



Feb 11/Mar 11

“This News sheet is intended as an aid to service throughout the Fellowship in Ireland”

The Murky Origins of ‘90 Meetings in 90 Days’

No one can speak with any certainty about the roots of "90 meetings in 90 days." Certainly, no one at the General Service Office can pinpoint the source of this bit of counselling heard in some A.A. meetings. No such suggestion appears in the Big Book or in the Twelve and Twelve. In the 1950s, though, mention of 90 days or three months as a milestone in sobriety was appearing in the Grapevine. An article in the January 1959 issue, which was one of a series on conducting talks at beginners meetings, is headed "90 – Day Trial."

In the article, it was pointed out that one approach to newcomers might be: "I'd like to suggest that for a period of three months you decide to stay away from a drink twenty-four hours at a time, and also decide to attend many meetings – every night if possible. Surely you can spare ninety days from your life. They might prove to be the most useful ninety days in your entire lifetime. You may learn whether or not you are an alcoholic, and that's a good thing to know."

For some in the Fellowship it makes obvious sense to

suggest to newcomers that they immerse themselves in A.A.'s program for the first few months. Someone new to the rooms following this suggestion is relieved of the burden of deciding on a daily basis whether to attend a meeting.

Some, though, believe that the concept of 90 meetings in 90 days runs counter to A.A.'s focus on a day at a time, and that to suggest to newcomers that they plan three months ahead is asking too much of them. One letter writer to the Grapevine is the March 1988 issue asserts: "If I had been required to do anything for more than a twenty four hour period, I probably would have walked out."

Also, some A.A. members with years of sobriety can be heard announcing that they are doing "90 – in – 90" to give their program a boost.

In general, A.A. members and groups have shown solid instincts for finding what works for staying sober. There are no rules on how many meetings anyone has to attend, of course. It comes down to what works for the individual.

Credit Box 4-5-9, April/May 2007

Concept X

Our Service Structure cannot function effectively and harmoniously unless, at every level, each optional responsibility is matched by a corresponding authority to discharge it. This requires that authority must be delegated at every level – and that the responsibility and authority of every entity are well defined and clearly understood.

As we have seen (Concept I) "final responsibility and ultimate authority" reside with the A.A. groups and they delegate this authority to the Conference (Concept II). The Conference, in turn, delegates to the General Service Board the authority to manage A.A.'s affairs (Concept III) on its behalf. The board is in authority over its subsidiary operating conditions – A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. – but it delegates to the directors of those corporations the authority necessary to run these service entities. The directors are in authority over the executives of the corporations, but delegate to these officers the authority needed to carry out

their administrative responsibilities. And finally, the executives delegate to the G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members and other employees the authority necessary to carry out their important service jobs.

"It is perfectly clear," says Bill, "that when delegated authority is operating well, it should not be constantly interfered with." Otherwise, he warns, "those charged with operating responsibly will be demoralised." For example, the General Service Board owns the two operating corporations and its authority over them is absolute. "Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the trustees do not unnecessarily interfere with or usurp the operating authority of these entities."

"To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to recognise; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and discharge their clear responsibilities.

A Message from Bill

May 1964

I'm glad indeed that we so often say to each other, "Faith without work is dead – action is the magic word!" as we strive to devise better ways of carrying the AA message to those who still suffer, I hope that we will also try to create a wider understanding of the operation and needs of AA's world services – that all-important cluster of activities which enables our Fellowship to function as a whole. Because these far-flung services reach into every quarter of the world, their direct influence for good is too often unseen, and therefore unknown.

Without that global effort, we would now be in a most sorry and chaotic state. Let me illustrate this by two examples:

Suppose, for instance, that, during the last twenty-five years, AA had never published any standard literature - no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics generally we would today be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, AA would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity.

Nevertheless, effective literature was prepared, and in 1939 the publication of the Big Book became our very first world service. From that time on, it became perfectly clear what AA is, what it believes, and how it works. Millions of our pamphlets and hundreds of thousands of our books are today in circulation. AA's message can never be garbled; anyone at all can find out about us with ease. What the dividends of this single project in world communication have been, only God himself knows.

One more illustration. Our Fellowship enjoys a vast goodwill everywhere. In large measure this is directly due to another AA world service – the service of public

information. For many years wonderful accounts of AA have poured from the press and from other media of communication. This astounding success has required of your general service people great labour, top skills, and unstinted dedication. There is no question that this continued torrent of favourable publicity has brought to AA one-half its present membership.

But just suppose that these great channels of communication had been left wide open to the winds of chance; or worse still, had never been developed by us at all. Had there been such a failure, we may well shudder at the dire consequences. Tens of thousands of today's AA membership would still be drinking. Many indeed would now be mad or dead.

I'm sure you have already seen that AA world service is utterly necessary to our future unity and growth – even to our survival as a Fellowship.

To maintain these life-giving arteries of world communication in full flow, and in good repair, will always be a top priority task for each new generation of our Society. This will require of us a greatly increased understanding of the immense need to be met, and a sustained devotion of the highest order.

The world of today harbours the appalling total of twenty million alcoholic men and women. Without doubt a large fraction of these fellow sufferers could begin to find their sobriety and a new way of life if only they could see and hear just one AA meeting. Experience has already proved that our world services constitute the largest and the most powerful single agency that we shall ever possess to bring those legions of sufferers within reach of what we – AAs around the world – have so providentially discovered for ourselves.

Knowing this Fellowship, I feel entirely confident that we will eagerly shoulder and discharge well this most high responsibility to our Third Legacy.

As we continue in the language of the heart to carry AA's message across all distances and all barriers, may God bless us.

(Credit Language of the Heart, pgs 348-349)

Conference Decision in Relation to Group Insurance - March 1996

"That all Groups/Areas/Intergroups/Convention Committees ensure that they are properly insured, inclusive of member to member liability."

AA's Tradition of Self-Support

October 1967

AA's far-flung Twelfth Step activities, carrying the message to the next sufferer, are the very lifeblood of our AA adventure. Without this vital activity, we would soon become anaemic; we would literally wither and die.

Now where do AA's services – worldwide, area, local – fit into our scheme of things? Why should we provide these functions with money? The answer is simple enough. Every single AA service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work is possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office to arrange hospitalisation and sponsorship, or the world service Headquarters to maintain unity and effectiveness all over the globe.

Though not costly, these service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion – to our survival as a Fellowship. Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to a recognition on our part that AA must everywhere function in full strength – and that, under our Tradition of self-support, we are all going to foot the bill.

We have long known that Alcoholics Anonymous has no need for charitable contributions from any source. Our Fellowship is self-supporting. Neither do AA groups try to meet the

rehabilitation expenses of thousands of newcomers. Long ago we learned that this was impractical.

Instead, AA offers to the new person a spiritual way of life that can eliminate the alcohol problem. With this accomplished, the new person, in the company of his fellow sufferers, can then begin the solution of his personal problems – including the financial one.

So AA groups themselves accept no charitable funds – and give none away. At first glance, this attitude may seem to be hard-nosed, even callous. An immense experience tells us otherwise. Money gifts – as a prerequisite of getting sober – are usually worthless when made a function of an AA group.

Of course, we see AA's primary charity in the Twelfth Step activities of tens of thousands of us as we daily carry the AA message to newcomers. We travel millions of miles; we absent ourselves from business and home. In the aggregate, we lay out large sums. As individuals, we do not hesitate to give temporary financial aid to the newcomer, if and when he seems to want sobriety first. Here, then, is money charity aplenty, always given on a very personal, face-to-face basis. And perhaps even this cannot be called wholly charitable, since every Twelfth Step effort means more certain sobriety and added spiritual growth from the sponsor.

Both these principles we understand: that AA wants no charity; that we support our own services. We understand – but we sometimes forget.

(Credit Language of the Heart, pgs 349-350)

Prayer

JANUARY 1980

THE AA PROGRAM ONLY SUGGESTS that newcomers attempt to begin to conceive of a power greater than themselves, in their own individual terms. After that, an old-timer might suggest to a sceptical newcomer – along with not picking up the first drink – faking prayer and keeping an open mind.

I came into this program a drunken atheist. Today, I pray. My being sober is a reflection of the good attributes of some higher power; it is not a reflection of any moral virtue or strength of will on my part.

This change in a drunken, hardcore, cynical atheist is a miracle beyond human comprehension. However, one aspect of the program has always been required for me to remain sober – results. Prayer works. If prayer didn't work and show results, I'd become an atheist again today.

Spirituality happens to be extremely practical. Prayer, reading

the AA literature, going to meetings, using the Steps, and helping another alcoholic all combine to make my life easier and more comfortable, hour to hour, day to day.

As an atheist, I faked prayer on a trial basis in the beginning. The results have altered my view of the cosmos. An unseen realm does exist. I do not attend church, nor have I experienced a spiritual awakening; I'm still a fire-breathing cynic. Yet I pray regularly to something unseen and so vast that I, as a human being, can never understand or even name it.

I pray because of the positive results that flow from prayer. I'm a pragmatist. So, for today, I have become an agnostic, who occasionally experiences violent swings toward faith. With all the blessings that have been bestowed upon me in a year and a half, I still experience doubts and have not made the quantum leap to faith.

All this proves only one thing: that some nuts are tougher to crack than others. Today, I'm still faking prayer and getting results. Maybe God likes nuts, especially the hard ones.

(Credit Best of Grapevine Vol 1)

Official AA Website

The General Service Board wish to thank those members of the Fellowship who emailed their contributions for updating the official AA Website. All contributions will be duly considered in the forthcoming process.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
NEWS SHEET
update

Forthcoming Conventions

Limerick Area 4-6 February 2011
 The Greenhills Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick.

Cork City Area 4-6 March 2011
 The Montenotte Hotel, Cork City.

Cork County Area 10-12 June 2011
 The Maritime Hotel, Bantry, Co. Cork.

Galway East Area 1-3 July 2011
 Ard Ri Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway.

Mayo Area 25-27 November 2011
 Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Galway West Area 6-8 January 2012
 Galway Bay Hotel, Galway.

One Day Events

ONE DAY EVENTS

Gratitude Day - Area 14
Sunday 6th March 2011
 Riverside Park Hotel
 Enniscorthy
 Co Wexford
 10.30am to 5.00pm

54th All Ireland Convention

**Clanree Hotel,
 Letterkenny,
 Co. Donegal.**

8th - 10th April 2011

Theme:
 Recovery, Unity, Service

For bookings contact:

Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny.
 Tel: 074-9124369

Letterkenny Tourist Office
 Tel: 074-9121160

