

July 1961

CONFERENCE REPORT

*"Meeting our responsibility of Service"
was the dominating theme of the 1961 General Service
Conference held April 19-23, at the Hotel Roosevelt
in New York City.*



DIGEST OF BILL W.'S REMARKS

At the Conference opening, Bill paid tribute to the invaluable services of the non-alcoholic Trustees of the General Service Board in former years, and strongly emphasized our permanent need for the services of this group of Board members in the future.

In his closing talk he pointed out that at St. Louis, in 1955, full authority and responsibility for the maintenance of AA's World Services had been transferred by him and AA's old-timers to the General Service Conference itself.

He then indicated that our 1961 Conference marked another historic turning point for AA—one at which he would vest in the Board of Trustees all of his remaining World Service leadership and responsibility. This he did, and so placed AA fully on its own.

In this connection he strongly emphasized that he would always be available to help repair any unforeseen flaws that might develop in our Service structure; that he intended to maintain close communication with AA by means of more writing, and that he is presently engaged in a series of articles for the Grapevine which will amount to a synopsis of a major new book, keyed to the theme of "practicing these principles in all our affairs." He will start work upon this if it becomes evident through his preliminary Grapevine pieces that he will be able to make a satisfactory job of the larger volume.

Action Highlights for 1961

Eighty-four Delegates from North America, including Alaska and Hawaii, participated in the four days of reports, special presentations and general discussion.

As the link between the groups and the General Service Board of AA, the Delegates were called upon for decisions and "advisory actions" to guide the Board in its 1961 activities. Highlights of such "advisory actions" are summarized in the following paragraphs.

1965 CONVENTION

The Delegates indicated their approval of a 1965 International Convention of AA to be held in the city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The final decision to be made by the Trustees of the General Service Board.

THIRD ONTARIO DELEGATE

They approved, in view of the large geographical area and increasing population involved, a request for a third Delegate from Ontario, Canada, to serve the North and Northwest section of the Province.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Recognized the growing importance of this field of activity by establishing the Study Committee on Relations with Outside Agencies as a standing committee of the Conference.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The GSO is now co-operating with approximately fifty local public information committees. Materials available to assist local AAs in their public information activities include the following:

1. Radio and television material.
2. Special material for the press.
3. Brief pamphlet describing AA to non-alcoholics.
4. Material to aid AA members who address non-AA meetings.
5. "Basic Fact File" on the movement for writers and editors.

AA OVERSEAS

There are now 1,112 Overseas groups with a total membership of 17,737 men and women.

Highlights of AA growth and development overseas include:

France: Establishment of an active group of approximately twenty French

members who were attracted to AA by a series of twenty articles in a leading French daily.

Latin America: Contact with approximately 250 new correspondents as a result of an article in a Spanish-language edition of the *Reader's Digest*. (GSO has recently inaugurated a Spanish Newsletter, distributed to ninety Spanish-language groups and twenty-five Loners.)

Union of South Africa: Publication in Afrikaans of a one-volume digest of the three basic AA books.

Transvaal: Publication of mimeographed AA material in the Isixhosa and Swahili idioms.

GSO OPERATIONS

Mail activity at the General Service Office of AA, based on volume of incoming and out-going letters, totalled 258,000 items in 1960, compared with 215,800 in 1959.

The number of AA books shipped during the year increased from 34,800 in 1959 to 36,833 in 1960 and the number of pamphlets shipped rose from 743,811 to 845,055.

INSTITUTIONAL AA

Approximately 800 institutional AA groups with a total of more than 24,000 members are currently registered at GSO.

A survey of institutional groups during the past year indicated that seventy-five per cent of the groups returning the questionnaire are being supported by more than one "outside" group or by an "institutional committee" representing a number of groups.

MISUSE OF DIRECTORY

Directed the attention of AA members once more to the statement on the inside front cover of the Directory which specifies that the book is not to be used for any form of solicitation or for any commercial venture.

PROPOSED PAPERBACK BOOK

Rejected, again, after hearing a detailed presentation of the financial factors involved, a proposal to issue the "Big Book" in a paperback edition.

GRAPEVINE

The 1961 General Service Conference adopted the following recommendations of the Grapevine Conference Committee:

1. The adoption of the Grapevine Group Sponsorship program whereby groups are encouraged to send a new subscription each month to a local

doctor, minister, psychiatrist, library, law-enforcement agency or member, prison or hospital, or any other person or agency, selected by the group, as a joint Twelfth Step venture.

2. Continue the action of the previous GSO Conferences in establishing and encouraging Grapevine Representation at the State, Area and Group levels—depending on the problems and needs of each Delegate's area.

3. Where possible appoint a knowledgeable AA member as a central Grapevine "editor" to search out AA writers and artists for Grapevine contributions.

4. Re-adopt the quota of 5,000 new subscriptions as a continuing goal for 1961.
