

**DRAFT MINUTES
WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
LITERATURE COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 1992**

The meeting was opened at 9:00 a.m., with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer. Present were Bob McKendrick, committee chair, Steve Bice, Donna Markus, Jack Bernstein and Greg Pierce, trustees, Steve Lantos from the WSO and various members from the local fellowship.

The first item on the agenda was the draft response to the committed motion on the usage of gender-specific language and the word "God" in our literature. The committee reviewed the response, and made minor alterations. Please see the attachment for the revised version of the response. There was some additional discussion on the possibility that the WSB would, at some future date, work on preparing a position paper on this issue. The committee was not, however, prepared to make any recommendations, at this point in time, about the development of such a paper.

Next on the agenda was an update on the progress of the traditions project. Bob reported on the meeting that took place in January, during which the input received on the first six traditions was reviewed and factored into the first draft of the approval form. The approval form will be mailed to all WSB and WSCLC members for their review shortly after this weekend's meeting. The plan then calls for input being accepted from these members until May 22, after which all the input will be compiled and mailed to all members of the WSB. The board has tentatively added an extra day to the June meeting in order to review the approval form of the first six traditions.

As part of the update on this project, some discussion ensued about a recommendation to the full board about the release of the approval form. The two options offered were the release of the approval form in two stages, Traditions One through Six when completed and the traditions portion in its entirety upon completion, or holding off on its release until all chapters were completed. After some discussion, the committee decided to recommend that the two-stage release plan be the committee's recommendation to the full board.

Bob also relayed to the other committee members that two pieces were offered to the traditions ad hoc committee from the WSCLC as input to the project. The traditions group decided to accept the piece "Unity in Action" as it pertained to their work on Tradition One and any further development of that piece by the WSCLC would result in a possible duplication of efforts. The second piece titled, "Practicing the Principles of Our Traditions," developed by a local literature committee was returned to the WSCLC. The primary reason for this action was the committee's perception that the focus of this piece seemed to be on the personal practice of the principles embodied in the traditions and, as such, was not in keeping with the focus of their task. The ad hoc's work is focused on the groups' application of the traditions, not individual member's.

Next, the committee began discussions on the annual report from both, the WSB Literature Review Committee and the WSB Traditions Ad Hoc Committee. Bob reported on the ad hoc's recommendations to this committee, as noted in

the report on the January meeting. The committee agreed that focusing on the process developed by the traditions group both before and during the actual writing of the material would be an essential ingredient of the report. It was decided that this portion of the report would be experiential in nature, describing the process from the time the committee was given the task to its present state, including the various steps taken by that committee to invite involvement from the fellowship at the various stages of the project. The committee also wanted to see emphasis placed upon the advance planning work done by the committee in developing the mission statement, the evolution of the role of the staff team in the process, and the review of all available input prior to the actual start of the development of the material in its current state.

The balance of the committee's meeting was taken up in performing a cursory review of the review form of Steps One through Six. The process used entailed the committee reading aloud each draft and then taking time to comment on the style and content of the material while also giving some of the observers an opportunity to comment. The results of this review will be forwarded to the WSCLC shortly after this meeting. Bob then asked all committee members to spend some time doing their own review of the material and provide individual input.

On a final note, Bob expressed his regret that Mary Jensen, chairperson of the WSCLC, who has been recently appointed to be a member of the WSB Literature Review Committee, was not able to be present during this meeting due to funding considerations. After a brief recap of the meeting's events, the committee adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

**WSB APPROVED RESPONSE
to Committed Motion about Literature**

During WSC '91, the following motion was committed to the Board of Trustees for consideration:

That all subsequent literature that is to be revised and be produced to have non-gender-specific language and that all references to God be changed to "Higher Power" or "Power Greater than ourselves."

This motion was addressed at our June, August, and February trustee meetings, with our discussions focusing on the following main issues.

First, and simplest, is the change to non-gender-specific language. Our perception is that the various committees involved in literature projects are already very sensitive to this issue. Changes of the type suggested by this motion are already being considered in the literature development and review process.

More complicated is the question of changing all references to "God." Our fellowship embraces the devoutly religious as well as the atheist. We experience a profound spiritual awakening as a result of actively applying the Twelve Steps in our lives. Most of us continue to experience change and growth in our spiritual orientation as we continue to live the program. We are faced with the dilemma of meaningfully addressing diverse and evolving personal spiritual orientations. This motion proposes replacing all references to God with the terms "Higher Power" or "Power Greater than ourselves." These substitutions would not resolve our dilemma since they still would not meet the needs of many members, particularly those who believe that the "Power greater than ourselves" in the Second Step is not equivalent to the "God, as we understood Him" in our Third Step. There have been numerous other alternatives suggested to the term "God." We feel that, prior to making a change which could profoundly impact our philosophy and interpretation of principles, significant discussion and agreement need to take place within the fellowship at large.

Both of these questions carry with them an additional consideration, since the word "God" and gender-specific language are used in our steps and traditions. We feel that any changes to our steps and traditions should not be considered in the same way we consider narrative portions of our literature. Once again, we feel that such changes and the possible ramifications of such changes need to have significant discussion and agreement prior to any implementation.

As a result of our discussions, it is the opinion of the World Service Board of Trustees that no formal action should be taken on this motion at this time. We do, however, believe that these topics should be widely discussed throughout the fellowship. We thank the conference for allowing us to serve.