

Perry Hall Speaker Group – Group Conscience

April 10, 2010

Contents

1. Primary Purpose
2. Group Conscience Meetings
3. Scheduling Speakers
4. Service Structure
5. Treasury
6. Positions
7. Old Business
8. Treasury Report
9. Inventory
10. New Business
11. Secretary's Instructions
12. Love & Service / Legacy Conference
13. Summary of Group Conscience Meeting

1. Primary Purpose

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

2. 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 the group member’s ability to talk with the newcomer after the meeting.
3. Schedule regular group conscience meetings once every six months (October and April) at a location other than the church at a day & time other than meeting night.
4. When the group conscience meetings are scheduled on a weekend, efforts will be made to choose a starting time in the afternoon, to enhance the ability of group members to attend, but not so late that it affects evening meeting times. As much advance notice as possible will be provided.

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.

3. Scheduling Speakers

The group believes that all efforts should be made to ensure that each speaker carry a message that is similar to the message identified in the group's stated primary purpose. The group believes that its ability to do this would be severely limited by simple geography if they 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:

- Ensure that someone is scheduled to speak each night,
- Solicit home group members to continue to scout for speakers to schedule, and
- Explain to people who request to celebrate the group conscience decision.

The group conscience decision to not celebrating anniversaries is a result of the group's belief that as a group grows in number and in enthusiasm, there is a natural attraction for people to join the group to participate in the enthusiasm. Naturally, some of these new group members will have varying forms and degrees of experience and therefore different messages to offer. More important, many of these "well intended" people may not have the necessary frame of reference to know how vital it is that we preserve our primary purpose.

This decision is an attempt to protect the group from unintentionally compromising the group's primary purpose and to avoid offering some, but not all, group members the opportunity to celebrate their anniversaries. The group believes that this decision will allow an inviting atmosphere to all who are attracted to the group and remove the risk of offending anyone. This decision will also invite the possible use of a home group member as a regular speaker in the event of a last-minute cancellation, since they would not have already spoken for their anniversary.

The group acknowledges the sensitive nature of this decision and is committed to help each individual understand the group's decision, find a way to celebrate their sobriety anniversary, announce the celebration during the meeting announcements and support the celebration at the determined time and place.

4. 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 would prefer not to support the service structure financially while believing so strongly that the service structure is headed in the opposite direction from the group, however acknowledging that Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole does support this, the group has decided to yield its preference and support the structure, in protest.
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 at our meetings 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 had 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 had 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. Within a few short months, the group realized that passing the basket was necessary to meet group expenses due to lack of voluntary donations from the group members. As of September 17, 2008, the group decided to revert back to passing the basket and therefore back to sending funds over and above the expenses and the prudent reserve of one month's expenses to the service structure in the recommended distributions as published in the pamphlet.

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.

5. Treasury

The group desires to adhere to the spirit of the seventh tradition, referenced below. We have decided to donate \$250 per quarter to the church, slightly more than \$80 per month. The treasurer distributes the funds, over and above the one-months' prudent reserves, each quarter, as described:

50% World Services, New York

30% Area 29

10% Intergroup

10% Literature in Prisons, utilizing Jim Hauck as a contact person. Jim is considered to be very active in the Literature in Prisons endeavor.

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.

6. Positions & Rotation

Set-up/Coffee/Supplies	Laura M. (Alt: Heather W.)	Six Month Rotation
Greeters	All Members	All Members
Secretary	Heather W. (Alt: Ben F.)	Six Month Rotation
Speaker Scheduler	Steve F.	Undetermined
Treasurer	Joe D.	Two Year Rotation (10/10)
Literature & Intergroup Rep	Louis S. & Adam E.	Six Month Rotation
GSR	Joal B. (Alt: Steve F.)	Two Year Rotation (04/11)
Institution Rep	Louis S. & Adam E.	Six Month Rotation
Clean-up	Joal B. & Drew M.	Six Month Rotation
	Mallorie S. & Holly W.	
Basket Handlers	Tim Z. & Holly W.	Six Month Rotation
Shepherd	Laura M.	Six Month Rotation

7. Old Business

None

8. Treasury Report

See Treasurer

9. Inventory

100 Red Mini Big Books
Coffee equipment and supplies

10. New Business

- a. Reaffirm each group conscience decision mentioned in this report
- b. Review of the Love & Service mini-Conference

11. Secretary's Instructions

Reaffirm the meeting format

12. Love & Service / Legacy Conference

On February 20, 2010, the group sponsored the second annual Love & Service conference. The play that was originally planned did not happen. An Ask It Basket session was done in its place.

13. Summary of Group Conscience Meeting

The group conscience meeting was held at the home of Joal B. and Louis S. at 3pm, Saturday, April 10th, 2010 in Towson, MD.

1. Primary Purpose – Reaffirmed.
2. Group Conscience Meetings – Reaffirmed. Added note about advance notice.
The next group conscience for October will be scheduled by August, 2010.
3. Scheduling Speakers – Reaffirmed.
4. Service Structure – Reaffirmed.
5. Treasury – Reaffirmed.
6. Positions – Elections were conducted.
7. Old Business – None.
8. Treasury Report – Joe gave report, nothing note worthy.
9. Inventory – Heather gave report, nothing note worthy.
10. New Business – A “Do Not Enter” sign will be designed and provided by Tim Zukas for the doors into the church/school.
11. Secretary’s Instructions – Reaffirmed.
12. Love & Service Conference – Plans for next January will be conducted at our group conscience in October, 2010.

Secretary's Instructions

Choose a person to read the "Preamble" and the "Twelve Steps".

Welcome to the Perry Hall Speaker Group. Please help me open the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Are there any visitors or anyone here for the first time?

We are passing the basket in accordance with our 7th tradition. Please do not feel obligated to participate if you are new, not a member or cannot afford to.

Coffee and _____ are available for free in the back of the room. There are flyers on the table for upcoming AA events. If you would like a Big Book, please see me after the meeting. Bathrooms are to the left and right of the main entrance. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers or any noise making devices. Are there any announcements?

Please limit movement during the meeting to avoid distractions.

Preamble

Steps

Please help me welcome our speaker, _____ from _____.

Thank the speaker

If you would like to make this your home group, please see me after the meeting.

After the Lord's Prayer, please help us with the chairs. If you're outside smoking, please use the butt-can provided.

Please help me close the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

Date _____ Attendance _____ 7th Tradition Contributions \$ _____
Receipts _____

