

2024 Conference Committee on Finance

ITEM C: Review progress report reflecting shared experience from the Fellowship reflecting on possible future changes to literature written by A.A.'s founders.*

+Carryover from a previous EDW plan

Background note:

In response to a Committee Consideration from the 73rd General Service Conference suggesting that the trustees' Literature Committee *seek input from the Fellowship (including but not limited to Area delegate feedback) regarding any possible future changes to literature written by A.A.'s Founders*, the trustees' Literature Committee met to discuss and subsequently developed a list of suggested questions for discussion. The list was distributed to all Conference Delegates with the anticipation that the Area Delegates would schedule discussions within their Areas, utilizing the proposed questions to help inform the discussions.

Excerpt from trustees' Literature Committee January 27, 2024 Meeting Report

As of January 25, a total of 1,171 responses have been received via online and postal mail. The breakdown by region:

Online (region/area unknown)	2
East Central	80
West Central	15
Western Canada	6
Eastern Canada	1
Southeast	264
Northeast	154
Pacific	247
Southwest	94
International*	35

**Received a response explaining that the correspondence was directed to members in the U.S./Canada structure*

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CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

It was noted that approximately 2/3rds of the responses came from individual members, with the remaining representing sharing from group, district, or Area discussions.

The committee discussed and agreed to develop and distribute another letter to be sent to the Fellowship to clarify the intent of the original letter (e.g., designed to help inform area discussions — through Conference process/delegates, not a survey). The committee also discussed and agreed to distribute to the Regional Trustees the sharing received to date so that they can distribute to the respective Area delegates.

Background:

1. Sharing on Founders Writings - Proposed Questions, Document from the Trustees' Literature Committee (November 2023)
2. February 2024 Correspondence from Trustees' Literature Committee

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November 13, 2023

Dear Trusted Servants:

A.A.'s Co-Founder, Bill W., in his 1953 address to the General Service Conference, stated that he did not consider himself the author of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Big Book (*Our Great Responsibility*, p. 92). He also alluded to the fact that in the various A.A. literature published prior to his passing, he borrowed heavily from other sources, and that other A.A. members made significant contributions.

On the other hand, addressing the historical context of some of the writings of our Founders, many members in our Fellowship have expressed strong sentiment against any changes in the first 164 pages of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Big Book, as well as the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare, and the Appendices. In fact, as early as 1995 and most recently in 2022, Advisory Actions designed to protect the above-referenced contents have been passed by the General Service Conference.

In response to a Committee Consideration from the 73rd General Service Conference suggesting that the trustees' Literature Committee *seek input from the Fellowship (including but not limited to Area delegate feedback) regarding any possible future changes to literature written by A.A.'s Founders*, the trustees' Literature Committee agreed it would be beneficial to gather shared experience from the Fellowship regarding this topic.

We would like to hear from you — the top of the triangle! While we hope that the suggested questions will help to spark thoughtful sharing and discussion, please feel free to add questions that we may not have thought of that you feel may best inform the discussion. Most of all, we are grateful for and thank you for your participation.

In fellowship,

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The trustees' Literature Committee (2023-2024)

Attachment: Suggested Questions

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT A.A. FOUNDERS' WRITINGS?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you think that A.A. Founders would object to or embrace revisions to their writings? If yes, why? If not, why?
2. Do you think the Founders' writings are effective in reaching new members? If not, what measures do you think can be taken to resolve this issue?
3. What reasons would you consider for changing our Founders' writings?
4. How do you feel about changing A.A. Founders' writings to replace outdated references?
5. What suggestions do you have for preserving the Founders' writings, along with keeping pace with our current A.A. Society and its future?
6. Should there be a special Conference process for approval of changes to our Founders' writings? (e.g., super, or qualified majority – 75%, and/or two-year consideration process.)
7. What additional ideas, thoughts, or suggestions can you share about changing or not changing the Founders' writings?

Note: Please be as concise as possible in your responses to the questions.

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February 7, 2024

A TENTH STEP FROM THE TRUSTEES' LITERATURE COMMITTEE

We appreciate and thank all who took the time to discuss the “proposed” questions and provided sharing. However, we realize that for the vast majority, our correspondence was unclear as to its intent and that caused confusion. We apologize for this confusion.

The November 13, 2023, correspondence enclosing “proposed” questions was not intended to be a “survey.” Instead, we hoped the questions would spark discussions at the local level. And that the local sharing would be provided to the Area Delegates.

However, in a subsequent meeting with the delegates, it was stated that the sharing could be forwarded to the General Service Office. As a result, many in the Fellowship sent us individual letters relating their viewpoints on the matter.

We realize now that this invitation confused matters and inadvertently circumvented the Conference process wherein the Area Delegates bring to the Conference the sense of their respective Areas.

We have gathered the sharing received and will provide this sharing to the regional trustees who will in turn distribute to the Delegates in their Region. You may be interested to know that there is a sharing session planned for this year’s General Service Conference on this very topic — “How Should We Treat Writings by A.A.’s Founders.” To be clear, this is just a sharing session — not a voting or policy making discussion.

While we admittedly missed the mark with the November 13 correspondence, one silver lining is that members are discussing this important subject. We hope you continue to discuss in your local areas and connect with your Area Delegate. For more information about the Conference process and how we work together “to help the alcoholic who still suffers,” you may want to access the pamphlet “Circles of Love and Service” <https://www.aa.org/circles-love-and-service>.

With gratitude for your service and participation.
The Trustees’ Literature Committee (2023-2024)