

May 4, 1983

THE PHILADELPHIA PLAN

The following proposal is an expression of the group conscience of the members of Narcotics Anonymous in the Greater Philadelphia Region. It is not intended to disrupt our Fellowship but to further our primary purpose. It is an adaptable structural format which can be implemented with a minimum amount of friction. The plan, as now proposed, is broad and general and intended to stimulate discussion.

The World Service Office (WSO), as it exists today, is responsible for the printing and distribution of NA approved literature; it is also entrusted with the supervision of the funding necessary for the publishing of our literature and the monies generated by any literature sales. It has become apparent, however, that the present level of world-wide growth of the NA Fellowship was unanticipated when the WSO was founded and that it is unable, as constituted, to serve the needs of a drastically changed fellowship. Greater Philadelphia's concern for the future of the NA program is the underlying cause in our decision to propose any structural changes.

If the WSO were to be disbanded and replaced by five District Service Offices, our Fellowship would be in a stronger position to keep abreast of our progress. The opening of offices to serve specific geographic sections would effectively decentralize our literature operations and redress the imbalances so glaringly obvious at the present time.

The essential premise -- decentralization -- of this plan could also be used in a restructuring of the World Service Board of Trustees (WSB). The WSB, as it exists today, is theoretically responsible for dealing with matters that affect our Fellowship as a whole; its self-perpetuating membership, however, in no way reflects the world-wide membership of Narcotics Anonymous. If the proposal to establish District Service Offices is adopted, then each District could be responsible for nominating three trustees from its geographic location. This would guarantee the Fellowship a WSB with trustees, representative of the bodies they serve and familiar with the Fellowship they protect.

The creation of service boards to DIRECTLY serve the Fellowship is crucial! That these service boards help ensure the continuity of the NA program is a matter of urgency. Greater Philadelphia believes that its proposal fulfills both these goals.

Proposed Structure Changes for WSO

The existing WSO should be disbanded and replaced by five District Service Offices (DSO). These offices would be established in geographic and demographic centers of NA activity. It should be structurally simple to open additional offices if the need arises.

The offices would serve the following geographic locations: the Southeast, the Northeast and Europe, the Middle West, the Southwest and Australia, and the Northwest and Western Canada.

These District Service Offices would be responsible for distributing literature, handling money matters, assisting groups, areas and regions in their Districts.

The managers of the five District Service Offices would be responsible for devising an efficient and economical method of printing NA approved literature, subject to the approval of the World Service Conference.

In all other matters the District Service Offices will be under the direction of the groups, areas and regions they serve.

The District Service Offices would offer the following advantages to the Fellowship:

- 1) Decentralizing the operations of the WSO would eliminate the possibility of too much money and authority accumulating in one place.
- 2) Service boards would finally be established by those they serve.
- 3) The Fellowship would be in a better position to sustain the incredible growth of the past decade --a growth that gives every indication of continuing.
- 4) New avenues of service work would be opened, allowing more NA members to express their gratitude to the Fellowship they love.

Proposed Structure Changes for WSB

Each of the five Districts shall express its group conscience in the election of three trustees.

The World Service Conference should establish criteria for election to the WSB. These criteria must ensure that the Fellowship be served by its most responsible, dedicated and mature trusted servants.

Trustees would serve for four years. (The initial trustees under this plan would have to serve staggered terms so the Fellowship would not be confronted with the dilemma of having an entirely new WSB every four years.)

The trustees are the guardians of the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous; they must not be concerned with the active management of service boards.

The trustees of each District would comprise a Traditions Committee for their District and be responsible for the protection of the NA Traditions in that District.

The full WSB (fifteen members) would meet annually to ensure the protection of the Traditions for the entire NA Fellowship.