

"The Twelve  
Concepts for  
World Service"

The  
what?



## AKRON INTERGROUP COUNCIL OF AA



The Twelve Concepts of World Service apply not only to the General Service office in New York, but apply to our entire service structure including the Group, Intergroup, Boards and committees, District, or the Area.

We have "rewritten" the Concepts Illustrated pamphlet to apply to our Intergroup structure so that Board members as well as Intergroup Reps can better understand how they apply to us in Akron.

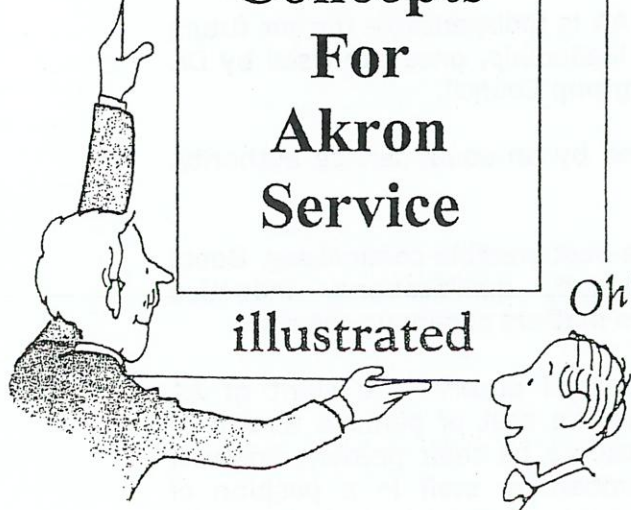
Bill W. states in the Service Manual (pp 3) "...and they (Concepts) detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today. These Concepts therefore aim to record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost."

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## The Twelve Concepts For Akron Service

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## **THE TWELVE CONCEPTS OF AA, SHORT FORM, ADAPTED FOR THE AKRON INTERGROUP**

- 1) Final responsibility and ultimate authority for Akron area AA services should always reside in the collective conscience of all Akron area groups.
- 2) The Akron Intergroup Council has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of Akron AA in its area affairs.
- 3) To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of Akron AA – the Intergroup Council, Intergroup Representatives, the Executive Board, staff, and committees – with a traditional "Right of Decision"
- 4) At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.
- 5) Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
- 6) The Intergroup Council recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most Akron area service matters should be exercised by the members of the Executive Board.
- 7) The Constitution and Bylaws of the Intergroup Council empowers the Board members to manage and conduct Akron service affairs. The Constitution and Bylaws are not a legal document; it relies upon Tradition and the Akron AA purse for final effectiveness.
- 8) The Intergroup Council is the principal planner and administrator of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of all Akron AA services, exercising this through their ability to elect all members of the Executive Board.
- 9) Good service leadership at all levels of Akron AA is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary Akron service leadership, once exercised by Dr. Bob, must necessarily be assumed by the Intergroup Council.
- 10) Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
- 11) The Intergroup Council should always have the best possible committees, Board members, staff and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
- 12) The Intergroup Council and Executive Board shall observe the spirit of AA Tradition, taking care that they never become the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be their prudent financial principle; that they place none of their members or staff in a position of unqualified authority over others; that they reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, wherever possible, by substantial unanimity; that their actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that they never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, they will always remain democratic in thought and action.



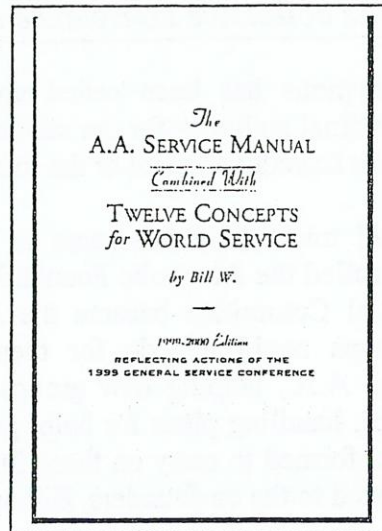
# The Twelve Concepts For Akron Intergroup Service

How Bill W. explained the spiritual principles that undergird  
A.A.'s structure and how the parts work together.

This is a pamphlet about the Concepts; it is NOT the Concepts themselves. They are found in the book *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, and should be read by every "trusted servant." (A condensed version, in mimeographed form, is also available from the General Service Office on request.)

As A.A. in Akron grew up, it began with the groups—first only a few, then hundreds. Prior to 1954 a Central Committee, later renamed The Akron Intergroup Council was formed to be responsible for our affairs. And with Dr. Bob's death and Bill's facing up to his own mortality, the General Service Conference assumed the leadership, which had fallen to the co-founders. Meanwhile, a tiny publishing operation and service office had grown in size and importance to the Fellowship, and a monthly journal, *the Intergroup News* started to publish the same time the office was opened.

Which of these entities was supposed to do what? Little wonder there was confusion! What was their relationship? Who was in Charge? What were their responsibilities—and

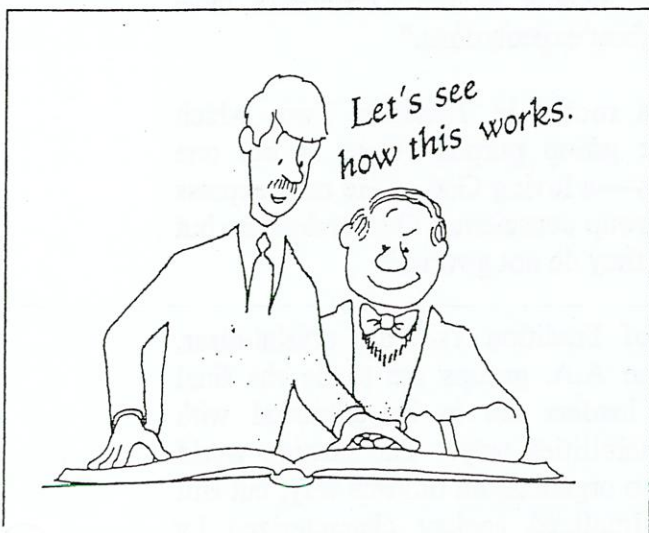


what were their rights? Bill W. himself sometimes took part in the pulling and hauling that took place, and so he saw the need to "reduce to writing" his concepts of the "why" of the whole structure, the lessons to be drawn from experience, the relationships and, above all, the spiritual principles.

As Bill set them down, the Twelve Concepts are a potpourri: Concepts III through V, IX and XII deal with spiritual principles; the remainder, though they have spiritual overtones, are devoted to describing the relationship of the various service entities and how they work together.

What follows in this pamphlet is an illustrated introduction to the Twelve Concepts as they relate both to Akron and AA as a whole. If it is answers or guidance you are seeking, go to the Concepts themselves.

Throughout this pamphlet, wording from the Twelve Concepts themselves (subject to some editing for clarity) is indicated by quotation marks; the rest of the text is either descriptive or explanatory.





# Concept I

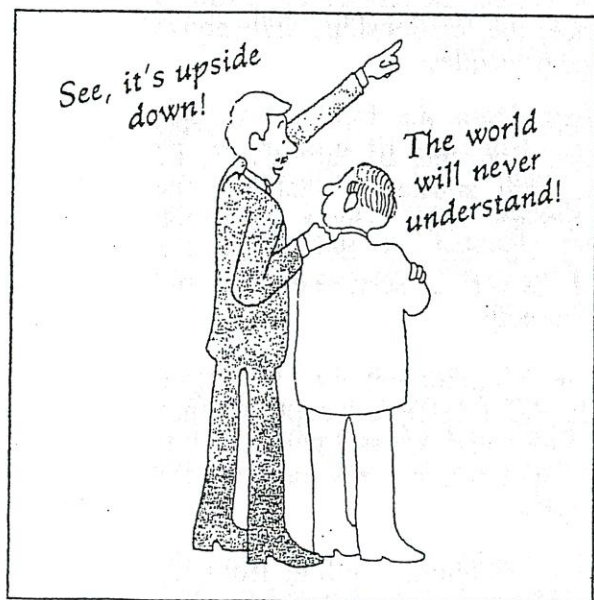
*The final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.*

*For Akron = Final responsibility and ultimate authority for Akron A.A. services should always reside in the collective conscience of all Akron Groups.*

Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside-down organization because the ultimate responsibility and final authority for our services resides with the Akron groups—rather than with the members of the Executive Board or the Intergroup Council.

In Concept I, Bill traces how this came to be. The first step in 1938 was the creation of a trusteeship, first called the Alcoholic Foundation, renamed in 1954 the General Service Board. In Akron, the Central Committee became the Akron Intergroup Council. Why? To perform the services the groups could not do for themselves: e.g., uniform literature, uniform public information about A.A., helping new groups get started, sharing with them the experience of established groups, handling pleas for help, publishing a magazine, and carrying the message. A service office was formed to carry on these functions under the board's direction. Both the board and the office looked to the co-founders, Bill and Dr. Bob, for policy leadership.

In the midst of the exuberant success" of early A.A., Dr. Bob became fatally ill and Bill asked, "When Dr. Bob and I are gone, who would then advise the trustees and the office?" The answer, Bill felt, was to be found in the collective conscience of the A.A. groups. But how could the autonomous, widely scattered groups exercise such a responsibility?

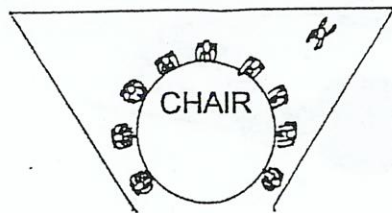
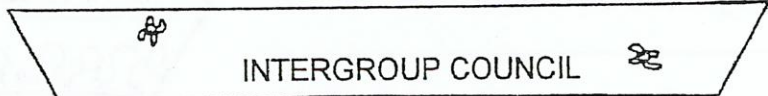
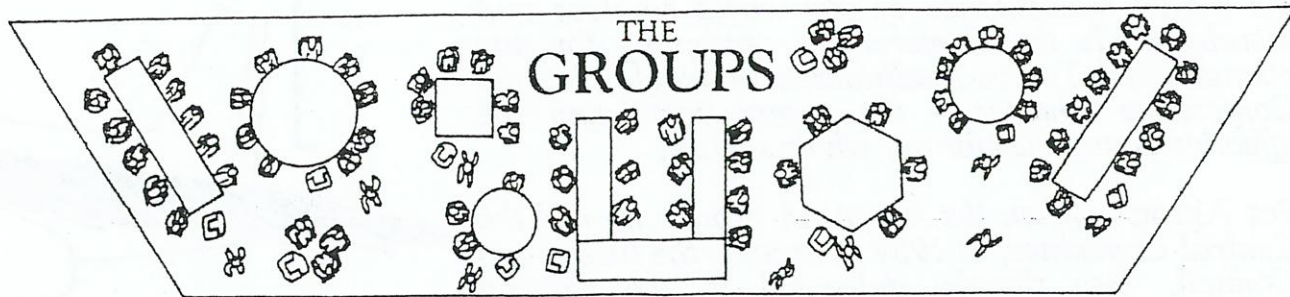


Over great resistance by trustees and members devoted to the status quo, Bill managed to "sell" the idea of calling an A.A. General Service Conference (see Concept II), and eleven years later Bill was able to declare, "The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations."

This Concept is rooted in Tradition Two, which states: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

The principles of Tradition Two are crystal-clear, Bill asserts: "The A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only." The outside world cannot imagine an organization run this way, but Bill calls it "a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility, and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work



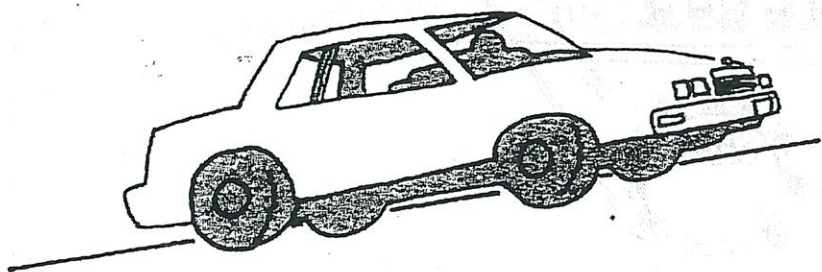
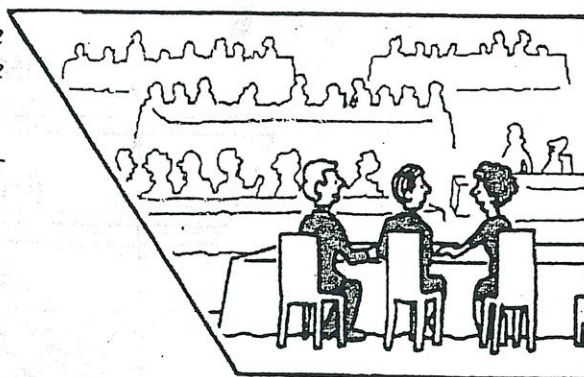
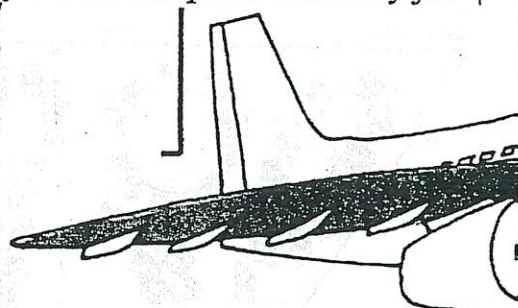




## Concept II

*When, in 1955, the AA groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference – excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter – the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole society.*

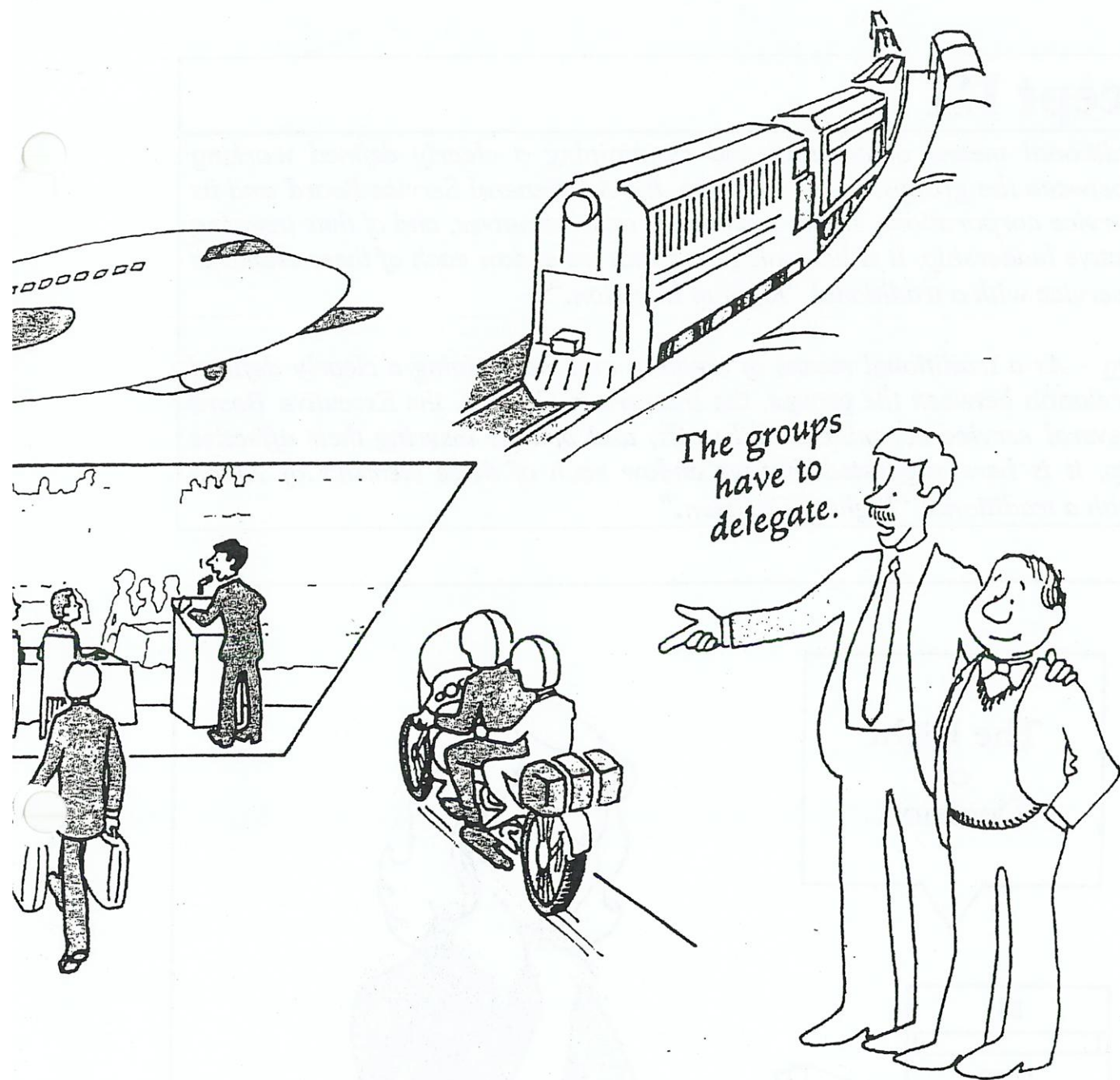
*For Akron – When the Akron AA groups formed the Central Committee, in 1954 to become the Intergroup Council, they thereby delegated to the Council complete authority for the active maintenance of our area services and thereby made the Intergroup Council the actual voice and the effective conscience for Akron area AA.*



Concept I establishes the “final responsibility and ultimate authority” of the A.A. groups; but, in actual practice, how are they to manage Akron A.A.’s service affairs? By *delegation*, Concept II declares.

Dr. Bob was entrusted by the early groups to get the program going in Akron and to spread the message. Later, Akron formed an Intergroup Council and delegated to it the responsibility for finances, literature, public information, the service office and the *Intergroup News*. However, as the Board members constantly looked to the oldtimers for advice and guidance and the groups also continued to hold them accountable, it was evident that the leadership should be transferred to the AA Groups as a whole.





t if the groups were to carry on their primary purpose, they would have to delegate their leadership role to  
 Intergroup Council. They do this by electing an Intergroup Representative for each group, and the IGR's  
 et regularly at Council meetings. Every month, the Intergroup Representatives from the close to 300 groups  
 he Akron area meet with the members of the Executive Board, the staffs of the Intergroup Office and the  
 rgroup News and certain other service workers. Thus, this Intergroup Council of Akron A.A. is "the actual  
 ce and effective conscience of our whole Akron area in its affairs."



## Concept III

*As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the AA General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."*

For Akron - *As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Intergroup Council, the Executive Board and its several service committees and staffs, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of Akron service with a traditional "Right of Decision."*



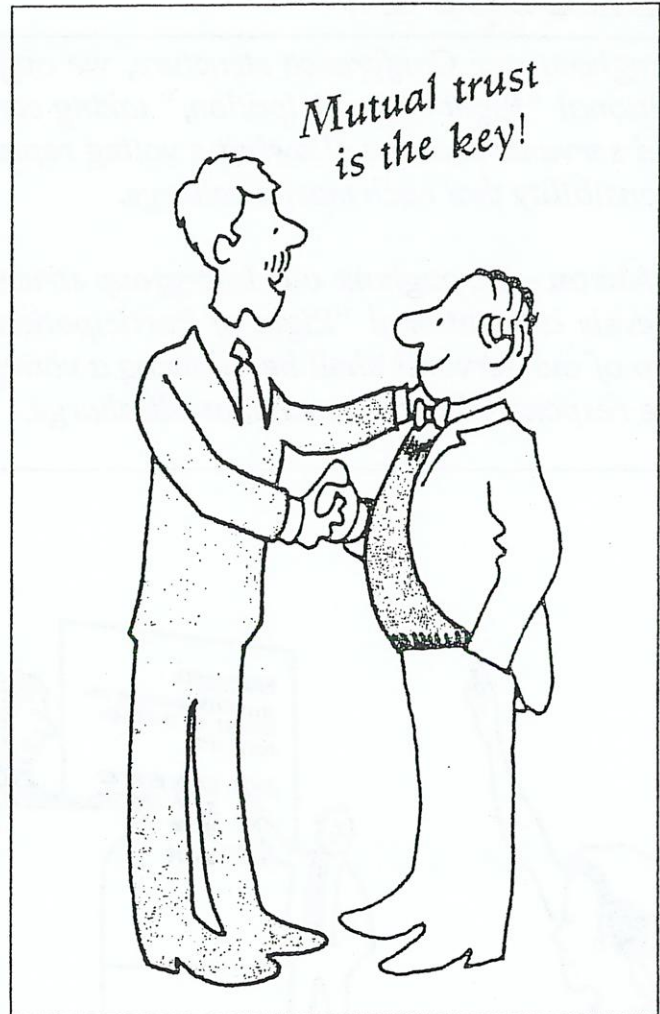
AT ALL LEVELS OF SERVICE

background for this Concept, you should be familiar with the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Akron Intergroup Council. For, except for the specific directions in these documents, every trusted servant and every A.A. entity—at all levels of service—has the right “to decide...how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises.” That is, they can “decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report consult, or ask specific directions.” This is “the essence of ‘The Right of Decision.’”

But this right also means the Fellowship must have trust in its “trusted servants.” If the groups *instruct* their IGR’s rather than giving them a “Right of Decision,” then the Intergroup Council is hamstrung. If the Council *instructs* the Board members rather than giving them a “Right of Decision,” then the Executive Board is hamstrung. As Bill points out, Conference delegates are *primarily* the servants of A.A. as they should... cast their votes...according to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time.”

Similarly, if the Intergroup Council, acting through its subsidiary board, “were to attempt to manage” the Intergroup Office and the *Intergroup New* in detail, then the staff members would quickly become demoralized; they would be turned into buck-passers and rubber stamps; their choice would be to rebel and resign, or to submit and rot.

Bill warns against using “The Right of Decision” as an excuse for failure to make the proper reports of actions taken; or for exceeding a clearly defined authority; or for failing to consult the proper people before making an important decision. But he concludes: “Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other.”

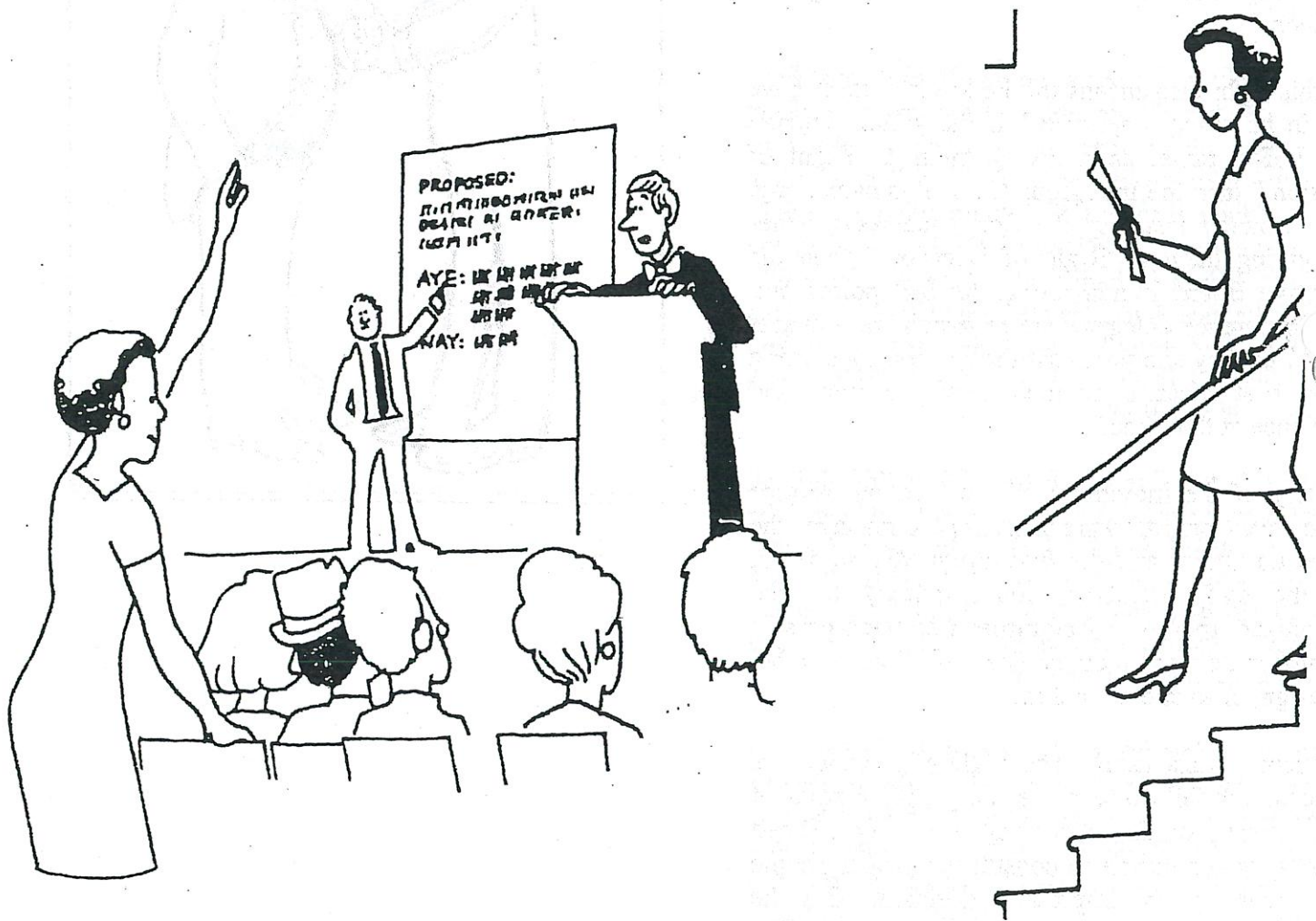




## Concept IV

*Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.*

**For Akron** - *Throughout our Intergroup structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our servants shall be allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.*





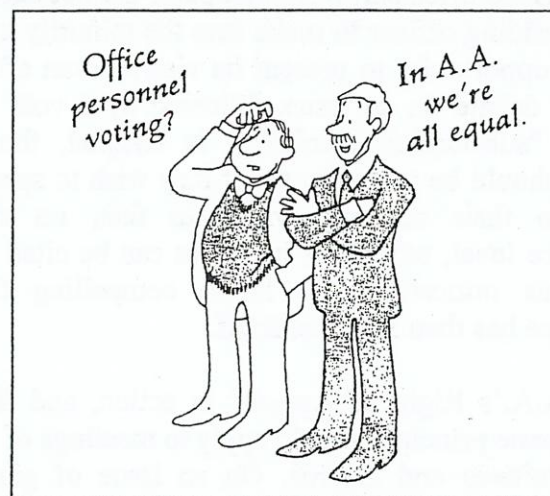
The principle of "Right of Participation" is built into the Intergroup through the Constitution. Voting members include only the Intergroup Reps. However, on the General Service Conference level, not only delegates but also the trustees, and the directors and staff members of A.A. World Services (i.e., G.S.O.) and the *A.A. Grapevine* all have a vote on the Conference floor.

In the same way, the boards of these two operating entities include as voting members not only trustees, but also non-trustee directors and paid administrators and staff members. On the Akron Intergroup Board, while any member of the Fellowship is welcome to attend and participate, only Board members are allowed to vote. The Intergroup Council is the same, anyone is allowed to participate, but only Intergroup Reps or Alternates may vote or make motions.

The Chairperson of the Intergroup appoints the chairs of the standing committees. "There are no superiors," no "inferiors," and no "advisers." New members on the Executive Board and Intergroup Reps of the Council are sometimes surprised to find paid staff members and members of the Fellowship attending the Board meetings. They are invited because of A.A.'s "Right of Participation." Thus, the Board members and Intergroup Reps are put into direct communication with their workers, who feel wanted and needed. Although they do not vote, these workers may freely participate.

Bill warns against the possibility of new Intergroup Reps or Board Members trying to "weaken, modify or toss out" the "Right of Participation." He cites arguments by delegates to take away the trustees', directors' and staff members' votes at the Conference. "Certainly," he says, "our trustees and service workers are not less conscientious, experienced and wise than the delegates." "It is vital," he continues, "to preserve the traditional 'Right of Participation,' in the face of every tendency to hittle it down."

Finally, there is a spiritual reason for the "Right of Participation." All of us desire to belong. In A.A., no members are "second class." The "Right of Participation" therefore reinforces Tradition Two, that no member is placed in "ultimate authority" over another. We perform our service tasks better "when we are where we belong—when our 'participation' assures us we are truly the 'trusted servants' described in Tradition Two."





## Concept V

*Throughout our world services structure, a traditional 'Right of Appeal' ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.*

**FOR AKRON** — *Throughout our Intergroup Service structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.*

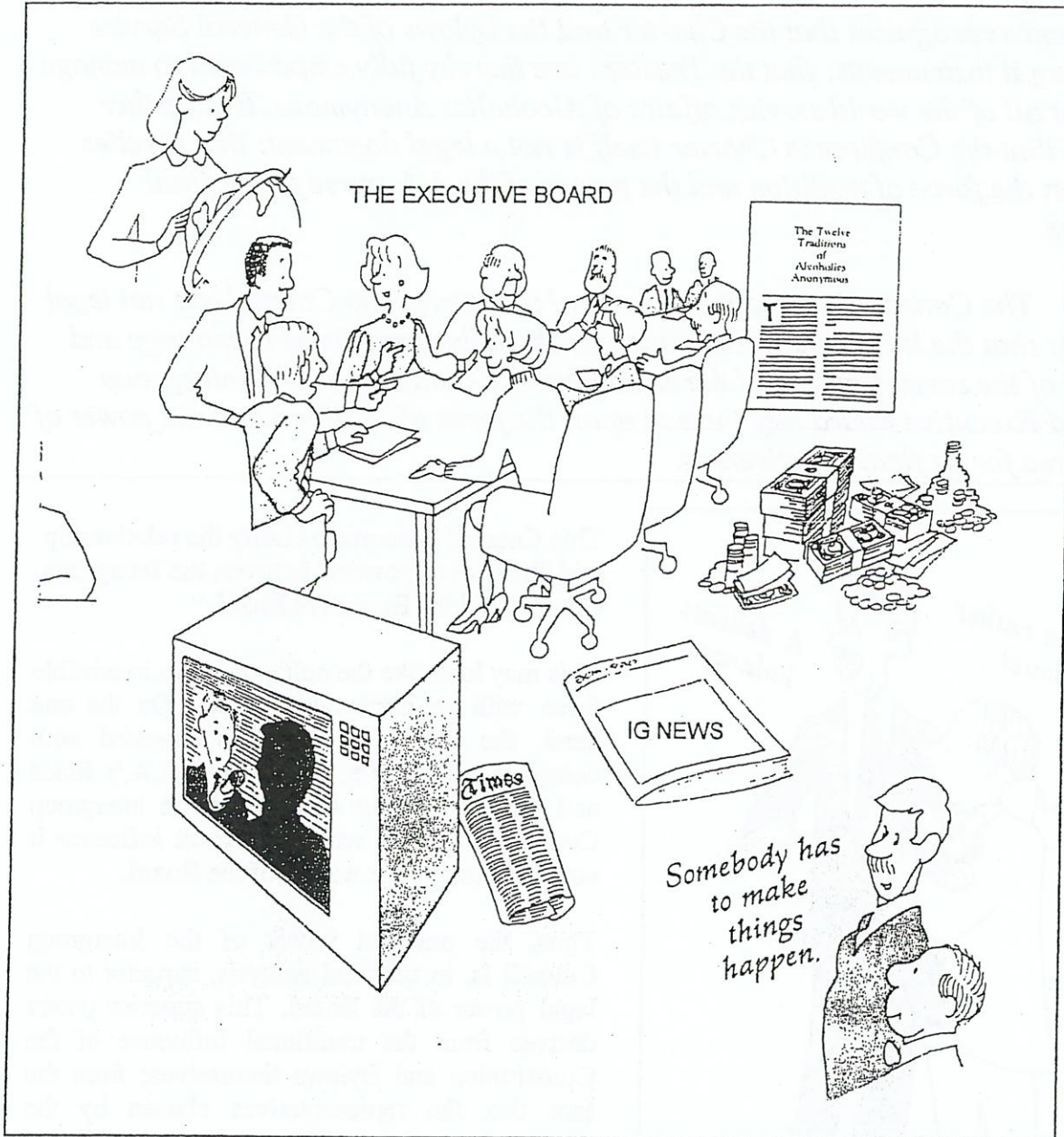
Newcomers to an Intergroup Council or Executive Board who are familiar with General Service procedures are often surprised that pains are not taken by the presiding officer to make sure the minority has a second opportunity to present its views. Even after extensive debate on an issue, followed by a vote in which a "substantial unanimity" is reached, those opposed should be polled to see if they wish to speak further to their minority view. In fact, on the Conference level, numerous instances can be cited in which this minority view is so compelling the Conference has then reversed itself.

This is A.A.'s "Right of Appeal" in action, and Bill says the same principle should apply to meetings of our committees and Boards. On an issue of grave importance the minority has the actual *duty* of presenting its views.

This "Right of Appeal" recognizes that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are in error they still perform a most valuable service when they compel a thoroughgoing debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.

"Trusted servants," according to Bill, "do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves." And in exercising their "Right of Decision" (see Concept III), trusted servants are almost always "a small but truly qualified minority"—whether in the form of committees, staff, the Board or even the Intergroup Council itself. It is incumbent upon them, therefore, in their own meetings, to pay special deference to the minority voice.



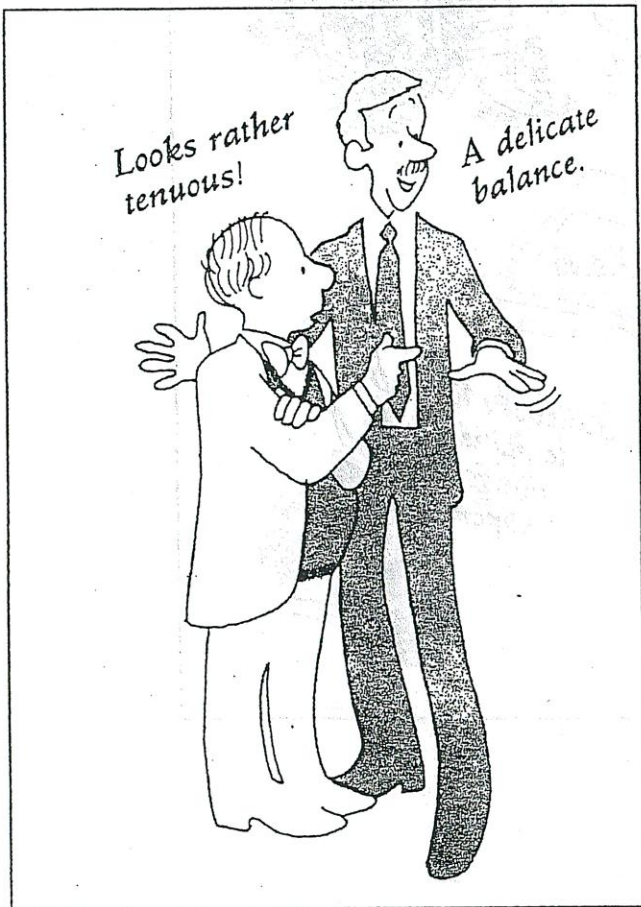




## Concept VII

*The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.*

**For Akron** - *The Constitution and the Bylaws of the Intergroup Council are not legal instruments: that the Intergroup Council is thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the service affairs of Akron Alcoholics Anonymous. The Intergroup Council and Executive Board rely instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.*



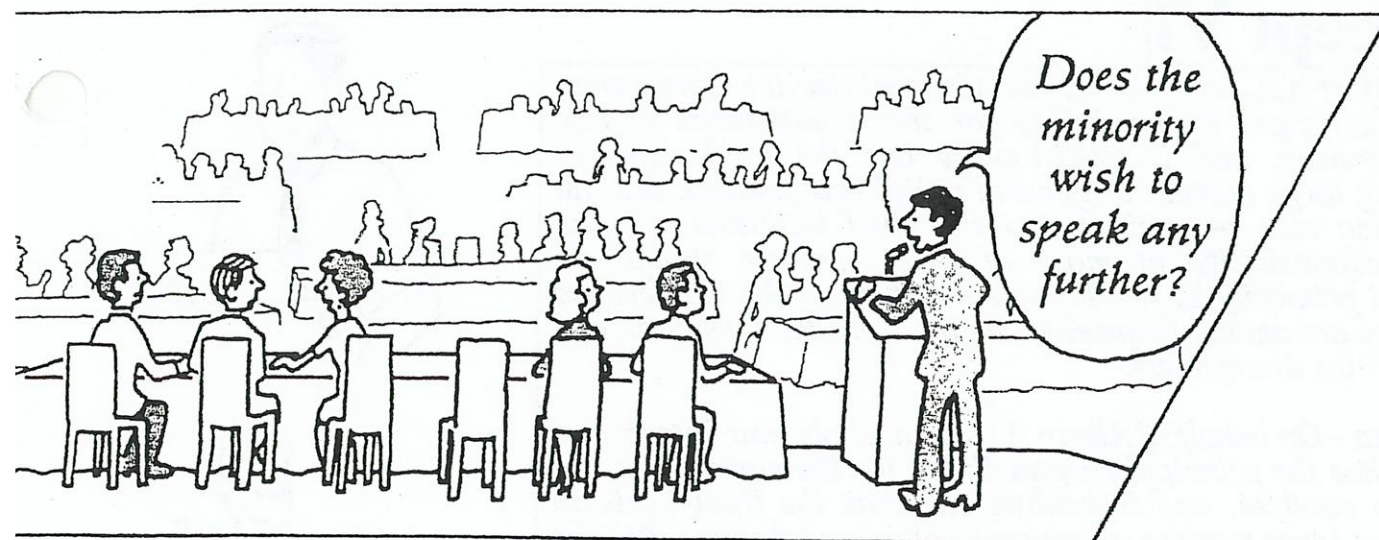
This Concept attempts to clarify the relationship and "balance of powers" between the Intergroup Council and the Executive Board.

This may look like the collision of an irresistible force with an immovable object. On the one hand, the Executive Board is invested with complete legal power over Akron A.A.'s funds and services; on the other hand the Intergroup Council is clothed with such great influence it could overcome the wishes of the Board.

Thus, the practical power of the Intergroup Council is, in the final analysis, superior to the legal power of the Board. This superior power derives from the traditional influence of the Constitution and Bylaws themselves; from the fact that the representatives chosen by the groups have the ability to recommend that groups cut off financial support.

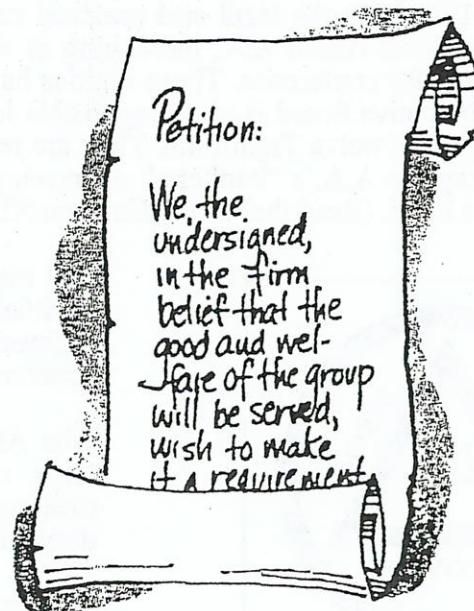
Theoretically, the Intergroup Council is an advisory body only; but practically speaking, it has all the ultimate power it may ever need. The Intergroup Council recommends—though its recommendations have the force of directives to the Board. The Board executes these recommendations. The Board does not have the legal authority to veto an Intergroup Council recommendation.





is Concept also warns us of "the tyranny of the majority" and points out that in A.A., a simple majority is not a sufficient basis for a decision. That's why we usually require at least a two-thirds majority at the conference level. Lacking this, it is preferable to delay the decision; or in the case of an election following the "Third Legacy Procedure," to go to the hat." (See *Service Manual*, Chapter I.) In Intergroup Council elections, only a simple majority is required.

"Right of Appeal" also permits any person in the service structure, whether paid or volunteer, to petition for redress of a personal grievance. He or she can complain directly to the Executive Board, without prejudice or fear of reprisal.





## Concept VI

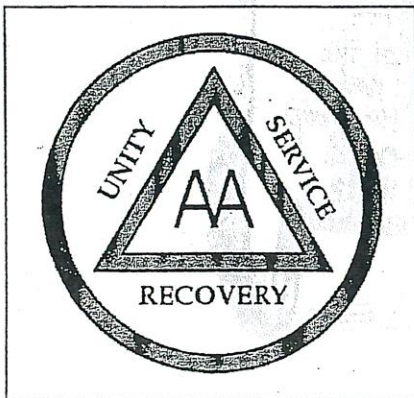
*On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.*

*For Akron - On behalf of Akron A.A. as a whole, our Intergroup Council has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our area services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Intergroup Council also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the members of the Executive Board.*



**W**e have seen that the "final responsibility and ultimate authority" for A.A.'s service activities rest with the A.A. groups (Concept I), but to carry out this responsibility they must *delegate* to the Intergroup Council. (Concept II). The Intergroup Council, in turn, must delegate administrative authority to the Executive Board. Again, it is helpful if you are familiar with the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Intergroup Council to understand this relationship and the freedom of action that the Board members must have.

The Executive Board has the legal and practical responsibility for the operation of Akron A.A. services, (which embraces local Akron A.A. publishing as well as the Intergroup Office), of the *Intergroup News* and the Founders Day conference. These entities have a combined cash flow of many thousands of dollars annually. The Executive Board is also responsible for Akron A.A.'s public information activities. They are the guardians of the Twelve Traditions. They are responsible for carrying the A.A. message to other areas near Akron. They are A.A.'s "bankers," overseeing the financial operations and investing Akron A.A.'s Prudent Reserve Fund. (Read the text of Concept XI for a more detailed account of their functions.)



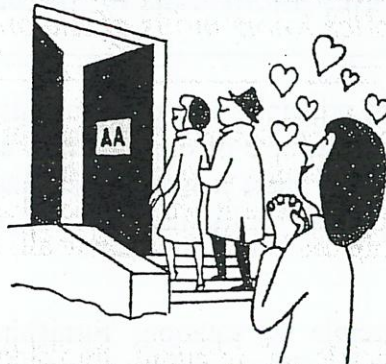
Bill makes the point that although "our objective is always a spiritual one," nevertheless our world service is a "large business operation." "Indeed," he says, "our whole service structure resembles that of a large corporation."

The Akron A.A. groups are the stockholders, the Intergroup Reps represent them, like proxy-holders, at the Council meetings; the Executive Board members are actually the directors of a 'holding company.'

This very real analogy makes it clear that, like any other board of directors, our Board members must be given large powers if they are to manage the affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron.

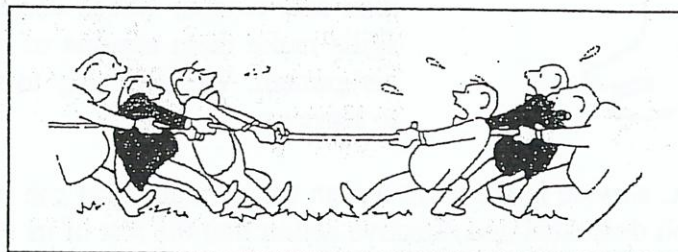


But they must  
always remember  
that they serve  
for the good of  
all, without authority over any.



The Intergroup Council, therefore, must not be distracted or burdened with the details or the endless questions which arise daily in the routine operation of the Intergroup Office. It must *delegate* its executive function to its subsidiary, the Executive Board. Here, the Council's attitude has to be that of custodial oversight. The Board members are the guarantors of good management of Akron A.A. services by electing the chairpersons of the service committees. The executive direction of these functions is lodged in the committees themselves, rather than the Executive Board. Each committee should possess its own procedures and policies, in keeping with the Constitution and Bylaws.

Bill draws from earlier mistakes by the General Service Board in trying to run the service functions directly and warns repeatedly against "too much *concentration* of money and authority."



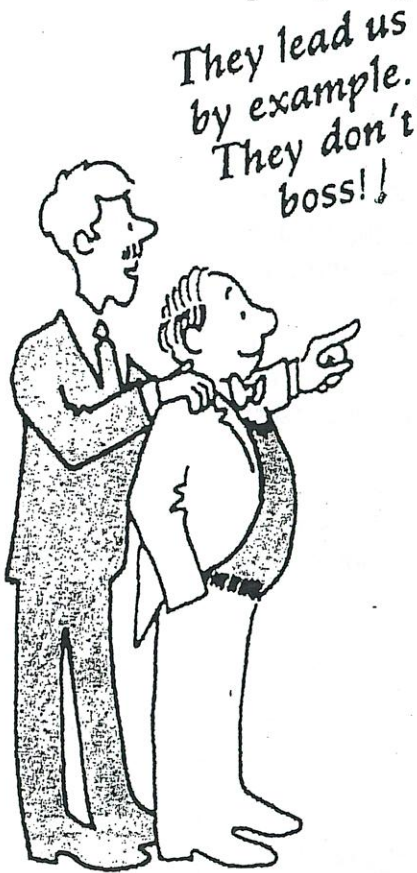


# Concept IX

*Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.*

**For Akron** - *Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary service leadership in Akron once exercised by Dr. Bob must necessarily be assumed by the Intergroup Council of Alcoholics Anonymous of Akron.*

No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility, the operating results of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who must man it and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure. Weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures.



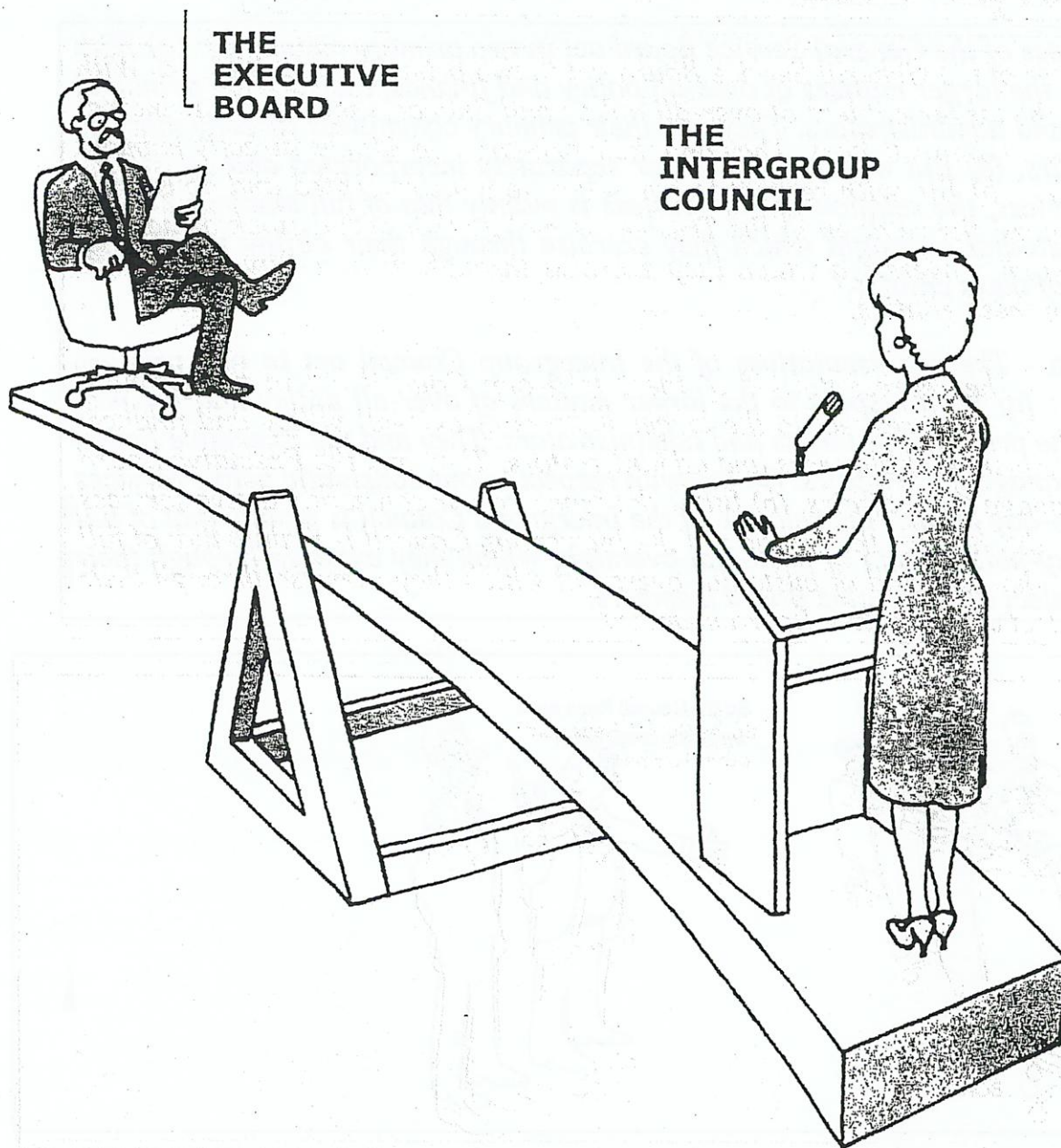
Due to A.A.'s principle of rotation, furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous effort. The base of the service structure—and the source of our leadership—is the Intergroup Representative. The IGR is the service leader for his or her group, the indispensable link between the group and Akron area AA as a whole. Together the IGR's are A.A.'s group conscience—and together, they elect the Executive Board members. Groups who have not named IGR's should be encouraged to do so. And as the IGR's meet at Council meetings, care and dedication are required. Personal ambitions should be cast aside; feuds and controversies forgotten. 'Who are the best-qualified people?' should be the thought of all.

'No society can function well without able leadership in all its levels, and A.A. can be no exception. Fortunately, our Society is blessed with any amount of *real* leadership—the active people of today and the potential leaders of tomorrow as each new generation of able members swarms in. We have an abundance of men and women whose dedication, stability vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

A leader in A.A. service is therefore a man (or woman) who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him and help him with his job.

Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.





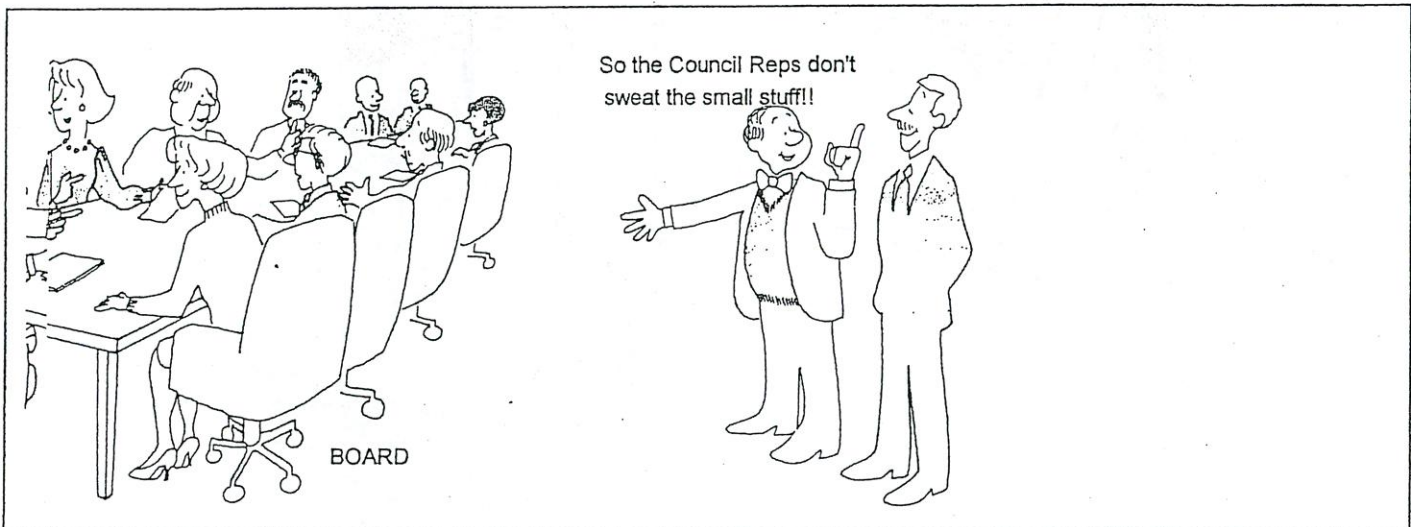
If the Intergroup Council will always bear in mind actual rights, duties, responsibilities and legal status of the Executive Board and its members...will constantly realize that the groups are the real seat of ultimate service authority...neither will be seriously tempted to make a "rubber stamp" out of the other...In this way, grave issues will always be resolved and harmonious cooperation will be the general rule.



## Concept VIII

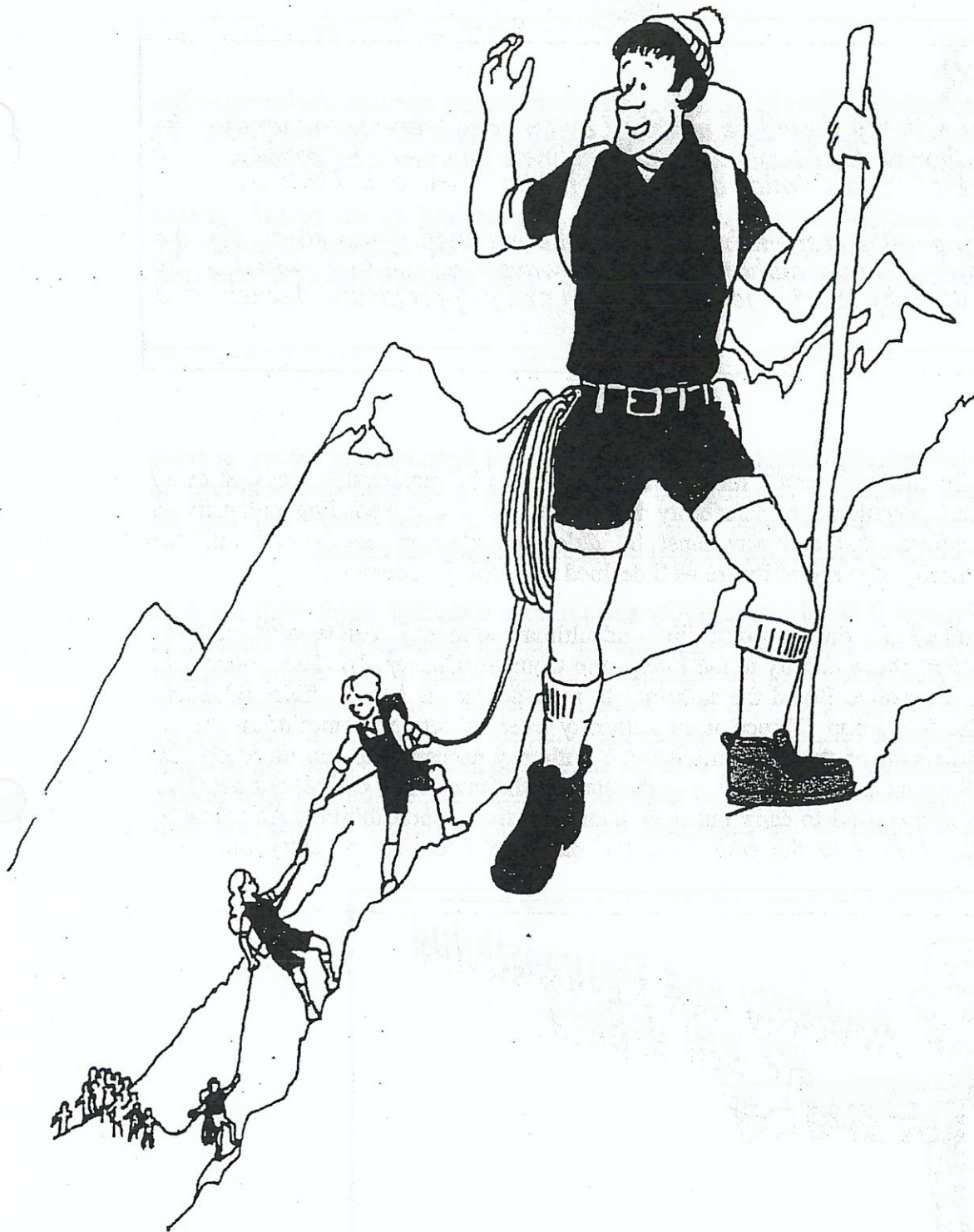
*The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.*

*For Akron - The representatives of the Intergroup Council act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and the Executive Board directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our constantly active services and day-to-day affairs, the relation of the Intergroup Council is mainly that of full stock proxy-holders and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all Executive Board members.*



**T**his Concept deals with the ways the Intergroup Council discharges its heavy obligations, and its relationship with its Executive Board.

Long experience has proven that the Intergroup Council must devote itself almost exclusively to the larger questions of policy, finance, group relations and leadership. In these matters, it must act with great care and skill to *plan, manage and execute*.



Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can, obtain sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility.

Another qualification for leadership is 'give and take,' the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one's positions about an issue until it is settled.

"Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example. We say to them, 'Act for us, but do not boss us.'"



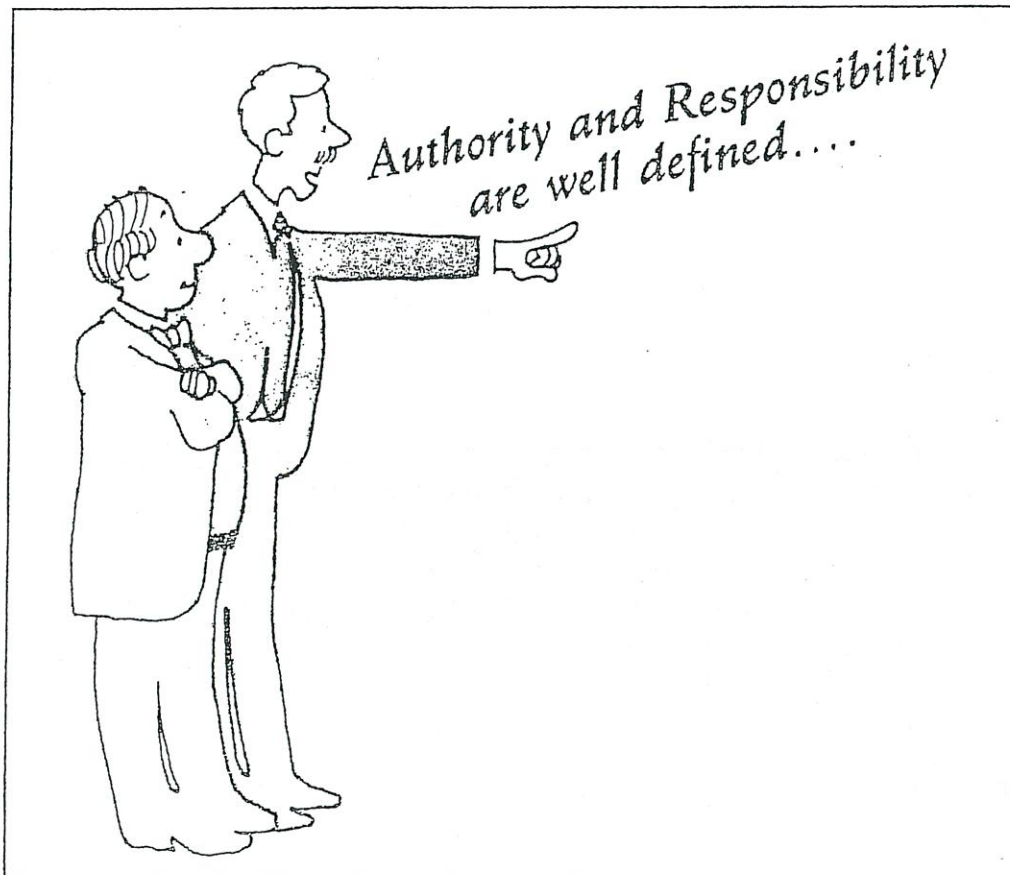
# Concept X

*Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority—the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.*

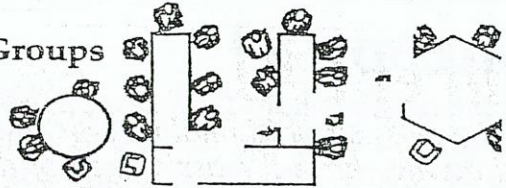
**For Akron** - *Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority—the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.*

**O**UR service structure cannot function effectively and harmoniously unless, at every level, each operational 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.

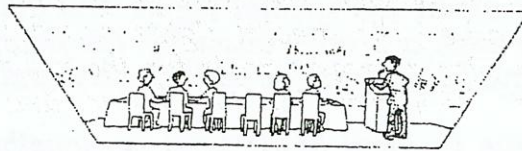
As we have seen (Concept I) “final responsibility and ultimate authority” reside with the A.A. groups, and they *delegate* this authority to the Intergroup Council (Concept II). The Council, in turn, *delegates* to the Executive Board the authority to manage Akron A.A.’s affairs (Concept III) on its behalf. The Intergroup Council is in authority over its service committees—but it *delegates* to the chairpersons of those committees the authority necessary to run these service entities. The Board members are in authority over the staff of the Intergroup Office, but *delegate* to the Chairman authority needed to carry out their administrative responsibilities. And finally, the Board Chairman *delegates* to the employees the *authority* necessary to carry out their important service jobs.



the Groups



INTERGROUP COUNCIL



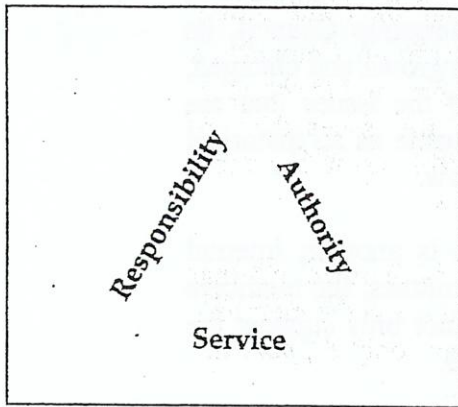
EXECUTIVE BOARD



SERVICE COMMITTEES



STAFF



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 demoralized." For example, the Intergroup Council oversees the Founders Day Committee and its authority over them is absolute. Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the Council or the Executive Board not unnecessarily interfere with or usurp the operating authority of this or any other committee.

To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; 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 to discharge their clear responsibilities."



# Concept XI

*While the trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.*

**For Akron** - *While the Intergroup Council holds final responsibility for Akron A.A.'s services, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, Executive Board members, staff and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and the Executive Boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our Board members, staff and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of our special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.*

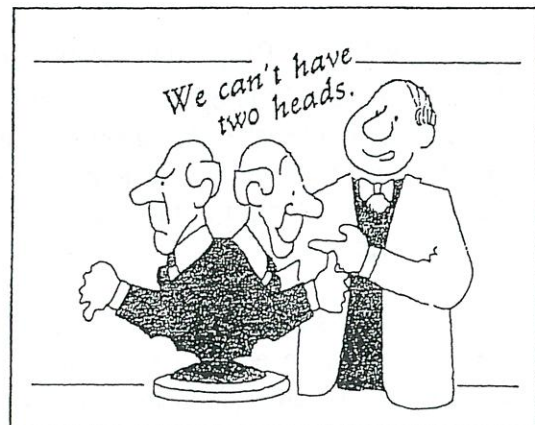
In this, the second longest of the Concepts, it explains in great detail the composition, functions and relationships of the standing committees of the Intergroup Council, its subsidiary Executive Board, and the Intergroup Office. As A.A. has grown and changed, many of the descriptions would be different today, and some of the issues that are addressed are no longer relevant. Nevertheless, the full text is valuable as an historical document, and many of the principles still apply, as summarized below.

Underlying the service structure we have been discussing, there is another, internal structure of service consisting of the members of the standing committees; the members Executive Board, and the staff members. Members of this group, not only *support* the leadership of the Intergroup Council: they *share* leadership with them.

The following are "several principles.., which" apply to Akron A.A. services.

## 1. The status of Committee members

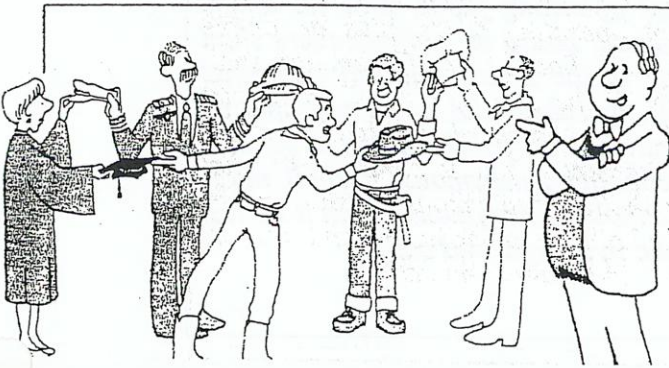
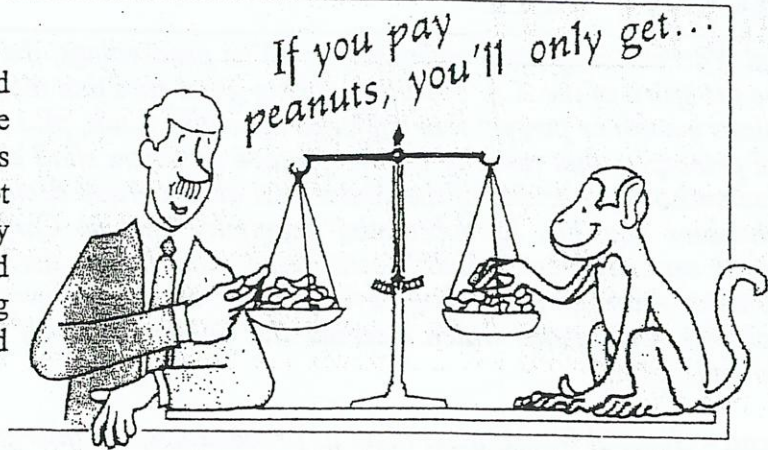
No active service committee can function well unless it has sustained and competent executive direction. This must always head up in *one person*, supported by such members as he needs. That person has to have ample freedom and authority to do his job, and he should not be interfered with so long as his work is done well.





## 2. Paid workers, how compensated

Each paid staff member or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world.... Cheap help is apt to feel insecure and inefficient. It is very costly in the long run. This is neither good spirituality nor good business. Assuming service money is available, we should therefore compensate our workers well.



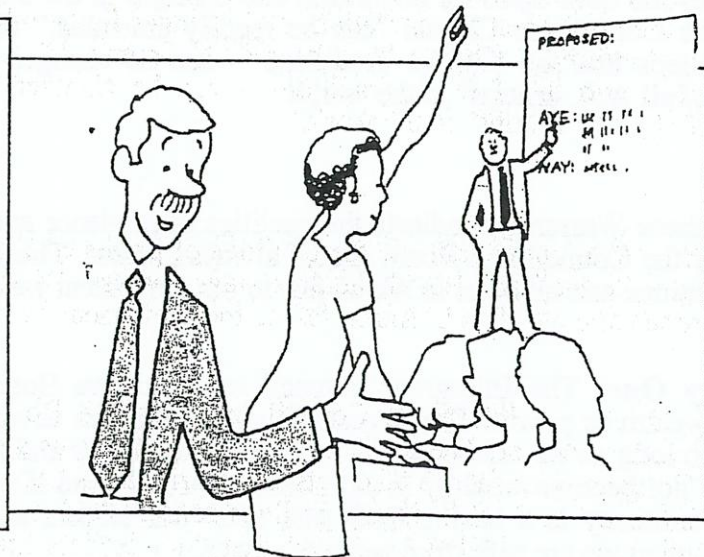
## 3. Rotation among paid staff workers

At A.A.'s General Service Office, most staff members' assignments are changed every two years. When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, any job in the place—excepting for office management.

## 4. Full Participation of paid workers is highly important.

We have already discussed the necessity of giving key personnel a voting representation on our committees and corporate boards. They should enjoy a status suitable to their responsibility, just as our volunteers do.

In Akron, our paid staff do not yet have a vote on the Intergroup Council, but their participation at all levels is welcome.





# Concept XII

*General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of Unqualified authority over any of the others: that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.*

**In Akron - General Warranties:** *in all its proceedings, the Intergroup Council and Executive Board shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Council or Board never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Council, Board or staff members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others: that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Council or Board action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Council or Board may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Intergroup Council and Board will always remain democratic in thought and action.*

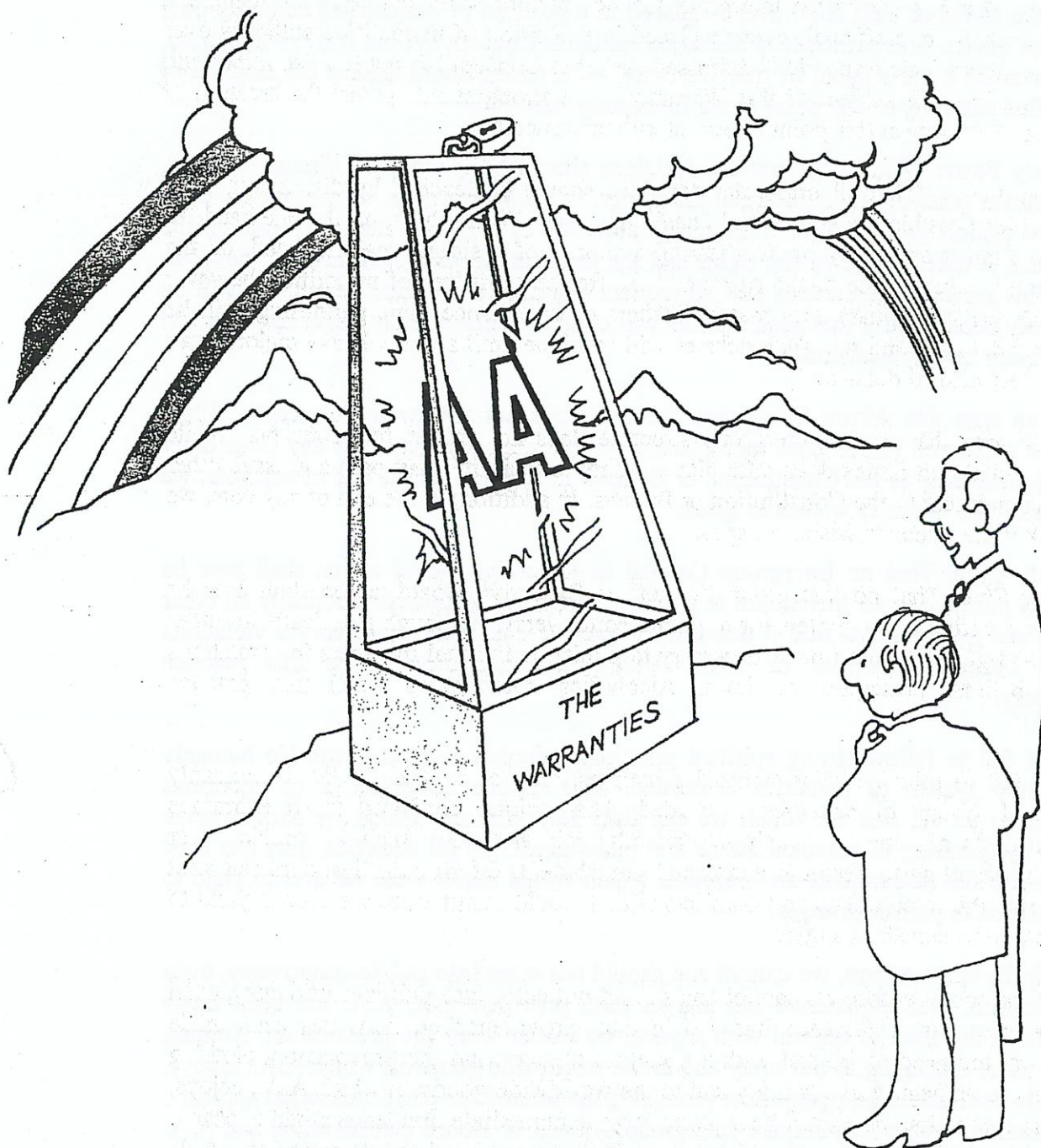
**T**his Concept consists of the General Warranties of the General Service Conference and are followed by the Akron Intergroup Council and Executive Board. It is cast in stone; that is, although Bill leaves the door open for alterations and changes in the other Concepts and points out that the rest of the Conference Charter "can be readily amended," these General Warranties —like the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions— can be changed only by "written consent of three quarters of all A.A. groups" in the world!

Why??

Because these Warranties indicate the qualities of prudence and spirituality which the Conference, as well as the Council and Board should always possess. These are the permanent bonds that hold the Conference and all of us in Akron fast to the movement we serve.

**Warranty One:** The Intergroup Council or Executive Board shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power. The Seventh Tradition protects us against the accumulation of too much money. So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual member's donations "we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense." And if we live by Tradition Two — that "our ultimate authority is a loving God" and that "our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern" — then we are safe from perilous power.





**Warranty Two:** Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, should be the Intergroup Council's prudent financial principal. Although many of us active alcoholics were free spenders, when it comes to supporting "AA service overhead, we are apt to turn a bit reluctant." Yet, in Akron, the cost of the Intergroup Office is relatively low in terms of the number of groups served, and if the need for support is made clear, the contributions are forthcoming. The Reserve Fund should be one full year's operating expense of the Intergroup Office. The Reserve Fund comes almost entirely from income from the sale of Literature and the Founders Day Conference, which also is used to make up the deficit between group contributions and the cost of group services.



**Warranty Three:** None of the Intergroup Council members, Executive Board members, committee chairs or staff shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others. This principle is discussed earlier in Concept IV, but it is "so important, we have made it the subject of this Warranty" — "a strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at *any* point in our Intergroup structure.

**Warranty Four:** "That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity." This Warranty is, on the one hand, "a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and, on the other hand, it takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision."

This is an area that Akron Intergroup structure does not follow the Concepts. While extensive debate on issues does take place, a simple majority may pass any issue other than an amendment to the Constitution or Bylaws. In addition, at the end of any vote, we do not ask if the minority wishes to speak.

**Warranty Five:** That no Intergroup Council or Executive Board action shall ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy. Although practically all other societies and governments find it necessary to punish individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws, Alcoholics Anonymous finds this practice unnecessary.

When we fail to follow strong spiritual principles, alcohol cuts us down. No humanly administered system of penalties is needed. This unique condition is an enormous advantage to us all, one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack and punishment. Of all societies, ours can least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts which would result were we ever to yield to the temptation to punish in anger.

For much the same reason, we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Our experience has shown that, providentially, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the worldwide goodwill which A.A., enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear. Some situations which may require Intergroup Council or Board consideration are: A.A. may come under sharp public attack or heavy ridicule—perhaps with little or no justification in fact. Our best defense in these situations would be no defense whatever—namely complete silence at the public level. If the criticism of AA is partly or wholly justified, it may be well to acknowledge this privately to the critics—with our thanks."

Public violations of AA. Traditions.

Our own members may try to use the AA name for their private purposes. 'Aggressive or punitive action, even in this area, must be omitted. Privately, we can inform Tradition violators that they are out of order. When they persist, we can use such other resources of



persuasion as we have. In the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly on the pressures of A.A. opinion and public opinion.

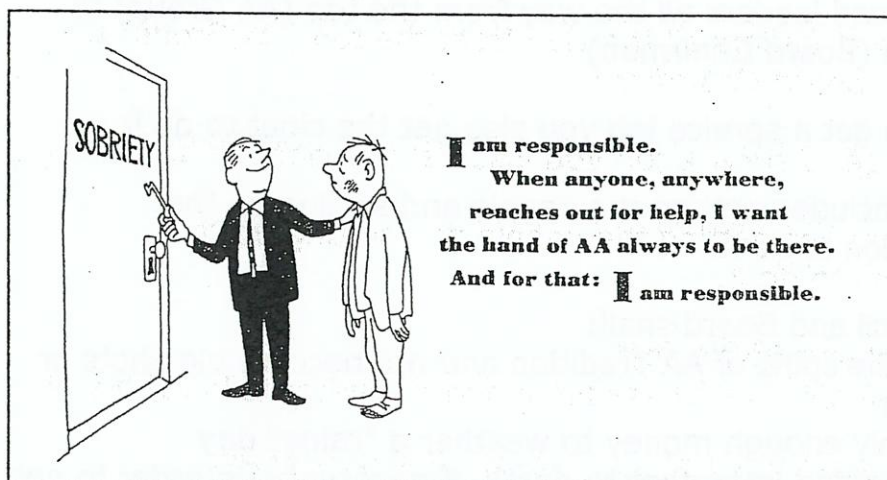
Another kind of problem is the severe internal disagreement that comes to unwelcome public attention." As Intergroup Council "is not a police operation." we can only offer AA's experience as a matter of information.

**Warranty Six:** That though the Intergroup may act for the service of Akron Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Intergroup Council itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

The AA Traditions accord the individual member and the AA group extraordinary liberties. In fact, we AA's probably enjoy more and greater freedoms than any Fellowship in the world. We claim this as no virtue. We know we have to choose conformity to A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or else face dissolution and death.

Because we set such a high value on our great liberties and cannot conceive that they will need to be limited, we here specially enjoin our Intergroup Council and Executive Board to abstain completely from any and all acts of authoritative government which could in any way curtail AA's freedom under God. We expect our Intergroup Council and Executive Board to try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love—one member to another.

Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron. May our Intergroup Council and Executive Board be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty.



## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE TWELVE CONCEPTS

*Anyone not aware that Bill W. studied law for awhile can surely learn this by a brief glance at our Twelve Concepts. The point is that they seem oppressively difficult and distant in the beginning. Here's an attempt to simplify and personalize them. While something is lost in this conversion, something's gained also. Bob McK.*

1. You're the boss!
2. You handle our business by sending a servant to the Intergroup Council meeting on our behalf.
3. It's a trusted servant. They're allowed discretion.
4. And they and you may participate in whatever affects you.
5. But anyone who doesn't agree with a vote should get a second chance to persuade the winning side to change their opinion.
6. A lot of simple stuff is best left to the Board.
7. And legally they *could* run everything...but just let 'em try and see what happens.
8. The Board's our custodians. They keep the business stuff neat and tidy.
9. We need good leaders all the way from the top (AA Group) to the bottom (Board Chairman)
10. When you get a service job you also get the clout to do it.
11. And this includes getting the people and setting up the organization to do it.
12. The Council and Board shall:
  - Follow the spirit of AA Tradition and not become big shots or bankers
  - Keep only enough money to weather a "rainy" day
  - Talk anything important to death, if necessary, in order to get consensus.
  - Not beat each other up, but mind our own business.
  - Not try to boss AA
  - Stay a group of equals in what they do and how they think





