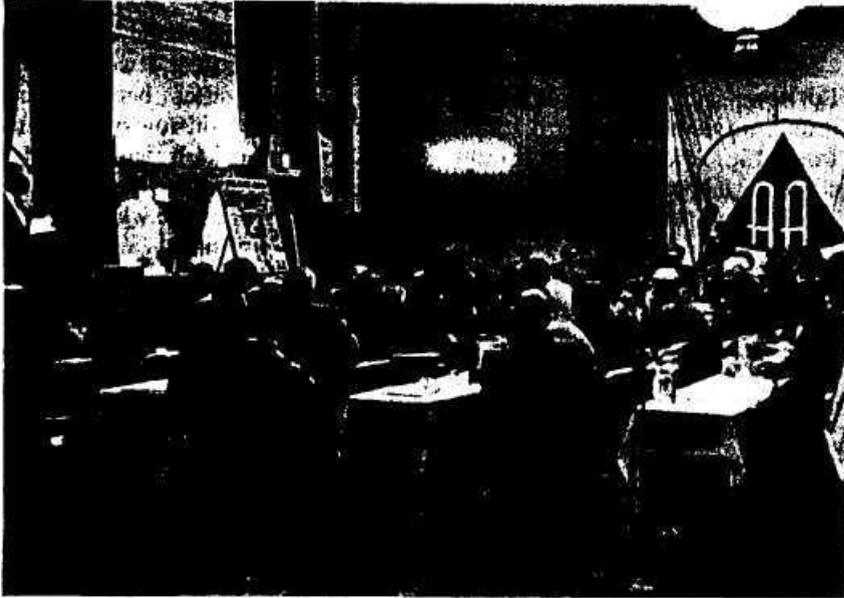


July 1960



# AA In Action

## THE CONFERENCE REPORT

**B**ETTER communication—both inside and outside of AA—was the dominant theme of the Tenth Annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, which met for four days late in April at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City.

Eighty-three Delegates from North America and two observers from overseas, together with GSO and Grapevine staffs, World Services and Grapevine Directors, and Trustees

of the General Service Board, reviewed developments of the past year and recommended activity for the coming year.

Bill W. sounded the keynote of the Conference when he spoke at the opening session on Wednesday evening. Describing AA as "a unique means of communication," AA's co-founder said:

"Our lives have depended upon communication. Our unity depends

on communication. Our functioning depends on communication. This Conference is a great network of communication. . . .

"Our Twelve Steps probably won't change. Our Twelve Traditions? Not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for service—let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, for ever. . . .

"We ought never neglect to reflect soberly that . . . in this generation which has seen AA come alive, this period of twenty-five years, a vast procession of the world's alcoholics has passed in front of us and has gone over the precipice . . . worldwide, something like twenty-five millions of them.

"We must also remember that a great many of these condemned passers-by are perhaps not amenable to Alcoholics Anonymous. Therefore I think we ought to cast aside some of our early fears, however justified they were at the time, and try to increase our friendly cooperation with whoever is trying to tackle this field. . . .

"Today, I think that our fears of the mistakes other people might make, as they might affect us, are far overdone. So I think we can go a little overboard on the friendly side because these people are in touch with drunks who may approach them but won't approach us."

Key decisions and advisory actions of the Conference, which urged that *communications* be the theme

of movement-wide service in the next year, are summarized below:

**1960 Convention.** *Approved* preliminary programming and arrangements for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary International Convention at Long Beach, California, July 1-3, and urged Delegates to make information about the Convention available in their areas.

**Literature.** *Recommended*, in view of the importance of communicating the AA message to non-English-speaking alcoholics in many lands, that AA World Services undertake a thorough study of both immediate and long-range needs for AA literature in other languages.

**Film on GSO Services.** *Recommended* that the General Service Board consider a proposal to prepare a special film on GSO activity, to assist Delegates, Committeemen, and others wishing to present a graphic account of the scope of AA World Services.

**Grapevine.** *Pledged* support to the Grapevine staff in its efforts to boost total circulation by a minimum of 5,000 copies between May 1, 1960 and April 30, 1961. *Expressed* approval of the book AA TODAY to be published July 1 by the Grapevine in commemoration of AA's Twenty-fifth Anniversary. *Recommended* that all areas participate in the Grapevine Representative Plan.

**Outside Agencies.** *Approved* unanimously a report of the Study Committee on Relations with Outside Agencies which reaffirms and docu-

ments the traditional AA policy of cooperation, but non-affiliation, with AA's many friends in outside agencies. *Recommended* that the Study Committee's "Fact File" be made available to all areas as soon as possible.

**Clubhouses.** *Confirmed*, on the basis of numerous case histories, that it is possible for clubs limited to AA members to develop and operate successfully without recourse to solicitation of funds from non-members. *Recommended* that a study be made of the relation of clubhouses to the AA movement, and approved formation of an eight-member Special Conference Study Committee to work with the GSO staff during the coming year.

**Finances.** *Expressed* appreciation for the record contributions of 1959 but warned against "financial complacency" in view of the increasing demands upon GSO for services to alcoholics throughout the world. *Reaffirmed* the desirability of maintaining \$3 per year per member as a suggested yardstick for contributions in support of World Services, since many groups do not as yet contribute. *Suggested* that groups be reminded of the desirability of sending their contributions in to GSO on a quarterly or monthly basis.

**Directory Information.** *Approved* a plan whereby GSO will seek information from the groups in two separate annual mailings: (1) to get data needed for an accurate World Directory and (2) to ascertain up-to-date

group mailing addresses.

**Group Communications.** *Approved* a plan whereby General Service Representatives (GSRs) whose names and addresses have been validated by their Area Committees may receive duplicates of material customarily sent to the group mailing address.

The Conference also heard and approved more than a dozen reports outlining GSO services and Grapevine activity. A few highlights:

- Two new display items are available from GSO for Area Conventions and Assembly meetings: "Inside AA," a 3-color 40" sheet based on the leaflet of the same name, and a kit with instructions for making a literature display.
- The Twenty-fifth Anniversary Convention in California, July 1-3 will feature three large meetings with Bill and Lois on hand, twelve major sessions on various phases of AA's role in the world today, fourteen "Alkathon" meetings, and ten workshops on group problems.
- Nearly 1,000 new groups registered with GSO in 1959.... approximately 500 *old* groups were "lost" — thirty-three Delegates were asked to help determine the status of such apparently inactive groups.
- Overseas members (non-U.S. and Canada) now total 16,420 individuals, 1,033 groups. Three new groups—in Fiji, Singapore, and Bombay — resulted from the activity of seamen members of AA, who now number 231.