

# SENY D-D-O-S 3/5/2022

## 72nd General Service Conference Committees Agenda Items V. Grapevine/La Viña Committee Questions under consideration

**Item D.** “Discuss the wide-ranging impact the Preamble change has had on our A.A. Fellowship.”

PRESENTED BY KEVIN F.  
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Good morning and thank you all for coming. My name is KEVIN F. my current service position is the Recording Secretary for the Rockland County General Service Committee and I was asked by our Delegate Tom B. To discuss the Grapevine /La Viña Conference Committee question:

ITEM D- “ DISCUSS THE WIDE RANGING IMPACT THE AA PREAMBLE CHANGE HAS HAD ON OUR FELLOWSHIP”

The given back ground material included the time line as well as a letter from Josh E., General Service Trustee and Board Chair for Grapevine , Inc. labeled as Document One-Dated Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> ,2022. A quick recap of the timeline begins in Dec. 2018 with the first request from a home group in Area 29 to change the wording of The Preamble and it continues until the end of the



71<sup>st</sup> GSC in 2021. In the intervening years two GSC's and many discussions with the results being passed back and forth across the Conference structure had occurred.

I have included the much more detailed timeline at the end of this presentation for your consideration but today I will be mostly focusing on the Letter.

# INTRODUCTION OF THE AAGVB LETTER

At the end of the 71<sup>ST</sup> GSC , The GV/LV Conference Committee presented its report to the whole Conference. During that report they noted that they had taken **No Action** on the question of gender-neutral pronoun usage.

*The GV/LV conference committee did request that the GVB gather additional shared experience from the Fellowship related to the topic of gender-neutral language options for the Preamble.*

It was conference Floor Action # 6 that ultimately resulted in the final change to the Preamble.

The AAGVB Chair, Josh E.'s letter reiterates and highlights the change process to The Preamble and at its conclusion states the question before us.

# AA GRAPEVINE BOARD LETTER TO THE 72<sup>ND</sup> CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

**Document 1-AAGVB Chair Josh E.'s letter:**

**“Almost immediately following the 71st General Service Conference, the AA Grapevine Board, the AA World Services Board and the General Service Board began receiving considerable feedback (some favorable, some unfavorable, and some simply asking for additional information) regarding the revision to The AA Preamble (Preamble)..”-Letter to The GSC-dated January 27,2022**

# GRAPEVINE BOARD LETTER-CONTINUES

The letter explains the lengthy process and the time devoted by all to discussing the Preamble change.

**“To be sure, the decision whether to change the Preamble has been the subject of an ongoing discussion that spans several years. Specifically,...no less than two General Service Conferences ( i.e.; 70<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> ). As directed by an advisory action arising from the 71<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference, we began replacing the words “men and women” with “people” as early as Grapevine’s July 2021 issue and its translation in La Viña’s July/August issue.**

# THE BOARD LETTER- CONTINUES

It explains some of the reactions and Traditional reasoning behind some of the commentary received.

**“Some welcome the wording “people in lieu of “men and women.” Others oppose the change. Interestingly, those who favor the original version as well as those who oppose the new Preamble cite our Traditions as the basis for their reasoning. For example, those in favor cite Tradition 1 such that AA unity is enhanced by welcoming *all* who suffer from alcoholism. Likewise, those who prefer “men and Women” assert that AA Unity has been disrupted by the change.”-Letter to 72<sup>nd</sup> GSC**



# THE A.A. GVB LETTER -CONTINUES

It further states the reasoning for the question and illustrates the board's due diligence in the discussion of this matter.

“After its passage, the GVB received a number of inquiries about whether the revision negatively impacted the GV's Editorial Independence. However, it was the GVB, Publisher, and Editors who discussed this proposed change over several meetings that ultimately lead to forwarding the discussion—as an agenda item—to the General Service Conference.” (See also the Timeline)- *Letter to*

*72<sup>nd</sup> GSC*

Further, it then goes on to state with Tradition arguments the pros and cons presented to the board.

## THE A.A. GVB LETTER -CONTINUES

**“Those who favored the revision all along noted that, under Tradition 4, each Group is autonomous and that their Group enacted the change to “people” in advance of the advisory action. Not surprisingly, those who opposed the change also noted that, under Tradition 4 that their Group is autonomous and that they plan to continue saying “men and women.” Regarding Tradition 10, some say the Preamble change is an outside issue (i.e.; political, sociological, etc.) while others hold fast that it is an inside issue supported by Tradition 3 (i.e., welcoming, inclusive, etc.). But all who are in the least reasonable will agree upon one point, as a group there is more discussion required so that we can move forward, as a Fellowship, in love and unity.”- Letter to 72<sup>nd</sup> GSC**

As you can see they cited Traditions 4,10 ,3 as well as the previous Tradition 1.

# SUMMARY OF THE TRADITIONS' USE: PRO AND CON

## TRADITIONS **FOR** THE CHANGE:

- **TRADITION 1**- UNITY ENHANCED
- **TRADITION 4**- AUTONOMY TO USE "NEW" WORDING: **PEOPLE**
- **TRADITION 3**- INCLUSIVITY & WELCOMENESS- "YOU ARE A MEMBER OF AA, IF YOU SAY YOU HAVE THE DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING"

## TRADITIONS **AGAINST** THE CHANGE:

- **TRADITION 1**- UNITY DISRUPTED
- **TRADITION 4**- AUTONOMY TO KEEP THE "OLD" WORDING: **MEN AND WOMEN**
- **TRADITION 10** – THE WORD CHANGE IS AN OUTSIDE ISSUE BECAUSE IT BRINGS INTO AA SOCIO-POLITICAL IDEAS OF THE OUTSIDE SOCIETY AT LARGE

# THE BOARD'S LETTER -CONCLUDES

The Letter concludes with the Question before us.

**“Therefore, consistent with the spirit of Warranty Four, Concept XII that “all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.”, we request that the Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña at the 2022 General Service Conference, consider the following:**

***"Discuss the wide-ranging impact the AA Preamble change has had on our Fellowship."***

*Letter to 72<sup>nd</sup> GSC- dated January 27, 2022*

# SUMMATION OF THE QUESTION ASKED

You've seen the arguments pro and con for the wording change as submitted to the various boards. You've heard the compressed Timeline for this action and in the end you saw that the GVB asked a final question according to Warranty 4- Concept XII.

The question stated is in keeping with the request from the 71<sup>st</sup> GSC GV/LV Committee in its discussion of the issue as noted in an earlier portion of this discussion

The beauty of the AA program is such that it allows for these types of civil discourses to occur as we form a spiritual group conscience with which to move forward on the issue at hand as a whole fellowship. There will always be a difference of opinion but in AA, we operate by substantial unanimity in all our affairs as they relate to the governance of the whole of the Fellowship as guided by a Higher Power.

# SUMMATION - CONCLUDES

Knowing that the word "IMPACT" means to have an effect or influence on.

Therefore you might ask your group that being mindful of the word impact & Concept One:

"Final responsibility and ultimate authority for our A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship". Bill W, Concept I.

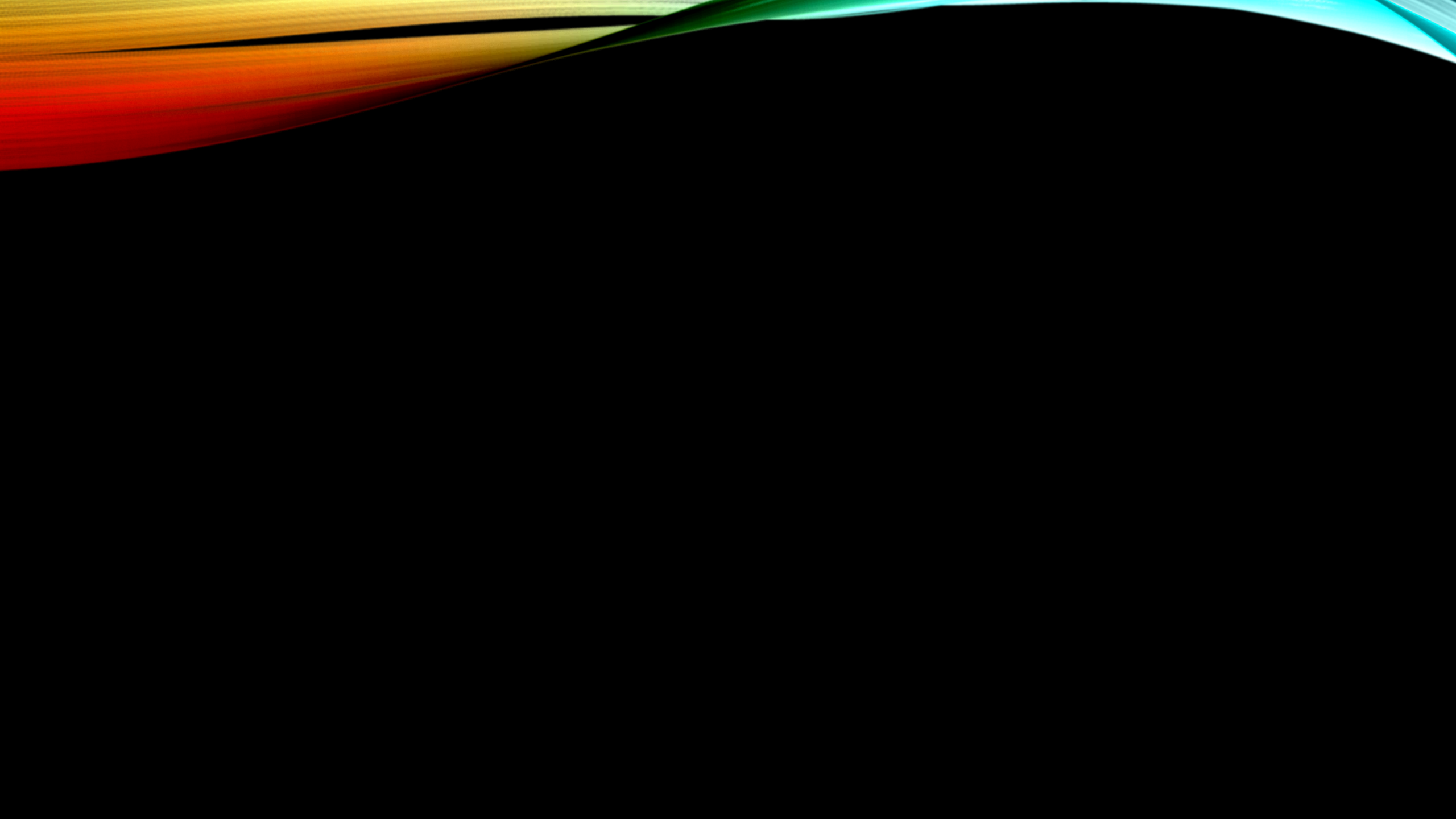
Our Delegate asks that you consider the following when attempting to answer this question.

"Whether your group is using the AA Preamble as approved at the 71<sup>st</sup> GSC, or whether it has continued with the former Preamble, what has been the Group's experience in doing so over the past months?"

Another way to look at it is the how, what and why of the effect this change has had to/or on your group and collectively these will help establish the impact this change has had on our Confernece as a whole.

THANK YOU AND MAY WE ALL TRUDGE THE  
HAPPY ROAD OF SOBRIETY WITH LOVE AND  
TOLERNACE IN OUR HEARTS.







# 71<sup>ST</sup> GSC FLOOR ACTIONS

- After the GV/LV finished its report to the conference on what they had decided there came a series of FLOOR ACTIONS which reopened the Question they had been asked to resolve

## By Their Numbers:

- Floor Action #2- request a change to the Preamble that would use the term **WE** in place of men and women in a few places in The Preamble- **This passed by 2/3 majority vote by substantial unanimity**
- Floor Action #3-The original request was once again submitted by two Delegates in conjunction-The Fellowship of *PEOPLE* –format-**The motion passed by 2/3 majority vote by substantial unanimity**
- Finally, Floor Action #6- was presented as : “The Preamble described in the Third Floor Action be presented to the General Service Board for Approval” -**THAT MOTION ALSO PASSED BY 2/3 MAJORITY VOTE BY SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY**



# TIMELINE TO PASSAGE OF THE AA PREAMBLE

# QUICK TIMELINE ON THE PREAMBLE CHANGE

## DEC. 2018

- A Home Group in Area 29 sends in a request to the AAGVB asking for more inclusive language in the Preamble

## JAN. 2019

- AAGVB took **NO ACTION** on the original request
- The AAGVB forwards the Preamble request to the Trustee's Literature Committee (TLC)- who are currently considering the Language usage in all AA literature

## SEPT.2019

- The Board receives two additional requests for changes to the PREAMBLE from Area 13 & Area 49—The board resumes its discussions

## NOV. 2019

- The AAGVB decides to rescind its previous request to the TLC

# PREAMBLE TIMELINE -CONTINUES

## **DEC-2019**

- Discussion continues on the many requests for change to the Preamble
- The AAGVB sends the requests to the 70<sup>th</sup> GSC Committee on GV/LV for further discussion

## **JAN. 2020**

- The 70<sup>th</sup> GSC Conference Agenda is set, including the questions from the AAGVB to the Conference

## **FEB-APR. 2020**

- Groups in the Fellowship are asked to discuss Items D. & E. from the GV/LV Conference Committee questions
- **ITEM D- "CONSIDER REVISING THE AA PREAMBLE TO USE GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS..."**
- **ITEM E- " CONSIDER A REQUEST TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE OF THE FIRST SENTENCE..."**

# PREAMBLE TIMELINE-CONTINUES

## APR. 2020

- PANEL 69 & 70 Delegates at the 70th GSC on the GV/LV Conference Committee considered **ITEM D.**- The request to change the wording to Gender-Neutral pronouns- **TOOK NO ACTION**
- **ITEM E.**- They sent a request back to the AAGVB for more examples of generalized language **OPTIONS** and asked that a report be sent to the 71<sup>ST</sup> GSC

## JUNE –OCTOBER 2020

- The board and those that work at the Grapevine are working to fulfill the Conference Advisory Actions of the 70<sup>th</sup> GSC
- Senior GV Editor Jon W. presents suggested changes to The Preamble which will serve as the Background Material for the 71<sup>st</sup> GSC

# PREAMBLE TIMELINE -CONTINUES

## JANUARY 2021

- The AAWS board sets the 71<sup>st</sup> Conference Agenda and forwards to the Committee on GV/LV the following question :

Item E .Review suggested gender-neutral language options for changes to the AA Preamble.

## FEB. – April 2021

- Groups across the service structure of the US and Canada discuss this item

## APRIL 2021

- Panel 70 & 71 Delegates on the GV/LV Conference Committee consider the question—They took **NO ACTION** because they felt they needed more information to make a decision
- Further they requested that the AAGVB gather additional shared experience from the Fellowship related to the gender-neutral language options being requested and that they bring them back to the 72<sup>nd</sup> GSC Committee on GV/LV

# CONFERENCE APPROVED ACTIONS PUT INTO PLACE

- Following the close of the 71<sup>st</sup> GSC the General Service Board met and accepted the Advisory Actions from the completed conference

## **AA GRAPEVINE BOARD TAKES ACTION:**

- The AAGVB approved the change to The Preamble as advised in floor action # 6
- The change goes into effect immediately for all online materials and the print change was officially enacted with the publication of the July 2021 issue of the Grapevine Magazine and the July/August La Viña
- The Change also goes into effect in all AAWS printings where the preamble appears and the change continues in new print runs, which brings us to the Letter known as Document 1 of the Back ground material