

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.