

2021 Literature Agenda Items (71st G.S.C.)

Here is your summary of 2021 Literature Agenda Items (71st G.S.C.). This document is also on the District 5 website at aadistrict5.org on the Literature Committee page.

Agenda items are like motions. Each group is expected to discuss and vote on each item that affects their local area or A.A. as a whole. Concept One states, "The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship." Therefore it is our responsibility to consider and vote on changes to our literature.

If several items are included in one agenda item, we have tried to define the separate elements that require a vote by the group with the heading **What the Delegate needs to know**.

The heading "**Background**" provides summary information. If the background information says, "we believe" or "we recommend," the "we" refers to the person or A.A. group or A.A. Area that put forward the agenda item. Page numbers at the end of a paragraph refer to the pages in the pdf that can be accessed on The Delegate's Corner (document is password protected) on the Area 15 website at area15aa.org. If you want to see more background on any agenda item, the full document is there.

Opinions by the District 5 Literature Committee have the heading **D5 Literature Committee opinion**.

We are not recommending this is how you should vote; it is intended to show you what our thinking is on the topic. If your group has a strong opinion on any of these agenda items, be sure to bring that opinion to the microphone at the April Assembly. Your GSR presents the vote for your group when the Delegate gets "the sense of the room" by raise of hand and every member of A.A. can present his or her opinion at the microphone.

Agenda Item A. +Review proposed "A.A.W.S. Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into Video Format."

D5 Literature Committee opinion: We are concerned that the focus on video has slowed work on printed pamphlets.

Agenda Item B. +Consider requests to revise the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*:

- B1.** +Add pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" as an appendix in the next printing.
- B2.** +Revise the first 164 pages.
- B3.** +Agenda item forwarded from the 70th G.S.C.

Agenda Item B1. Consider requests to revise the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*: Should we add pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet "The AA Group ... Where it all begins" as an appendix in the next printing of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*? (background information p. 439)

- This added information would encourage best practices and participation in general service.
- It would be easily available for clarification at business meetings and group inventories.

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item B1: No. Unnecessary expense.

Agenda Item B2. Should we revise the first 164 pages?

District 55 proposes to revise the first 164 pages of the Big Book (Doc. 2.i Version 4, April 26th, 2019): We

recommend that the Conference form a study committee to audit the first 164 pages of the Big Book with the purpose of identifying changes that can be made to make the Big Book more reflective of the A.A. membership composition. The focus should be on identifying the following for possible change:

- Pronoun usage – where possible the gender-neutral form should be incorporated.
- Passages or sections that are no longer consistent with or relevant when taken in context of society in general or the A.A. membership composition.
- The chapters To Wives and The Family Afterward should specifically be evaluated for revisions to be more consistent with today's membership.

Once items have been identified these should be prioritized both by the ease of editing and the possible impact to the context of the message. Changes to the overall message should be minimized or avoided entirely. Simplification of the vocabulary should not be considered and references to historical figures and events should remain unchanged.

Where possible, suitable changes should be suggested for incorporation into the text subject to Conference approval. Examples of changes consistent with the proposal:

Pronoun usage: The gender-neutral form is not the same as no gender; rather it is the generally accepted form of writing that does not assign specific gender to an action or uses a he or she format.

From the Big Book page 17, the sentence, "But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself," could readily be changed to "But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about themselves," without altering the meaning. This would be considered an appropriate change.

Passages or sections that are no longer consistent with or relevant when taken in context of society in general or the A.A. membership composition.

The following is a passage from the Big Book followed by the section rewritten in a fashion aligned with the proposal.

This was done in a single pass, with little thought concerning the precise words that could be used. Even so, the message seems consistent.

Original text: Into Action, page 80:

The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with women in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. We doubt if, in this respect, alcoholics are fundamentally much worse than other people. But drinking does complicate sex relations in the home. After a few years with an alcoholic, a wife gets worn out, resentful and uncommunicative. How could she be anything else? The husband begins to feel lonely, sorry for himself. He commences to look around in the night clubs, or their equivalent, for something besides liquor. Perhaps he is having a secret and exciting affair with "the girl who understands." In fairness we must say that she may understand, but what are we going to do about a thing like that? A man so involved often feels very remorseful at times, especially if he is married to a loyal and courageous girl who has literally gone through hell for him.

Revised text:

The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with someone in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. We doubt if, in this respect, alcoholics are fundamentally much worse than other people. But drinking does complicate sex relations in the home. After a few years with an alcoholic, a spouse gets worn out, resentful and uncommunicative. How could they be anything else? The alcoholic begins to feel lonely, sorry for themselves. They commence to look around in the night clubs, or their equivalent, for something besides liquor.

Perhaps they are having a secret and exciting affair with “someone who understands.” In fairness we must say that they may understand, but what are we going to do about a thing like that? A person so involved often feels very remorseful at times, especially if they are married to a loyal and courageous partner who has literally gone through hell for them.

Chapters: The chapters To Wives, and The Family Afterward and perhaps even To Employers are, for a variety of reasons particularly challenging. Perhaps applications of the first two revision criteria, which are essentially simple word substitutions, may result in improvement.”

However, the apparent revision level required for these chapters may result in rewrites on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. The text would be recognizable, but may differ significantly from the original text. Thus, it is outside the scope of this document to address what may be done in these cases.

Examples of changes not consistent with the proposal:

Historical references to people or events should remain the same. For example, Bill’s Story is a period piece. The vocabulary and descriptions should not change. Being able to connect to a period of 80-90 years ago when alcoholics experienced the same feelings we have today is of immense value to the continuity of the fellowship.

Similarly, when discussing a Higher Power in We Agnostics the proposal of travel to the moon is presented as a mechanism of faith in an idea we cannot know with certainty. Would changing that historical prediction to something new be more relevant? Or does it provide connection to the thinking of those that came before us? We think the latter, and such references should remain unchanged.

Additional Notes: The proposal has been made specific to clarify the objective. It should not be construed as an attempt to make a simple-language big book. The exact mechanism the committee uses to identify items, develop changes, and the subsequent approval process is left to the Conference. However, we think much of that is obvious. One important detail to note is the 1995 conference advisory action preventing changes to the first 164 pages remains in effect.

The Literature Committee agrees that an audit committee should be formed to analyze pronoun usage and societal context. We are open to the idea of a gender-neutral version of the Big Book, and would like to see an entire chapter submitted for review.

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item B2: No. This agenda item was confusing. For example, the proposal asks, “Should the first 164 pages be revised?,” while the explanatory text proposes that, “We recommend that the Conference form a study committee to audit the first 164 pages of the Big Book with the purpose of identifying changes that can be made to make the Big Book more reflective of the A.A. membership composition. (District 55 in Area 59). Some text changes seem grammatically incorrect.

NOTE: Plain Language Big Book is a suggested translation of the Big Book, not a change to the Big Book we use. The background material shows that this Agenda Item has languished for years. Most A.A. Members do not want any change to the Big Book, therefore this agenda item fails every time it is brought up. Because any change to the Big Book is voted down, we suggest this be developed as a pamphlet. The pamphlet “This Is A.A.” provides a good example.

Quote from A.A. co-founder Bill W. supporting the idea of change: “Since the audience for the book is likely to be newcomers, anything from the point of view of content or style that might offend or alienate those who are not familiar with the program should be carefully eliminated.”

Agenda Item C. +Consider proposals related to possible Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*:

C1. +Develop a Fifth Edition.

C2. +Develop a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and V.

C3. +Add a proposed addendum to a Fifth Edition foreword of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* at the time it is published.

What the Delegate needs to know:

C1. Develop a Fifth Edition or not?

C2. Develop a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with updated stories

Background

This background is from Item D.

Quotes from A.A. co-founder Bill W. supporting the idea of change::

In a June 14, 1954 letter to Bernard S., Bill wrote: "The story section of the Big Book is far more important than most of us think. It is our principle means of identifying with the reader outside of A.A.; it is the written equivalent of hearing speakers at an A.A. meeting; it is our show window of results. To increase the power and variety of this display to the utmost should be, therefore, no routine or hurried job. The best will be none too good. The difference between 'good' and 'excellent' can be the difference between prolonged misery and recovery, between life and death for the reader outside A.A."

And in a letter to a potential author of a Big Book story, Bill wrote: "As you are probably aware the stories we need will be of the straight A.A. variety; the kind which would be most effective with the beginner on our program. We are looking for straight personal narratives which describes the drinking history, how the newcomer arrived in Alcoholics Anonymous, how A.A. affected him, and what A.A. has since accomplished for him."

and with the following revisions to Appendices III and V?

C3. Update Appendix III (The Medical View on A.A.) to include more information on mental illness. The language could be similar to (or directly lifted from) "The A.A. Member - Medications and Other Drugs." Specifically, page 6 of the pamphlet where it talks about some alcoholics needing medication.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Unsure; would like to see a draft - this appears to be a wider topic than the material covered in The Medical View.

C4. Appendix III references a pamphlet that is now out of print. It says, "This address is now available in pamphlet form...under the title 'Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W'."

D5 Literature Committee opinion: A.A.W.S has the authority to make any corrections necessary.

C5. Update Appendix V and include perspectives from different faiths. Currently, the only perspectives offered are from Father Ed Dowling, who was Catholic, and an Episcopalian magazine. There are many other faiths that can be included, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, etc.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Approve, but would like to see a draft.

C6. Add an addition to the Forward that explains dated language such as why the original audience was male, etc.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Approve, but would like to see a draft.

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item C1: Yes to develop a Fifth Edition. Bring us more detail and specific wording on the other suggestions.

Agenda Item D. +Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos*.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Yes.

Agenda Item E. +Consider requests to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:

E1. +To remove the phrase “opposite sex” from paragraph two on page 117 in the chapter “Step Twelve.”

E2. +To reconsider use of the phrase “lustful enough to rape” in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter “Step Six.”

Agenda Item E1. Should we remove the phrase “opposite sex” from paragraph two on page 117 in the chapter “Step Twelve” in *Twelve Steps - Step Twelve* (background information pp. 106-125)

Remove Original Paragraph: "Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate of the opposite sex with whom the fullest possible union can be made - spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. This mighty urge is the root of great human accomplishments, a creative energy that deeply influences our lives. God fashioned us that way. ..."

Replace with Proposed Paragraph: "Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate with whom the fullest possible union can be made - spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. This mighty urge is the root of great human accomplishments, a creative energy that deeply influences our lives. God fashioned us that way. ..." {The rest of the paragraph would remain unchanged}

Background

The paragraph is in conflict with Tradition 10. It states that “‘every sound human’ desires to find a mate ‘of the opposite sex’ with whom the fullest union can be made, and it says that God fashioned us that way.” This reflects religious ideals.

A.A. has no opinion on outside affiliations, let alone stating God's will towards sexual preferences.

Tradition 3 tells us that the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop drinking. Telling any alcoholic that their lifestyle preference is not 'sound' or that it goes against God's Will says to them that they are different, and could have them question if they are accepted in the fellowship.

Tradition 2 tells us for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience.

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item E1: We support this change. We assume that the original wording of the *Twelve* and *Twelve* will be retained as an archival document available to individual members and groups who want to use it.

Racism, gender identification, sexism, religion and related barriers are outside issues except as they relate to Twelfth Step work.

A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote in 1965: "We have atheists and agnostics. We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion. In A.A. we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering. Consequently, the full individual liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy whatever should be a first consideration for us all. Let us not, therefore, pressure anyone with our individual or even our collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way toward the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of A.A., so long as he or she declares."

Agenda Item E2

To reconsider use of the phrase "lustful enough to rape" in paragraph one on page 66 in the chapter "Step Six." Twelve Steps - Step Six" [Twelve Steps - Step Six](#) (background information pp. 63-69)

Background

Lust is not the cause of rape. The cause of rape is complex and multifaceted. In a 2015 literary review on the causes of rape, Beverly A. McPhail concludes that "rape occurs due to multiple motives rather than [a] single motivation ... The multiple motivations include, but are not limited to, sexual gratification, revenge, recreation, power/control, and attempts to achieve or perform masculinity and a desire for power, among other causes" (8). In stating so plainly that lust leads to rape, these words are hugely misleading. This inaccuracy at best misinforms AA members and at worst triggers AA members - many of whom are sexual assault survivors.

What the Delegate needs to know: Groups only need to vote on whether delegates "reconsider." There is no specific change to language.

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item E2: We find this vague. It would have been helpful if the suggested language change were included. We prefer to vote on specific word and paragraph changes.

Agenda Item F. +Consider request to add a subtitle to the booklet Living Sober.

- Amend title to read: "Living Sober: How not to take the first drink"
- This would, of course, necessitate updating the introduction to the booklet

D5 Literature Committee opinion: No - unnecessary expense.

Agenda Item G. +Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group." (P-16 "The AA Group ... Where it all begins")

Background

This agenda item was written in a way that obscures the real intention. The intention is not to make the literature consistent, but is to change our group conscience on primary purpose. They wrote:

Last year, the suggestion to add "Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers" to the Primary Purpose (blue) card is because the card does not match the language found in the pamphlet The A.A. Group. This motion was defeated. Therefore, to make the literature consistent, the sentence: "Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers" should be removed.

The two groups who put this forward encourage non-alcoholics to participate in meetings. Their points include:

- “My home group has a long custom of permitting Al-Alons – often the Significant Others of our members – to speak at our open meeting (they generally introduce themselves as such)”
- “If someone does not want nonalcoholics sharing in their meeting, I strongly suggest they not hold an open meeting, and instead consult their group conscience on whether or not their meeting should be closed.”
- In Alcoholics Anonymous (p. 159-60), it says this: “In addition to these casual get-togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems.” “New people” and “anyone and everyone interested in a spiritual way of life” sounds like whoever showed up could share.

What the Delegate needs to know: Should “Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers” be removed from the pamphlet description of open meetings.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: No. “Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers” should not be removed.

The intention in deleting this sentence is not to make the literature consistent, but is to change our group conscience on primary purpose. The person requesting this change quoted the definition of open and closed meetings without quoting the paragraph above those definitions:

“The purpose of all A.A. group meetings, as the Preamble states, is for A.A. members to “share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.” Toward this end, A.A. groups have both open and closed meetings.”

In “Problems Other than Alcohol,” it states, “there are certain things that A.A. cannot do for anybody, regardless of what our desires or sympathies may be. Our first duty, as a fellowship, is to insure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity.

“Sobriety — freedom from alcohol — through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don’t stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.”

As an autonomous group, they can decide to have Al-Anon members speak at their meetings. This is not a request to “revise text related to open meetings”, but a request to change our current group conscience on our primary purpose.

Finally, we are going to request that future agenda items be more carefully reviewed. This agenda item was framed as a request only “to revise text,” which obscured a very different intention.

Agenda Item H. +Consider request to revise text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”

In the brochures P-2 and FP-2, “Frequently Asked Questions About AA / Foire aux questions sur les AA”; in English on page 17 and in French on pages 17 and 18, the question “What does membership in AA cost?” submitting group states they have a problem with the answer which states that most local groups “pass the hat” at meeting to defray the cost of renting a meeting place and other meeting expenses, including coffee, sandwiches, cakes or whatever else may be served. A.A. is not a catering service; reference to food should be deleted.

What the Delegate needs to know: Should the text on self support be removed?

D5 Literature Committee opinion: No. Coffee and food are legitimate group expenses.

Agenda Item I. +Consider revising the pamphlet [“Questions & Answers on Sponsorship”](#):

I1. + Change the following paragraph, found on page 12 under the heading “Can any member be a sponsor?”:

I2. +Expand the section on “Service Sponsorship” and retitle the pamphlet to include service sponsorship.

Agenda Item I1. + Change the following paragraph, found on page 12 under the heading “Can any member be a sponsor?”:

Remove the original paragraph: “In most instances, A.A. custom does suggest one limitation, already noted on page 10: If the group is large enough to allow a choice, sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex. The reasons are the same from both viewpoints; we A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from “our primary purpose.””

Replace it with the following paragraph: “A.A. custom does suggest one limitation: sponsorship should be avoided wherever a romantic entanglement might arise between sponsor and newcomer. We A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from “our primary purpose.””

Background: Transgender people are disproportionately likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, but they are far less likely to seek and find sobriety in A.A. than non-transgender people. This is not because of any inherent difference or deficit of transgender people. The experience of a growing number of transgender and nonbinary alcoholics demonstrates that this program can work for us, if we are given the same opportunities as any other alcoholic to connect with the wisdom and support of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Systemic barriers within A.A. make it an unwelcoming place for transgender people to find recovery. Throughout our pamphlets, our literature, and our meeting formats, Alcoholics Anonymous maintains a strict segregation of men and women. This segregation leaves transgender alcoholics at risk of misunderstanding, ostracism, rejection, and even violence.

When a nonbinary newcomer hears in our Preamble that Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women, they hear that this is a fellowship with no place for them.

When it comes to sponsorship, there is often no good option. They have three options:

1. they can out themselves by looking for a sponsor who shares their gender identity;
2. they can hide their identity and seek a sponsor who shares their assigned sex;
3. they can try to go it alone, without a sponsor to help them navigate sobriety.

Remove the suggestion that sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex.

Those against the changes seemed to voice comments around:

- If we start changing anything, where would we stop?
- That as written, the 12x12 was good enough to get them sober, so it’s good enough for everyone

Those in favor of the changes seemed to voice comments around:

- The removal of the few words would be more inclusive
- It was religious in nature
- Some members were personally offended by the text as written

[as Submitted by District 1 Area 15] (background information p. 65)

What the Delegate needs to know: Should the original paragraph be replaced by the proposed paragraph, which changes “sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex”?

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item I1: Yes; but more attention should be paid to how text changes are made. The original paragraph should have been placed with or incorporated into the paragraph on page 10, which says, “Some gay men and lesbians feel an opposite-sex sponsor is more appropriate.”

Furthermore, 13th stepping is not addressed by the new language. There is nothing “romantic” about 13th stepping and it should be explicitly addressed. We suggest a paragraph like the following:

In the past, A.A. suggested that it was best for men to sponsor men and women to sponsor women as a protection against romantic entanglements. More recently and for the same reason, gay men and lesbians have said that an opposite-sex sponsor is more appropriate. Also, as in any large organization, predatory behavior (disguised as “romantic” or “helping the newcomer”) sometimes occurs. The caution to find an appropriate person as a sponsor is intended to keep newcomers safe and to help members stay focused on the A.A. program.

Quote from A.A. co-founder Bill W. supporting the idea of change: “Since the audience for the book is likely to be newcomers, anything from the point of view of content or style that might offend or alienate those who are not familiar with the program should be carefully eliminated.”

Agenda Item I2. +Expand the section on “Service Sponsorship” and retitle the pamphlet to include service sponsorship.

We think that a pamphlet on service sponsorship has several benefits and can serve many ends. Such a pamphlet can serve:

- To reinforce the notion that service work often begins with a suggestion from a service sponsor.
- To have more members engage in service work.
- To point out the benefits of service to the individual, the group and the fellowship.
- To define service work as a responsibility of the recovering AA member.
- To discuss ways in which a person in service can attract others to service.
- To explore ways in which a service sponsor can assist those new to service.
- To present personal experiences of those serving as service sponsors.

What the Delegate needs to know: Should the section on “Service Sponsorship” be expanded and the pamphlet be retitled to include service sponsorship?

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item I2: Yes

Agenda Item J. +Consider request to include a G.S.R. preamble in the pamphlet “G.S.R.: Your Group’s Link to A.A. as a Whole.”

Background

As outlined in the proposal, the home group believes adding the G.S.R. Preamble to the G.S.R. pamphlet would be beneficial for the following reasons:

1. The G.S.R. Preamble is a clear-cut directive to G.S.R.s regarding their responsibility.
2. Adding the G.S.R. Preamble to the pamphlet, would provide consistency and thus unity across A.A. as a whole.
3. If added, it would affirm Conference approval when read at District and Area Functions.

G.S.R. Preamble: “We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of A.A. We realize the ultimate authority is a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship. Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our group and A.A. as a whole.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Yes

Agenda Item K. +Review recovery literature matrix (2019).

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Standard review by A.A.W.S.

Agenda Item L. +Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic.”

- An A.A. member, also an African-American, who volunteered at a C.P.C. exhibit, said that we are not pushed out, but not welcomed in either, and new stories sharing how to get through all that would be great. I retired here and know what I have to do to stay sober, but what about the new guy or gal?
- Racism, gender identification, sexism, religion and related barriers are outside issues except as they relate to Twelfth Step work.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Yes. Include stories about African-Americans who may have faced barriers within the rooms. Racism, gender identification, sexism, religion, and related barriers are outside issues except as they relate to Twelfth Step work.

Agenda Item M. “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated” pamphlet:

M1. Discuss draft update of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

M2. Consider not retiring the existing version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

Agenda Item M1. Discuss draft update of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item M1: Yes; this pamphlet is dated.

Agenda Item M2. Consider not retiring the existing version of the pamphlet “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”

What the Delegate needs to know: Should we retain the original pamphlet?

D5 Literature Committee opinion on Agenda Item M2: Yes. This pamphlet has historical significance. This might also set the precedence that when a book or pamphlet is completely revised, the original is retained for those who prefer it to the modern version.

Agenda Item N. Review draft language regarding safety and A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and “Questions & Answers on Sponsorship” (P-15) to add the following paragraph to “Different kinds of A.A. meetings”:

New paragraph: “Of course, A.A. is a microcosm of the larger society around us and problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. As we strive to share in a spirit of trust, both at meetings and individually with sponsors and friends, it is reasonable for each member to expect a meaningful level of safety. Those attending meetings derive a benefit by providing a safe environment in which alcoholics can focus on gaining and maintaining sobriety. The group can then fulfill its primary purpose - to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: The District 5 Literature committee questions the placement of the new paragraph. In Questions & Answers on Sponsorship, the paragraph is under the heading “How does sponsorship help a group?” It follows text on helping people in institutions and isolated Lone Members. Safety is a topic that continues to come up. It should be a separate topic with a suitable heading.

Agenda Item O. Review the draft update of the pamphlet “Young People and A.A.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item P. Review the draft of the new pamphlet on A.A.’s Three Legacies.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item Q. Review the draft of the new pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item R. Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item S. Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts illustrated.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item T. Discuss progress report regarding the pamphlet “Too Young?”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item U. Consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations, and large print versions of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution. (background information pp. 364-378)

What the Delegate needs to know: Can all of these suggestions be addressed with a common solution?

D5 Literature Committee opinion: No. They are too diverse to be addressed with a common solution. Some of these entail changes to the existing Big Book and will require lengthy discussion by the fellowship while at least one of these is long overdue for an up or down vote. We do not understand why we are encouraged to agree to a “common solution” to very different publications. Trying to find a “one size fits all” approach doesn’t work. The suggestions for each publication should be weighed separately.

(NOTE: Plain Language Big Book is a suggested translation of the Big Book, not a change to the Big Book we use. See pamphlet “This Is A.A.”)

Agenda Item V. Consider adding the Long Form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay for that Tradition in the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Background

Nearly every 12 & 12 book study that I have attended includes a reading of the short form of the Tradition along with the blurb that is printed in the Contents section and printed as a leader into the essay on that Tradition. What is forgotten and not read is the long form of the Tradition, buried in the back of the book. Please remedy this by printing the long form of each Tradition at the beginning of each essay, with or without the blurb. The long form is where I find great guidance for dealing with issues that come up in recovery and in service. It is my observation that the long form is far too under-utilized and unknown to too many AA members and making them more visible in this much studied book would help. And making this change in addition to any other revisions makes sense financially since a reprint would take place anyway.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: We do not feel that both are necessary. Replace Short Form with Long Form.

Agenda Item W. Consider the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, noting past Advisory Actions.

Consider the development of a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, bringing a progress report to the 2022 Conference; keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action that: “The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, ‘The Doctor’s Opinion’, ‘Dr. Bob’s Nightmare’ and the Appendices remain as is” (background information p. 339)

Agenda Item X. Consider revising the pamphlet, “The A.A. Group,” to reflect the importance of the group as a “spiritual entity” as stated in the Long Form of Tradition Five.

Background

On pg. 12 of the pamphlet, *The AA Group ... where it all begins*, the section titled “What Is an AA Group?” expresses the Group in terms of Tradition Three and Warranty Six. The Group as a spiritual entity is not mentioned until page 31 and only in reference to safety. The long form of Tradition Five states, “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” (*Alcoholics Anonymous* p. 562).

Perhaps the inclusion of the Long Form of Tradition Five in this section will provide a clearer picture that an A.A. Group is, as suggested by our Traditions, a spiritual entity. Due to the pandemic, many Groups have moved from traditional face to face gatherings to alternative platforms for meetings and twelfth step work. The Traditions can be used as a guide for these uncharted waters. Spiritual entities, or Groups, do not need mechanization, physical locations, or a government. Their primary purpose can be carried autonomously however a loving God expresses Himself in their group conscience. It is important that our Fellowship clings to our Traditions during these challenges and the trials that are yet to come.

In the contemplation of rewording some of this pamphlet, there may be additional changes needed across our literature to reflect some of the changes that have been taking place in our Fellowship. This would better inform our members and the public about the importance and the nature of our Groups. It should also include taking into consideration the Groups that have meetings accessed through teleconferencing and various virtual platforms.

D5 Literature Committee opinion: We agree with this idea and would like to see specific suggested language.

Agenda Item Y. Consider revising text highlighting service roles at the group level in the pamphlet, “The A.A. Group” (P-16) pamphlet, page 29, question 9 as follows:

"Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?"

to:

"Mindful that trusted service is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our trusted servants with care?"

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Yes.

Agenda Item Z. Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Native North American.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Yes.

Agenda Item AA. Review G.S.O. Publishing updates per the A.A.W.S. print policy.

AA1. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, “Is A.A. for You?”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

AA2. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, “Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

AA3. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, “Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

AA4. Review the draft update of the pamphlet, “This is A.A.”

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Not applicable. Only Conference Committee sees these drafts.

Agenda Item BB. Review Matrix (2020)

D5 Literature Committee opinion: Standard review by A.A.W.S.

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