

Final

OUR COMMITMENT TO UNITY

Over the years, members of our fellowship have struggled to resolve a variety of questions: How should our world services, and particularly our World Service Office, be administered? What is the proper relationship between world services and the rest of the fellowship? What are the appropriate means for developing, approving, and producing N.A. literature? How do we apply N.A.'s Twelve Traditions?

Recently, those issues came to a head when World Service Office, Inc., filed a federal suit in a controversy over the alleged infringement of N.A. literature copyrights. On one hand, there were members who felt the fellowship needed an easily affordable recovery text. Those members decided to print the Basic Text themselves. While recognizing the importance of the related internal issues, the WSO Board of Directors felt a responsibility to take action it believed would protect the fellowship's legal rights to its own literature.

Both parties came to court on January 2, 1991. The actual result of their confrontation, however, was far different from what either party expected, and far more beneficial for the N.A. Fellowship. In the course of the hearing, both parties became increasingly aware of the importance of N.A.'s primary purpose and the wisdom of our Twelve Traditions. The parties involved in the dispute were encouraged to seek an agreement among themselves, rather than place the court in the position of having to settle it for them. Their intensive negotiations and consultations, guided by the spirit of our traditions, were successful.

On January 4, the parties appeared again in federal court, agreement in hand. Their settlement not only resolved the lawsuit, but also described a procedure whereby the N.A. Fellowship could settle the longstanding internal issues which had led to the controversy and resulting lawsuit. The parties involved in the suit left court in unity, prepared to give their full energies to fulfilling the agreement they had made.

The status of our fellowship's trademarks and literary copyrights has not changed. There were no "losers" in the agreement. The January 4 settlement will, we hope, benefit the entire N.A. Fellowship.

Narcotics Anonymous has the chance to resolve some long-standing issues, issues which have repeatedly caused controversy and grief in our services and in our fellowship. The agreement reached gives the N.A. groups the choice to vote directly on these matters.

Three motions appear in the WSO Board of Directors section of the 1991 *Conference Agenda Report*: Which edition of the Basic Text, or parts thereof, is the one most preferred by the N.A. Fellowship? After considering all factors, do the N.A. groups want the WSO to produce a low-cost version of the Basic Text? Do the N.A. groups themselves wish to vote directly on these questions? If we are thorough in considering the issues surrounding these questions, diligent in producing answers to them, patient in discussing them with one another, and willing to abide by whatever decisions the fellowship as a whole finally arrives at, Narcotics Anonymous will have peace and unity.

It is our belief that the time has come to put aside all hostility arising from whatever disagreements we may have over these issues of fellowship policy. We know that many of our members have much to share about the issues surrounding the motions that appear in the *Conference Agenda Report*. Let us all place our "cards" on the table and confront the issues squarely and honestly.

By entering into this agreement in good faith, we have put aside any further intention to settle this particular controversy by means of litigation. While the fellowship attends to the issues being put before it, we encourage everyone to cease attacking one another.

We are all deeply saddened that N.A. members and groups on both sides of the table have felt the pain of rejection for their roles in this affair. N.A. members and groups on both sides of the table have been threatened and punished for their roles in this affair. Meetings have been removed from N.A. directories. Group and area representatives have been excluded from their ASC and RSC meetings. Individual trusted servants have been forced to resign. We ask the entire N.A. Fellowship--our members, groups, service boards, and committees--to cease such behavior. Those engaged in activities that could be considered controversial are asked to reflect on how their actions might affect their fellow members. We must find a way to talk about the issues before our fellowship without declaring war on one another.

Our fellowship has arrived at a point where it must resolve the controversies that are plaguing it. This solution may not appear overnight. We must commit ourselves to the process of forging that solution through prayer, study, discussion, and debate. The decisions our fellowship will make in this matter affect us all, and we are all responsible to take part in making them. If we do so with trust in a loving God, mindful of our fellowship's primary purpose, both for our own good and for the good of the addict we have yet to reach with our message.

With high hopes,

Stuart Tooredman 1-15-91

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date

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George Hollahan 1-15-91

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date