual A.A. members' and A.A. groups' collective conscience as expressed for the General Service Conference committee in their locale.

What follows is a broad description of how that collective conscience works in the U.S. and Canada, which generally parallels the structure of Conferences in other parts of the world.

The U.S. and Canada General Service Conference is a *representative* committee of approximately 135 members;

2/3 of the voting body are Delegates (A.A. volunteers); one Delegate from each of 93 Areas in the U.S. and Canada,

1/3 of the voting body is made up of 21 Trustees (nonalcoholic and A.A. volunteers), and 21 people who are either A.A. staff, non-Trustee Directors of A.A.W.S. and the A.A. Grapevine, or non-alcoholic staff.

In essence, over 90% of the voting body are members of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is the collective conscience of this Conference that represents the responsibility and ultimate authority of all A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada. That is, all A.A. groups who participate by having an active General Service Representative can exercise that responsibility and authority.

The G.S.R. connects the A.A. group to the General Service Conference

All A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada are associated with one of the 93 Areas (sometimes called Regions in other countries). Each group can elect to have a General Service Representative (G.S.R.), who serves as the group's liaison to their designated Area committee. Through active involvement with the group's Area committee, the G.S.R. is an essential part of the communication channel to the General Service Conference that includes the 21 Trustees on the General Service Board who are charged with carrying out the decisions of the Conference. The G.S.R. is the A.A. group's vote on matters pertaining to the Conference. The *A.A. Service Manual* says:

It might be helpful to think of general service as a kind of dialogue or communication between the groups, the trusted servants working on their behalf, and the General Service Office and General Service Board as they all manage the Fellowship's affairs.

Therefore, through its G.S.R., each A.A. group can contribute to the collective conscience for the General Service Conference by forming "a group conscience on proposed changes or actions on matters relating to A.A. as a whole." The graphic, "Structure of the Conference *U.S. and Canada*," in *The A.A. Group* pamphlet, purposefully places A.A. groups at the top of an upside-down triangle. The illustration portrays the service structure as one in which the A.A. group is at the top of the chain of responsibility and authority in A.A.'s general service structure. When a group wants to weigh in on a matter of A.A. policy:

1. The group's G.S.R. shares the recommendations of the group conscience with the District committee or other service committee as defined by each Area's service structure.
2. The District committee (or similar structure) is a service committee of G.S.R.s from the groups in an assigned District. The District's G.S.R.s select a representative, District Committee Member (D.C.M.), who shares with the Area committee the sense of the groups in the District.
3. The Area committee holds a special meeting to discuss the agenda for the upcoming General Service Conference. The Delegate, elected by the Area committee, listens to the discussion at the Area's pre-General Service Conference meeting.
4. The Delegate attends the General Service Conference and fully discusses issues with the other voting members, putting forward to the Trustees on the General Service

Board final decisions (Advisory Actions) or recommendations (Additional Considerations).

5. The Trustees, as custodians of A.A.'s corporate entities, implement the decisions and recommendations of the Conference.

In essence, the channel of communications is dependent on the A.A. groups' participation and is only possible through the efforts of trusted servants (volunteers) at each level. The Eighth Tradition discussion included the invitation to seek out the Final Report of Conference available on the A.A. General Service Office website from the standpoint of the support that paid staff provide. It helps now to look at the same report from the standpoint of the scope of what the volunteers in the Conference accomplish.

To learn more about A.A.'s General Service structure and the Conference, see *The A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

But the work doesn't occur only during the Conference.

The table below is a subset of the Conference committees that have the most impact on helping A.A. groups to carry the message, and it illustrates the connection between Traditions Eight and Nine that has been established by Bill's vision for A.A.'s service structure.

The center column lists that subset of General Service Conference committees.

The right column lists the Trustees' committees that work in tandem with those committees

The left column lists the corresponding offices where paid workers per the Eighth Tradition support trusted servants per the Ninth Tradition by assisting with the preparation, discussion, and recommendations of the Conference and Trustee committees.

Traditions Eight and Nine at Work		
G.S.O. A.A. Staff Offices	General Service Conference	Corresponding Trustees Committees
Accessibilities & Remote Communities	Treatment and Accessibilities	
Conference	Agenda	General Service Conference
Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.)/Treatment	Cooperation with the Professional Community	Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.)/Treatment and Accessibilities
Corrections	Corrections	Corrections
Literature	Literature	Literature
Public Information	Public Information	Public Information

Archives	Archives	Archives
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Facilitated by the connective nature of the above service committees between the Conference, paid staff, and the Trustees, there is an abundance of activity that continues before and after the Conference. The General Service Board meets quarterly usually to bring actionable projects to completion and then put them onto the agenda for the next Conference. The Trustees committees provide a report each quarter on their progress that can be found on the General Service Office website. Individual members and A.A. groups also contribute to the continued activity of the General Service Office desks. For example, the Area committee usually has the same committees described in the above table. Those committees depend on volunteers to review policies and literature so that they can find ways to improve carrying the message to suffering alcoholics in their Area. They can propose improvements or clarity to existing resources; or they can even propose new resources. This could require back-and-forth with the relevant offices in the General Service Office and it certainly helps to involve the Area's Delegate. The A.A. staff accumulate a wealth of knowledge and information throughout the year when members and groups throughout the 93 Areas contact their desks with questions and concerns.

The Seventh Tradition plays a significant role in the activity and the continuity of the Conference and other A.A. service entities. A.A.'s independence from outside influence is protected by its philosophy of self-support. Only A.A. members and groups are allowed to contribute to the finances and provide the voluntary work of its service committees. In particular, groups elect how to partition their excess contributions should they choose to support their intergroup or central office, district (or other entity), their Area, or the Conference through its General Service Board. Guidelines are in the pamphlet *Self-support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix* provided by the General Service Office.

This connectivity and continuum of interaction plays a vital role in the success of shaping decisions that will help carry the message of recovery.

Finally, A.A. online has grown exponentially so that it is now a common experience for A.A.s from around the world to not only share an A.A. meeting but to also share ideas for carrying the message. A.A.'s everywhere can now attend International Conventions hosted by different countries. The International and Convention desks in Alcoholics Anonymous World Services support this expanded wealth of experience, strength, and hope through working in tandem with the Conference's and Trustees' International Conventions and Regional Forums Committees. Therefore, the potential for A.A. service worldwide is a new and exciting arena for sharing and demonstrating A.A.'s primary purpose.

Through active and engaged volunteers in the service structure channel, A.A. groups that choose to "exist outside" the meeting can contribute new and exciting ideas for carrying the

message, and more importantly, decide through the General Service Conference *how to make Twelfth Step work possible*.

Long Form Part 3: The essentials for our General Service Board

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 [in] New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine.

Harkening back to the last paragraph in Bill's essay on the Ninth Tradition, one can see his determination to reinforce the future Conference's strength when he said, "Even our Foundation, once an independent board, is today directly accountable to our Fellowship. Its trustees are the caretakers and expeditors of our world services."

Whew! And yet, Bill claimed A.A. was not organized? How and why was that? It helps to go back to the years before the Conference when all decisions for A.A.'s future were made by Headquarters (Bill and Dr. Bob) and the Alcoholic Foundation's Trustees, the majority of whom were non-alcoholic. We will then conclude with the remaining portion of the Long Form of the Ninth Tradition.