

**DOCUMENT 8:
FROM A TRADITIONS PERSPECTIVE**

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MEMBER FUNDING

It is suggested that no individual meeting use its Seventh Tradition funds or any other collected funds to defray costs associated with its elected World Service Conference member (“WSC member”) attending the yearly FA World Service Business Convention (the “Convention”). The reasons for this recommendation are threefold:

First

The principle of the Seventh Tradition guides us to use the funds collected at an FA meeting to support that FA meeting (i.e. pay rent, purchase literature or CDs, and pay for information session expenses) and to send remaining funds to the local chapter (if affiliated with one), intergroup and World Service offices.

The FA World Service voting body (the “Conference”) recently clarified this process in the “Your FA Seventh Tradition” pamphlet, available to be viewed and downloaded from the FA website.

The primary purpose of a meeting group is to “carry the message of recovery to the food addict who still suffers.” If many FA meeting groups were to decide to give money to their WSC members, either by using Seventh Tradition or other group collected funds, it could noticeably decrease the availability of funds for reaching still-suffering food addicts.

Decisions about how to allocate funds to help reach food addicts outside of the meeting itself are best made by group conscience at the intergroup level. Each intergroup has a defined process whereby applications for financial assistance for WSC members are confidentially and anonymously reviewed based on defined criteria before funds are allocated.

Second

When an individual meeting group asks for money to fund one member’s trip to the Convention, it can introduce controversy to that meeting. This can occur in several ways:

1. When brought up at a business meeting, the discussion/decision to fund a WSC member takes the focus away from discussions regarding meeting health and the meeting’s effectiveness in reaching the newcomer.
2. This practice could be perceived as establishing “VIPs” of the group, which would wrongly place the needs of personalities before principles.

3. For those who do not agree with the funding but cannot speak up because they do not yet have the 90 days required, or those with 90 days who do not have the courage to speak up, it can engender resentment towards fellows and/or FA.
4. It may create a sense of obligation for the group to continue to collect money for future WSC members' travel expenses in subsequent years.
5. It can be an unsettling and confusing topic for newcomers, who should not have to witness discussions on controversial issues at their first business meetings.

Third

As outlined in the FA WSC Service Manual, elected WSC members are not asked to represent individual meetings, but rather are entrusted by meetings, when voting, to use their individual consciences and to think of the needs of FA as a whole. A WSC member, funded by his or her meeting group, may feel obligated to take the specific concerns of the meeting to the convention, causing a potential bias with his or her vote.

Summary

Meetings are encouraged to defer to their intergroup regarding allocating financial assistance to elected WSC members. The established procedure is set up to provide anonymity, fairness, and to ensure that financial assistance is allocated based upon principles rather than personalities.

THE SWELLING OF THE VOTE AT INTERGROUPS AND CHAPTERS

Tradition Two 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.” Attending a specific intergroup meeting solely to vote on a motion or a group of motions or to help elect a new officer goes against the principles of Tradition Two. It unfairly affects the practice of group conscience. The Traditions Review Committee (TRC) hopes the following perspective will help educate members who may not have considered this conflict.

Tradition Two is the primary reason that the **Sample FA Meeting Format** indicates that, at business meetings, only members who regularly attend that meeting are to have a voice and a vote. Group conscience represents our collective Higher Power, and trusting the group conscience keeps any particular individual[s] from manipulating a meeting to suit personal ideas about how they believe it should be run. For example, at a regular FA meeting, two people might desire to be the meeting’s secretary. In this case, the group will hold a vote. Only the members who regularly attend that meeting will know which person is best suited for the job, based on what the members have observed during their experiences at that meeting over time. To have a member who does not regularly attend the meeting show up and cast a vote, without this first-hand knowledge, can both be disruptive and “political.” Most importantly, it directly contravenes the spirit of Tradition Two.

The TRC believes that the same principles that apply to FA meetings apply to intergroup meetings; that only those members who regularly attend are in a position to voice their thoughts and vote.

The bylaws of EAI and WAI require members to be present to have a voice and a vote. This is consistent with parliamentary procedures. An exception to the above applies to members of the body who live *beyond* 100 miles from intergroup meetings and, therefore, could not reasonably be expected to regularly attend. In particular, if a member has made the effort once in a while to attend intergroup, his or her vote is especially welcome and spiritually appropriate.

Members who live *within* 100 miles of intergroup meetings and who choose to attend only to vote at a certain meeting are, from a Traditions perspective, going against the spirit of Tradition Two. Based on geographical distance, these members *can* participate regularly in the life of the group, but choose not to. When a member attends a specific intergroup meeting for the sole purpose of casting a vote, and with the intention not to continue as an active participant at intergroup meetings, this results in an artificial vote, swollen for a political purpose. This results in an inauthentic and illegitimate group conscience.