

Topics/Questions for Conference 2010

Committee No. 1

1. Would the Fellowship share experience at Group, Intergroup and Regional level on the 'themed weeks' focused on Gratitude and Traditions with the aim of having a full and lively discussion on this subject at Conference?

Please share experience on whether these Gratitude and Traditions Weeks are effective and useful. Do they achieve a positive result? Can they be improved?

Would it be helpful to expand this idea to include, for instance, a Primary Purpose week?

Background

AA Service News Spring 2009, History of Gratitude Week, page 16
AA Service News Winter 2007, Traditions Week, page 18

2. Inventory Question

Would the Fellowship consider the possibility of holding Conference every other year?

The following points, amongst others, will need to be considered:

- a) How long should the delegate's term be and how will this impact on rotation?
- b) How would Board reports be received and handled in non Conference years?
- c) Would Conference need to be longer if held biennially?

Background

The question is a composite of a number of questions that were received this year. These questions all related to the usefulness, effectiveness and structure of Conference.

The Conference Charter and our Service Handbook give specific guidelines as to how Conference is to be held and the relationship of Conference to our Fellowship and General Service Board.

Amongst others, background can be found in the following sources:

- a. Conference Charter for Great Britain, particularly Articles 3 and 4
- b. The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, in particular Section 10
- c. AA Comes of Age, particularly pages 210-221
- d. Conference 1999, Committee 4, Question 2
- e. The Language of the Heart, page 164.

Committee No. 2

1. Would the Fellowship offer guidance and suggestions on how, using our service structure, we may better participate in the process of generating and formulating Topics or Questions for Conference, thereby stimulating new interest from our membership.

Background

There is an increasing lack of interest throughout the Fellowship regarding Conference questions. When this was discussed by the whole of Conference 2009 at the plenary session, it transpired that the Conference Steering Committee could only select a few from the 51 questions received and threw the problem back to AA members for not submitting sufficient questions for the Committee to choose from.

This problem is not new and seems to rear its head every 2 or 3 years. We can change that by trying to understand from AA members how they would like to participate more and how Conference could change the process of submitting topics to simplify it and make it more accessible to all.

Or we could do nothing and let it re-occur diminishing a wider participation further. Conference is a valuable legacy that provides the Fellowship with an ability to maintain itself through the service structure and Bill W reminded us that it is the conscience of the groups guided by a higher power that will always work best for us - the question is how to best tap into the group conscience.

2. AA Service News is a vital communication link to the Fellowship as a whole. The strong editorial team in place relies on contributions being received on a regular basis from all levels of service.

Would Conference please consider how we, as a Fellowship, have embraced the detailed recommendations made by Committee 4 Question 1 at Conference 2003.

- 1 Have we encouraged group members to submit articles regarding their involvement in local service activities?
- 2 Have we encouraged Intergroup members to submit articles highlighting service activities?
- 3 Have we encouraged Regional members to submit articles on recent Regional meetings?
- 4 Have we encouraged Conference Delegates to submit articles on their pre and post Conference meetings?
- 5 Have we encouraged our home group members to read the 3 copies provided to each group, and to visit the AA web site document library where downloads are available?

Background

Conference 2003 Committee 4 Question 1
AA Web Site Document Library 36 AA Service News Editions and downloads made.

Committee No. 3

1. Would the Fellowship share experience on the principle of the 'Home Group' regarding who is involved and how decisions are made on the day to day matters concerning your group?
 - a. Would individual members of a group they acknowledge as their 'Home Group' have the same participation rights in the running of other groups they attend?
 - b. Is it possible for members to have more than one 'Home Group' ? Does this affect commitments made to other groups?
 - c. Considering our traditions in particular one, two, three and the long form of tradition four, how well do our groups co-operate in matters affecting local AA and AA as a whole?
2. Inventory Question

Would the Fellowship consider how Conference and the underlying process be made more attractive to the membership of AA as a whole?

- a. Does Conference in its present form best serve the membership in fulfilling the primary purpose of AA?
- b. Are the structure, number and use of Conference committees most appropriate?

Background

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Committee No. 4

1. How well do we safeguard AA money?

Does every AA group that handles money frequently review how well they implement the guidelines?

A group conscience at every level of service can participate in this question and provide valuable input for their Conference Delegates.

Background

Section 12	Governance
Guideline 2	Groups
Guideline 4	Intergroups
Guideline 5	Regions
Guideline 12	Finance
Guideline 15	Conventions
Traditions 6 & 7	
Concepts VIII XII	

2. Would the Fellowship offer practical guidance on how better to make clear the intention behind selected Topics or Questions for Conference, thus making the content readily accessible to our membership and thereby removing any possible confusion.

Background:

Throughout the Fellowship there was a particular lack of enthusiasm in answering the selected Topics or Questions and giving feedback during 2009. Discussion revealed that many Regions reported that their members did not understand what was being asked of them as many of the questions seemed to lack sufficient background so they appeared to be directed at Conference itself rather than at grass roots members. Fewer members attended the pre Conference workshops than in the past.

Many members felt the background material did not present the “feeling” behind the question, i.e. “Why was a question being asked”? The wording lacked the clarity needed for members to understand the reason for the question and what point was the questioner trying to get across to members for wider discussion.

3. Would Conference consider and give guidance on the finance and publicising of Conventions?

Is the process of Convention organisation and accountability to the Fellowship clear for all?

Background

Guideline No. 15 Conventions
The Twelve Traditions

Committee No. 5

1. Could the Fellowship view the “Service Forums” in the Members Area of our official national AAGB Website at: <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>? Should we support or discontinue these “Service Forums”?

Background

The Service Forums of the AA Members Area on the Great Britain AA website were established as an online area where AA members could share their ESH and post questions concerning AA service at various levels. Additionally, a section dealing with Conference is opened each year to allow individual members to opine about agenda items before Conference.

The Service Forums were established perhaps as early as 2003 and in its current form since July 2005. In the four years since July 2005, there have been 646 registered users generating over 1033 posts within 123 Topics.

The forum dealing with Prison Liaison was started as a result of GSC, Committee 5 recommendation in 2007. The other six forum areas deal with Forum Guidelines, News, Intergroup Service, Region Service, Electronic Communications and Telephone Service.

While on the surface the forums present a great opportunity for the “inverted triangle”, the actual use of the forums over the past four years belies that. First, less than 2% of the estimated 34,000 AA members in Great Britain avail themselves of the forums. Second, of the total number of posts, 20 individual posters have generated the majority. Lastly, the forums require moderation – an AA member who takes the responsibility that posts remain on topic, civil and within the guidelines. (Correct at date of submission).

References:

Members Forum Area

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl>

Forum Charter

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?num=1198952170>

2. Inventory Question

Would the Fellowship consider whether the present methods of reporting back to the Fellowship (Delegate reports, AA Service News, Conference report and General Service Board reports) are serving their purpose? Is the Fellowship making good use of the results of Conference? Make suggestions for improvement.

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- e. The Language of the Heart, page 164.

3. Review revised Guideline No. 19 'AA and Electronic Communications'.

Background

Revised Guideline No. 19 'AA and Electronic Communications'.

Committee No. 6

1. Would Conference share their experience and give guidance with regard to members claiming travelling expenses when visiting prisons for meetings to carry the AA message.

A clear statement that attending Prison meetings is either 12 Stepping or AA Service would help resolve this matter.

Guideline 11, AA in Prisons, does not make it clear whether attendance at Prison meetings is a 12th Step Call or AA Service and does not make mention of people who cannot afford to attend meetings being discriminated against.

Background

Prisons quite often are in remote areas making access quite difficult and also quite costly for participating members.

Guideline 11

Guideline 12

A sample Service Level Agreement

2. Within the guidelines of Tradition Eleven at the public level consider the apparent decline in first-time contacts (received from all sources) from suffering Alcoholics. Are we as a Fellowship doing enough to attract new members or could we do better?

Consider the following and make recommendations:

- a. Although the various media formats are, at present, giving a lot of news to alcohol related problems and issues, is the coverage Alcoholics Anonymous receives sufficient?

- b. Whilst a lot is being done towards specific groups of people, prisons, doctors, health service etc., is not a more "general public" awareness campaign now needed?
- c. If one reads the history of "Alcoholics Anonymous", the effect that "Jack Alexander" article had on growth was tremendous. Do we need something similar now?

Background

Jack Alexander Article
Tradition 11