

# Perry Hall Speaker Group – Group Conscience

July 18, 2008

## Contents

Primary Purpose  
Group Conscience Meetings  
Scheduling Speakers  
Service Structure  
Court Slips and Attendance Slips  
Treasury  
Positions  
Old Business  
Treasury Report  
Inventory

## Primary Purpose

The group conscience places emphasis on the word “its” in the fifth tradition. We believe that each effective group of Alcoholics Anonymous has “its” own message. By defining this message and agreeing that carrying this message is our primary purpose, all further dilemmas or motions raised in group conscience need merely to pass one test...Will this enhance our primary purpose or distract us from it?

The group has defined “its” message as: Hope is available through God dependence and service to others. This message is carried most effectively by one alcoholic sharing with another, using the Big Book for guidance and inspiration.

**Reference** The fifth tradition short form: Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**Reference** The fifth tradition long form: Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose - that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

## Group Conscience Meetings

In the spirit of the second tradition, the group has decided to place emphasis on the word “informed” as it is explained in the published literature concerning the traditions (in 12 & 12, A.A. Comes of Age and several pamphlets describing A.A.’s Twelve Traditions). Informed group conscience is desired over simple group conscience. The group believes that two or more people can be in agreement and still be delusional. The group has adopted the following guidelines for two reasons: (1) to minimize the chances of the group conscience meeting distracting us from our primary purpose of being available to the man/woman who is still suffering, and (2) to minimize attracting people who are not

committed to the primary purpose of the group, who would join/vote/steer group conscience decisions without being informed.

Guidelines:

1. All efforts to be as informed as possible are always preferred.
2. Avoid group conscience meetings immediately following the meeting, except in extreme circumstances and only when they are guaranteed to be so short as to not affect our ability to talk with the newcomer after the meeting.
3. Schedule regular group conscience meetings once every six months (October and April) at 7pm, to be finished by 8pm, so not to affect our ability to welcome the newcomer before the meeting.

**Reference** The second tradition short form: 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.

**Reference** The second tradition long form: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

### **Scheduling Speakers**

We believe that all efforts should be made to ensure that speakers at our home group carry a message that will help the group to achieve its primary purpose. We believe that our ability to do this would be severely limited by simple geography if we assign this responsibility to one person. Therefore, the group has assigned the responsibility to all home group members to, in their normal travels, look for speakers that are carrying a similar message to the group's message, attain their contact information and forward that information to the elected speaker scheduler who has the following responsibilities:

1. Ensure that someone is scheduled to speak each night,
2. Recognize anniversaries of home group members, with the following guidance:
  - a. Employ all efforts to schedule only speakers who are carrying a message similar to the group's message,
  - b. Joining the group does not automatically qualify the person to speak for his/her anniversary. If the speaker scheduler receives a request from a celebrant who claims to be a home group member and the speaker scheduler believes or suspects that the celebrant is not carrying a message that will help the group achieve its primary purpose, he/she is expected to deny the celebrants request to speak at his/her anniversary. It is suggested that the speaker scheduler gather the opinions of as many other home group members as possible before making this decision,
3. Solicit home group members to continue to scout for speakers to schedule.

## **Service Structure (Opinion)**

The group realized that its opinion concerning the service structure was negative and possibly uninformed or misinformed. We organized and executed a mini-conference on Love & Service to invite some people who had positive experiences with the service structure to come and share their experience. We also invited some speakers to speak at our home group who had positive experiences with the service structure. After hearing these speakers, the group's opinion was only confirmed.

Group Conscience has agreed upon the following:

1. The current state of the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous is effectively removed from the primary purpose of helping the sick and suffering, spiritual malady alcoholic to find hope through God dependence and service to others.
2. In the spirit of autonomy, the groups that support the service structure should be allowed to follow their desired path and their convictions, and therefore we believe that our group should be afforded the same respect to follow our convictions.
3. In the spirit of the fourth tradition (referenced after these opinions) the group does not believe that this opinion affects other groups or A.A. as a whole, but furthermore believes that the commonly accepted practices of the service structure violate the spirit of this tradition more than any group possibly could.
4. The group acknowledges the group's opinion is in the minority in Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. The group also acknowledges that in the spiritual realm, sometimes when you stand for the truth, you stand "alone", but not alone from God.
5. The group does not want to separate itself from Alcoholics Anonymous. The group believes that many groups, with varying opinions and convictions, can still stand together, respecting each other's differences.
6. The group cannot, in good faith, support the service structure financially while believing so strongly that the service structure is headed in the opposite direction from the group.
7. The group realizes that its opinion and subsequent decisions will most likely not make any difference in Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, but will make an incredible difference in the group's personal relationship with God.
8. The group acknowledges that the people in the service structure are not asking us for our help and have consistently been resistant to opening their minds in consideration of our opinions. It is our experience that it seems to be a principle that you cannot help someone who does not want help. They do not want what we have, and we do not want what they have.
9. The group is committed to investigating specific actions that the service structure may be supporting which the group feels they would like to support. If and when these reveal themselves, the group will attempt to direct its support of time and/or money to that endeavor.
10. The group has decided not to announce that we don't support the service structure, so as not to incite controversy that may distract us from our primary purpose of carrying a message of hope to anyone who is lacking hope to any

degree. Nonetheless, anyone who may be interested in the group conscience decision is welcome to engage us in dialogue, make constructive suggestions or voice opinions. However, the group is not interested in unexamined, destructive and baseless criticism.

11. The group believes that when a typical group passes the seventh tradition basket at a meeting, it is implied that after the group pays its expenses and holds a prudent reserve, as suggested by common A.A. practices, additional money collected is distributed to the service structure, in accordance with, or something similar to, the suggested division of funds in the published pamphlet. Therefore, the group has decided, beginning July 1, 2008, not to pass the seventh tradition basket, but to rely solely on home group member contributions to pay the group's expenses, removing the implication that we support the service structure. The treasurer has been directed to send the money collected prior to July 1, 2008, minus \$150 prudent reserve, to the service structure in the recommended percentages published by A.A. World Services. At that point, the group will not send any money to the service structure, unless future group conscience decisions are made to support specific service structure endeavors.

**Reference** The fourth tradition short form: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

**Reference** The fourth tradition long form: With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

### **Court Slips and Attendance Slips**

The group is not interested in inciting endless debate or any activity that will distract us from our primary purpose. The group is in possession of the Maryland General Service report "DWI's and Court Slips", dated February 9, 1987, and feels that the debate is beyond exhaustive and to incite this debate is sure to offend current members on either side of the debate. The report attempts to argue reasons and methods as to somehow provide AA policy... fortunately the traditions, by design, restricted their ability to do this. Our group respects the attempts of Maryland General Services to find guidance on this matter but has decided to allow God, through love, service and adherence to primary purpose, guide each individual member in each individual situation. If an individual member supports or opposes the signing of court/attendance slips, the group respects that individual's opinion, but does not want to impose that opinion on any other member. In each situation, the group member is requested to remind him/herself of the group's primary purpose and ask themselves which decision will most likely enhance the primary purpose of the group.

**Reference** Maryland General Service report "DWI's and Court Slips", dated February 9, 1987.

## **Treasury**

The group desires to adhere to the spirit of the seventh tradition, referenced below. We have decided to donate \$200 per quarter to the church, slightly less than \$70 per month. The first payment made in July and the next payment due in September. The group has determined that the coffee and supplies expense is approximately \$100 per quarter. This brings the group to a budget of approximately \$100 per month. Group members are requested to donate an amount that feels comfortable to them toward this \$100 a month budget, however we want to make sure that if someone cannot afford to contribute that they do not feel obligated to, that we still make them feel welcome and that they still have an equal voice in the group. A treasury report is maintained and distributed by email to all members on the email list. Any monies collected over and above the budget will be used to buy literature.

**Reference** The seventh tradition short form: Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

**Reference** The seventh tradition long form: The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

## **Positions**

Set-up/Coffee/Supplies	Adam E. & Alex W.	Six Month Rotation
Greeters	All Members	All Members
Secretary	Kathy P.	Six Month Rotation
Speaker Scheduler	Steve F.	Undetermined
Treasurer	Dave F.	Two Year Rotation
Literature	Louis S.	Six Month Rotation
GSR	???	Two Year Rotation
Intergroup Rep	???	Six Month Rotation
Clean-up	All Members	All Members

## **Old Business**

1. Attempt to attain the churches permission to use their basement instead of their library. It will be cooler in the summer and more space for growth.
2. Determine how we are going to make donations to the treasury.

## **Treasury Report**

7/1/08	Beginning Balance	\$150	\$150
7/10/08	50 Red Mini Big Books sold to Delaware Group	\$ 50	\$200
7/18/08	Quarterly payment to church for rent / donation	\$-200	\$ 0
7/18/08	Coffee and supplies	\$ - 65	\$ -65
7/18/08	Member Donations from 2 members	\$ 65	\$ 0

## **Inventory**

350 Red Mini Big Books  
Coffee and Supplies