

To: World Service Conference of NA

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Member and outgoing Trustee

Date: April 1994

As part of my decision not to accept a nomination at this year's WSC, I felt compelled to write a few words of reflection. I have been involved in world services for almost thirteen years: three at a regional level, five as a WSO employee and five in this position as trustee. During this time, much has changed and yet much too much has remained the same.

It has been gratifying to me to have had the honor and opportunity to serve with such groups as WSC PI, WSB External, Ad Hoc on Traditions and Developmental Forum. These groups have, more than others, exemplified the quality and manner of work which can be accomplished when world service and the conference as a whole decides that a project is of importance to the fellowship that it was created to serve.

I have personally campaigned, in my own quiet way, for a shift in individuals' attitude and perspective towards service at a world level (or any level, for that matter). This campaign has, for the most part, included discussions about: 1) breaking down the territorial system which we have allowed to dictate our world service structure, and 2) making personal service inventory a regular and expected part of every trusted servant's participation.

As an adjunct to these discussions has also been the identification of a major flaw in our perception and reflection of our supposed inverted service structure. I question whether it is a reality or simply a case of convenient language. Of course, bottom line, the groups can come back at any time and overturn any action that world services has made. But, for the most part, the groups are not the units which set the tone, format, agenda, or workload for the conference and its boards and committees. Those jobs are, and have been, set by the very boards and committees which will be doing the work and which are necessary to their survival (at least in terms of keeping service positions!). And this may be the best way for it to occur, but if this is the reality, then perhaps a part of our problem and the underlying suspicion and ill will that seems to permeate our structure would be done away with if the situation was identified and acknowledged for what it really is.

This is one item which I had high hopes for when discussions first arose about a slowdown and inventory. My naive assumption was that, through personal inventory, this and other vital aspects of our structure and why it is perpetuated would come to light in an atmosphere of openness and encouragement to change. An inventory of this

nature would include the opportunity to identify unhealthy and/or unproductive motivation and behavior in service positions. I know I'm not alone in the fact that ego and prestige, as well as a warped perception of knowing what's best for "my" fellowship, have been primary forces in keeping me involved in service at various times in my recovery. I've heard people say they use special sponsors for service and the idea of separating service from personal recovery concerns me. I am very grateful that I've had a sponsor who stays out of this stuff and offers innocent objectivity!

I have been very disappointed in the inventory process, so far, and voted not to continue. We agreed to it with the acknowledgment that we have a flawed system and yet began work on the inventory in exactly the same manner with exactly the same attitude as the system we had just identified as being the problem!!! We have not looked at the individuals involved in the problem; we have not addressed the territorialistic attitude brought about by the lure of funds for individual projects. The questions laid out for the boards and committees to use presupposed certain truths and were entrenched in the system that I had hoped we were trying to change.

What is the relationship of the World Service Conference work to the primary purpose of NA? I sat and listened and watched and participated while we tried to make it all fit. What would have happened if we couldn't? I can't imagine that the results of this inventory, the way it is currently being done, are going to be a change in the fundamental way we do things. There is simply too much personal investment on the part of people who are already involved.

During most of my world service "tour of duty", I have attempted to be honest and direct while retaining some diplomacy; during times of dissension, trying to be a calming influence--part of the solution rather than part of the problem; during confrontations, a helpful moderator. I have tried to bring a different and hopefully valuable perspective to our work and process. I am pleased that some members believe that I was at least partially successful in these attempts and consider these traits valuable enough to try to encourage me to accept another nomination. Many have also verbalized their hope and belief that I will surely be called upon to serve in a non-elected capacity as the need arises. This is something I sincerely hope will turn out to be true but which I have little faith in. It is, unfortunately, another aspect of our intensely competitive and ego attached structure that consistently resists change. We have an incredible wealth of NA members who have served at a world level, who have a vast amount of experience, talent and ability but are rarely, if ever, called upon to serve once they are no longer in elected positions. I believe that part of the reason for this is the closed system which we perpetuate. A system which says there is only a finite amount of money and time and if we try to include too many other people there won't be enough for us. A different perspective would be that if we utilize the vast resources available, there would not be as much need for the money and time and energy of a select few.

I look forward to returning to world services at a future date when either my perspective or that of the conference has changed. Thank you for allowing me to be of service.