

# **Minority Opinion Appeal To AA Fellowship**

**Presented to the Fellowship by  
the Mt. Rainier AA Group Conscience**

**Mount Rainier Group established January 1976**

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# Minority Opinion Appeal to AA Fellowship

## Executive Summary

This "Minority Opinion Appeal" to the entire Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous began with a small group of AA members who were united in their **opposition to development of literature** by AA World Services, approved during the 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference in 2010, **that will focus on spirituality and include stories from atheists and agnostics who are "successfully sober" in Alcoholics Anonymous**. We believe the majority is in considerable error, that this misguided decision is so grave that it could affect AA as a whole, and consequently it is our duty to attempt to see that our minority position is represented at the 61<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference to be held in 2011.

In essence, this is a Position Paper which begins with a short appeal followed by rebuttals to background documents the Literature Committee cited when it moved to develop the Conference Approved literature on this topic. The rebuttals to the background documents cite existing Conference Approved Literature in an attempt to outline the minority's position on this matter. As part of the minority's "background" material we quote, in the Appeal itself, one non-conference approved article written by an AA member. The entire article is attached after the appeal and before the rebuttals. For each of the background documents we rebut, we include the entire document, as it was submitted to the General Service Office (GSO), along with the GSO's correspondence related to the document.

In Summary, the minority's position is:

- The program of Alcoholics Anonymous is outlined in the Big Book which is our society's basic text. This book gives clear cut directions on how to practice AA's Twelve Steps which are described, in the Foreword to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as **"a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole."**
- Practicing the Twelve Steps enables alcoholics to develop faith in a Higher Power (or God of one's understanding) that is sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism.
- Consequently, any literature which attempts to describe *current* atheists or agnostics as being "successfully sober" in AA would be deceptive, misleading, and harmful to **real alcoholics** attempting to find the power necessary to solve their problem. Such a position is fundamentally opposed to the authentic program of recovery detailed in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. AA is a program designed to change us, not for us to change the program.
- The proposed literature is a frothy appeal, without any weight or depth, and not grounded in a power greater than ourselves. Much of our existing conference approved literature is geared toward helping non-believers develop enough faith, in something greater than themselves, to succeed with the program of recovery as it is outlined in the Big Book. Consequently, as the Trustees Literature Committee has concluded in each of the previous six attempts from 1976 to 2006, there is no "need" for additional literature on this subject.

# Minority Opinion Appeal to AA Fellowship

## For Consideration by District Committee for Area 13

### Background:

During the 59<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, which was held at the Crowne Plaza Times Square, New York during 26 April – 2 May 2009, the delegate from Northern California Coastal - CNCA 06 Delegate Panel 59) introduced floor action which stated:

*“we develop Conference-approved literature that focuses on spirituality and includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous.”*

The 59<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference voted to commit that floor action to committee, so the 2010 Conference Literature Committee (with limited time to read the voluminous background material on the subject) recommended that:

*“... the trustee’s Committee on Literature develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous, and bring a draft or progress report to the 2011 Conference Committee on Literature.”*

When this information was brought up at a Regional Panel Discussion on Literature in Area 29, Maryland, a small consensus formed that opposed the development of such literature. **This Appeal to the entire fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous NOT to produce such literature is in the spirit of Concept V:**

*“Throughout our world 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.”*

The AA Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service, by Bill W., 2009-2010 Edition states on page 22 (Concept V) the following:

*“In the light of the principal of the “Right of Appeal,” all minorities – whether in our staffs, committees, corporate boards or among the Trustees – should be encouraged to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. And when a minority considers an issue to be such a grave one that a mistaken decision could seriously affect AA as a whole, it should then charge itself with the actual duty of presenting a minority report to Conference.”*

**It is our contention that:**

- Our basic text Alcoholics Anonymous ©1939, the series of essays written in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions © 1952, and a body of other Conference Approved literature adequately covers this topic.
- We believe what is really needed is a deeper understanding of our existing literature and history. Per the Third Tradition, It is clear that AA members, recovered or not, should welcome everyone; including non believers and those with radically different belief systems than the majority of the members in the group. The personal story entitled “The Vicious Cycle,” written by one of AA’s original first 100 member’s \*, makes it abundantly clear that this issue was resolved within AA before 1940. Creating Conference Approved Literature focused on this issue will only confuse newcomers and resurrect a controversial issue that was resolved long ago.
- Any attempts to provide information approved by AAWS about how individuals or groups of people have stayed “successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous” without relying upon a Power greater than themselves, or God *as we understood him*, is in direct opposition to the AA message as it is laid out in the first 164 pages of the big book, and, therefore, threatens the integrity of our “**common solution**” (Big Book, pg. 17) thereby taking us away from our “... **primary purpose (which is to carry (our) message to the alcoholic who still suffers**”  
(Tradition V)
- We agree with the Delegate from Panel 58, Area 41 Nebraska (see the background document #6 from the 60<sup>th</sup> G.S.C.), that production of such literature is “not conducive to unity”, is divisive, and will dilute the AA message which, per the jacket (paper cover) of the third edition, is the first 164 pages of the Big Book.
- We are filing this minority report because we feel the majority opinion, reflected through the trustee’s Committee on Literature’s decision to “develop Conference-approved literature that focuses on spirituality and includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous, is in considerable error. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS MISGUIDED DECISION IS SO GRAVE HAT IT COULD AFFECT AA AS A WHOLE. Consequently, we feel it is our duty to see that this minority opinion makes it to the 2011 General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous when the draft of the proposed literature, or progress report, is introduced.

\* Jim B., from Washington DC, is the Author of the “Vicious Cycle” and was also one of the first 100 members that vetted the Big Book. He is credited with having the phrase “*as we understood Him*” added after the word “God” in Steps 3 and 11. His story is also told in the “Third Tradition” in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. In that story they call him ED. It is the story of how the issue of non-believers in AA was dealt with when formulating the Third Tradition – *The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.*

**Minority Position:**

Tradition Nine states:

***“A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”***

In “Tradition Nine” of the Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions (which is Conference Approved) Bill Wilson writes that Alcoholics Anonymous is able to have the least possible organization because of the fact that:

***“Unless each AA member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant. His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles.***

***The same stern threat applies to the group itself. Unless there is approximate conformity to AA’s Twelve Traditions, the group, too, can deteriorate and die. So we of AA do obey spiritual principles, first because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are AA’s disciplinarians; we need no others.”***  
(Twelve & Twelve page 174)

In his article, posted on recoveryrealm.com 7 July 2009, entitled ***“What happened to AA’s success rate???”*** AA member, Cliff B., makes the following pertinent observations \*:

- “30 & 40 years ago, we were keeping (sober) 75% or more of the alcoholics who came to us for help. Today, we aren’t keeping even 5%. What happened?”
- Many newcomers who arrive at AA today have been told by treatment centers and the court system, often before they arrive at an AA meeting, things that are contrary to the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Rather than educate these newcomers, recovered AA members have permitted newcomers to convince old-timers that they have a better idea.
- Over the years newcomers have become more confused with the diversity of information that has been presented to them such as
  - Just go to meetings and don’t drink
  - Go to 90 meetings in 90 days
  - Don’t rush into taking the Steps just take your time... Easy Does It!

\* Cliff’s opinions are his own and are not “Conference Approved,” but this minority agrees with his position. The entire article is included in the Background Material to this appeal and can also be viewed at:  
<http://www.recoveryrealm.com/Forums/tabid/126/forumid/12/postid/10604/view/topic/Default.aspx>

- Old timers have failed in their responsibility to the newcomer to remind them of a vital truth, “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program.” We have permitted untreated alcoholics and non-alcoholics to sit in our meetings and lay out their problems, ideas and opinions. \* We have gone from, “Rarely have we seen a person fail” to “Seldom do we see a person recover.”

The “majority” (while no doubt well intentioned) that is moving forward with creation of literature which is supposed to explain how atheists and agnostics can be “successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous” are the victims of this trend Cliff B aptly describes. Unfortunately; those of us who have found the common solution (big book pg. 17), through reliance on our Higher Powers, may very well be in the minority after decades of the AA message being diluted. It appears, to us, that the inmates may be on the verge of taking over the insane asylum!

We implore those of you who have been entrusted with representing the Group Conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous at our 61<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference in 2011, to read the following rebuttals we have prepared to some of the arguments made on behalf of creating such literature. We also hope you bear in mind 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.”***

\* As a minority we recognize and appreciate the right of individual AA groups to welcome and invite newcomers to “lay out their problems, ideas and opinions” during meetings, but we agree with Cliff that it is the responsibility of Recovered AA members to explain how the 12 Step Program of Recovery, outlined in the Big Book, can and will, if practiced, help change for the better these newcomer’s problems, ideas, and opinions.

The attached documents are rebuttals to background documents from the 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference which supported *the creation of Conference-approved literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in AA.*

These rebuttals cite conference approved literature, and some non conference approved literature, to demonstrate how this proposed new literature is unnecessary and potentially harmful to our First Legacy - the program of recovery, our Second Legacy – unity inside the fellowship of AA and amongst its service workers, and our Third Legacy – world service to carry the message to alcoholics worldwide.

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“What Happened to AA’s Success Rate????”, by Cliff B. recoveryrealm.com 3 pages

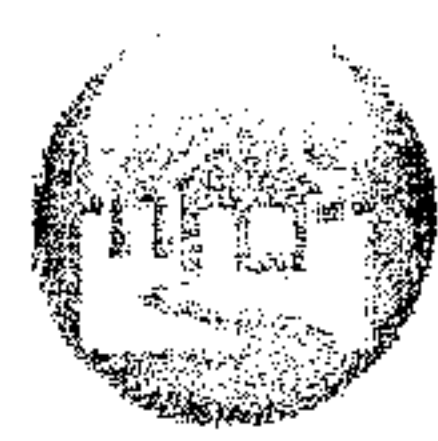
**Background Documents and Rebuttals:**

1.	8/4/2009 email from AA Member regarding AA literature for Atheists; 8/10/2009 reply from GSO Literature Coordinator	2 pages
	<b>Rebuttals to AA Member’s 4 August 2009 email to GSO</b>	<b>5 pages</b>
2.	10/15/2009 Letter from AA Member to GSO Literature Committee 10/26/2009 Reply Letter from GSO Literature Coordinator	1 page 1 page
	<b>Rebuttals to AA Member’s 15 October 2009 Letter to GSO</b>	<b>5 pages</b>
3.	10/1/2009 Letter from AA Member to GSO Literature Committee 10/26/2009 Reply Letter from GSO Literature Committee	2 pages 1 page
	<b>Rebuttals to AA Member’s 1 October 2009 Letter to GSO</b>	<b>7 pages</b>
4.	1/2/2010 Letter from CNCA 06 Delegate Panel 59 to General Service Office 1/5/2010 Email Communication from GSO Literature Coordinator	3 pages 1 page
	<b>Rebuttals to CNCA 06 Delegate’s 2 January 2010 Letter to GSO</b>	<b>5 pages</b>
5.	1/3/2010 Letter from NC Area 51 Delegate to GSO Literature Coordinator 1/5/2010 Reply Email from Literature Coordinator	4 pages 1 page
	<b>Rebuttals to NC Area 51 Delegate’s 3 January 2010 Letter to GSO</b>	<b>8 pages</b>
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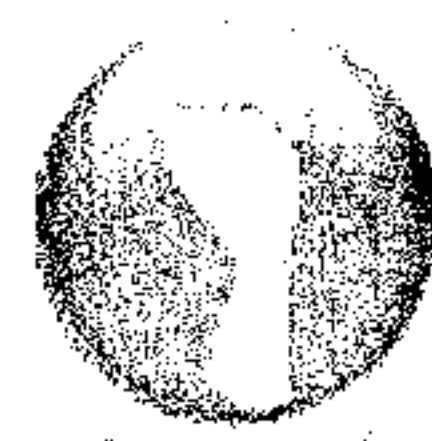
Bill V. Logo



HOME



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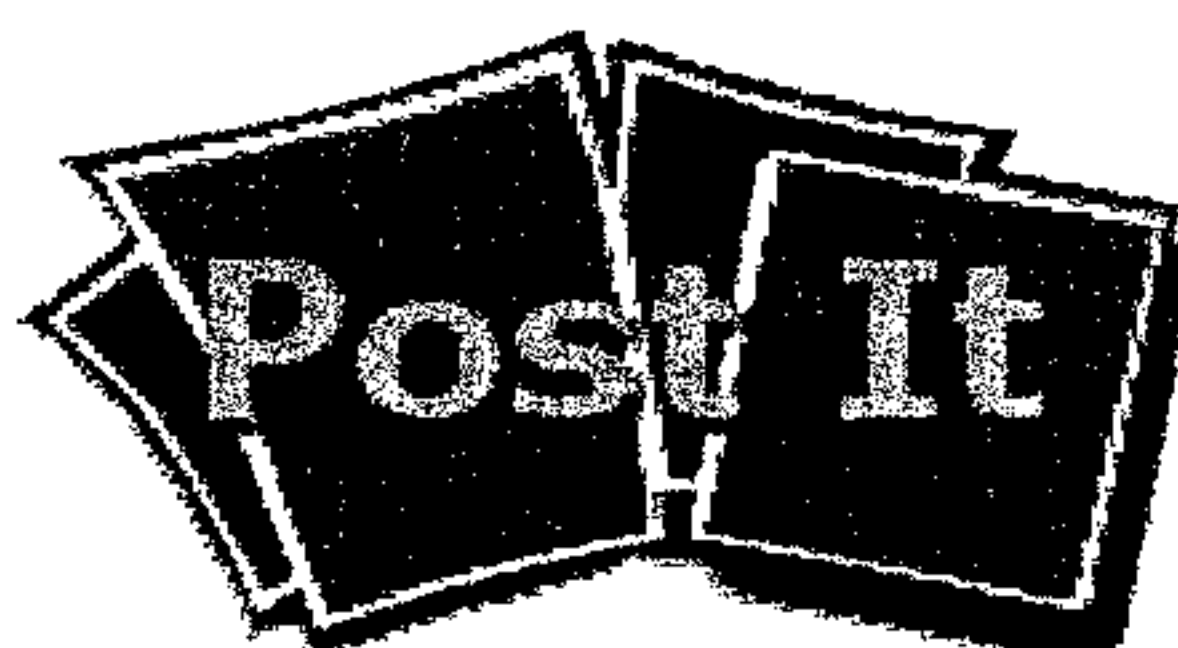
PHOTOS



When I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat,  
I noticed footprints in the sand...



# MESSAGE FORUMS



Recovery REALM and its MEETINGS are in the **EASTERN Time ZONE**

Recovery REALM Time is NOW...

4:18:37 PM

Meeting COUNT DOWN Clock

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Forums > 12 Step Programs > AA

Subject: What happened to AA's success rate???

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Author

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txsuperman ●  
 Junior REALMite  
 Posts: 20

07/07/2009 1:48 PM

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**What Happened?**

by Cliff B.

**That question is being asked by a lot of alcoholics lately. What happened to our high success rate? 30 & 40 years ago, we were keeping 75% or more of the alcoholics who came to us for help. Today, we aren't keeping even 5%. What happened?**

What happened to that wonderful A.A. Group that was around for 20, 30 or 40 years? There used to be 50, 75, 100 or more at every meeting. It is now a matter of history; gone! More and more groups are folding every day. What happened?

We hear a lot of ideas, opinions and excuses as to what happened but things are not improving. They continue to get worse. What is happening?

**Bill W. wrote,**

"In the years ahead A.A. will, of course, make mistakes. Experience has taught us that we need have no fear of doing this, **providing that we always remain willing to admit our faults and to correct them promptly.** Our growth as individuals has depended upon this healthy process of trial and error. So will our growth as a fellowship.

Let us always remember that any society of men and women that cannot freely correct its own faults must surely fall into decay if not into collapse. Such is the universal penalty for the failure to go on growing. Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole Society if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well." (A.A. Comes of Age, pg 231)

With so very few finding lasting sobriety and the continued demise of AA groups, it is obvious that we have not remained willing to admit our faults and to correct them promptly.

Seems to me that the Delegate of the Northeast Ohio Area, Bob Bacon, identified our mistakes and our faults when he talked to a group of AA's in 1976. He said, in essence, we are no longer showing the newcomer that we have a solution for alcoholism. We are not telling them about the Big Book and how very important that Book is to our long term sobriety. We are not telling them about our Traditions and how very important they are to the individual groups and to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Rather, we are using our meeting time for drunkalogs, a discussion of our problems, ideas and opinions or "my day" or "my way".

Having been around for a few years, and reflecting on what Bob Bacon had to say, **it would appear that we have permitted newcomers to convince the old-timers that they had a better idea.** They had just spent 30 or more days in a treatment facility where they had been impressed with the need to talk about their problems in Group Therapy Sessions.

They had been told that it didn't make any difference what their real problem was, A.A. had the "best program".

They were told that they should go to an A.A. meeting every day for the 1st 90 days out of treatment.

They were told that they shouldn't make any major decisions for the 1st year of their sobriety.

**And what they were told goes on and on, most of which are contrary to the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous!**

Apparently, what they were told sounded pretty good to the A.A. members who were here when the TC clients started showing up at our meetings. And a lot of the A.A. members liked the idea of the treatment centers because the centers provided a place where they could drop off a serious drinker, if he/she had insurance. That eliminated some of the inconveniences we had been plagued with before; having to pour orange juice and honey or a shot of booze down a vibrating alky to help them "de-tox".

**When A.A. was very successful, the folks who did the talking in meetings were recovered alcoholics. The suffering and untreated alcoholics listened. After hearing what it takes to recover, the newcomer was faced with a decision; "Are you going to take the Steps and recover or are you going to get back out there and finish the job?". If they said they "were willing to go to any length", they were given a sponsor, a Big Book and began the process of recovery by taking the Steps and experiencing the Promises that result from that course of action.** This process kept the newcomer involved in working with others and continued the growth of our Fellowship. Our growth rate was approximately 7% and the number of sober members of Alcoholics Anonymous doubled every 10 years.

With the advent of the rapid growth of the Treatment Industry, the acceptance of our success with alcoholics by the judicial system and endorsement of physicians, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc. all kinds of people were pouring into A.A. at a rate greater than we had ever dreamed possible. Almost without realizing what was happening, our meetings began changing from ones that focused on recovery from alcoholism to "discussion or participation" types of meetings that invited everyone to talk about whatever was on their mind. The meetings evolved from a program of spiritual development to the group therapy type of meeting where we heard more and more about "our problems" and less and less about the Program of Recovery by the Big Book and the preservation of our Fellowship by adhering to our Traditions.

What has been the result of all this? Well, never have we had so many coming to us for help. But never have we had such a slow growth rate which has now started to decline. For the first time in our history, Alcoholics Anonymous is losing members faster than they are coming in and our success rate is unbelievably low. (Statistics from the Inter-Group Office of some major cities indicate less than 5% of those expressing a desire to stop drinking are successful for more than 5 years; a far cry from the 75% reported by Bill W. in the Forward to Second Edition). The change in the content of our meetings is proving to be death-traps for the newcomer and in turn, death-traps for the groups that depend on the "discussion or participation" type meetings.

Why is this? The answer is very simple. When meetings were opened so that untreated alcoholics & non-alcoholics were given the opportunity to express their ideas, their opinions, air their problems and tell how they were told to do it where they came from, the confused newcomer became more confused with the diversity of information that was being presented. More and more they were encouraged to "just go to meetings and don't drink" or worse yet, "go to 90 meetings in 90 days". The newcomer no longer was told to take the Steps or get back out there and finish the job. In fact, they are often told, "Don't rush into taking the Steps. Take your time." The alcoholics who participated in the writing of the Big Book didn't wait. They took the Steps in the first few days following their last drink.

Thank God, there are those in our Fellowship, like Joe & Charlie, Wally, etc., who have recognized the problem and have started doing something about it. They are placing the focus back on the Big Book.

There have always been a few groups that would not yield to the group therapy trend. They stayed firm to their commitment to try to carry a single message to the suffering alcoholic. That is to tell the newcomer that "we have had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps and if you want to recover, we will see that you have a sponsor who has recovered and will lead you along the path the 1st 100 laid down for us".

Recovered alcoholics have begun founding groups that have a single purpose and inform the newcomer that until they have taken the steps and recovered, they will not be permitted to say anything in meetings.

They will listen to recovered alcoholics, they will take the Steps, they will recover and then they will try to pass their experience and knowledge on to the ones who are seeking the kind of help we provide in Alcoholics Anonymous. As this movement spreads, as it is beginning to, Alcoholics Anonymous will again be very successful in doing the one thing God intended for us to do and that is to help the suffering alcoholic recover, if he has decided he wants what we have and is willing to go to any length to recover, to take and apply our Twelve Steps to our lives and protect our Fellowship by honoring our Twelve Traditions.

There is a tendency to want to place the blame for our predicament on the treatment industry and professionals. They do what they do and it has nothing to do with what we in Alcoholics Anonymous do. That is their business. That is not where to place the blame and also is in violation of our Tenth Tradition. The real problem is that the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, who were here when the "clients" began coming to our Fellowship did not help the "clients" understand that our Program had been firmly established since April 1939. And that the guidelines for the preservation and growth of our Fellowship were adopted in 1950. That they must get rid of their new "old ideas" and start practicing the Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous as it was given to us. That until they had taken the Steps and recovered, they had nothing to say that needed to be heard except by their sponsor. But that didn't happen.

To the contrary, the old timers failed in their responsibility to the newcomer to remind them of a vital truth, "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program." We have permitted untreated alcoholics and non-alcoholics to sit in our meetings and lay out their problems, ideas and opinions. **We have gone from, "Rarely have we seen a person fail" to "Seldom do we see a person recover".**

We now know what the problem is and we know what the solution is. Unfortunately, we have not been prompt to correct the faults and mistakes which have been created by what would appear to be large doses of apathy and complacency. The problem we are trying to live with is needlessly killing alcoholics.

The Solution? The Power, greater than ourselves, that we find through our Twelve Steps promises recovery for those who are willing to follow the clear-cut directions in the Big Book.

**Do you want to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution? Simple, but not easy; A price has to be paid.**

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2009 10:52 AM

To:

Subject: RE: Important: New Pamphlet for Atheists

Literature  
AGENDA ITEM C  
Background Doc. 1

Dear

Warm greetings from your General Service Office. My name is [redacted] I am an alcoholic and I currently have the pleasure of serving on the Literature Desk. I am glad for this opportunity to be in touch.

[redacted], thanks for your thoughtful email and idea for a new pamphlet. I will be happy to keep your sharing in our files for any future discussions on the subject.

In the meantime, all of us here send our gratitude and best wishes.

Sincerely,

General Service Conference

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2009 11:42 PM  
**To:** Literature  
**Subject:** Important: New Pamphlet for Atheists

Dear AA,

I have a very good idea for a pamphlet I don't think you have thought of yet. It should be called something like "AA for the Complete and Total Atheist".

My dad has been an alcoholic for thirty years, and the main excuse he gives for avoiding AA is his atheism. I know his real excuses are much deeper than this, but this convenient loophole has kept him from approaching AA with anything but scorn all these years. To mention AA to an atheist is to frame one's self as a bible-thumping and sentimental religious fanatic.

I don't think things like "As We Understood Him" will cut it for hardcore atheists--too sympathetic to God and the supernatural. The fact is, some atheists seem to believe they are far smarter than religiously- or agnostically-inclined folks (whom they see as misguided suckers), and this sense of superiority provides endless eye-rolling and bitterness whenever a "higher power" is mentioned in any context. AA is to them a snakes' nest of religious piety and superstition, and only regarded with haughty disdain.

I go to Al-Anon (I'm not an atheist though, so the HP is not that much of a struggle for me). I have seen how various and multifaceted the interpretation of the "religious" aspect is, and I know it is addressed in the literature. But it needs to be framed

CONFIDENTIAL: This is background for the 60<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference, and as such may be a confidential A.A. document. Distribution is limited to A.A. members. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the Internet, such as Web sites available to the public, may breach the confidentiality of the material and the anonymity of members, since it may contain members' full names and addresses.

in a wholly non-supernatural way to make sense to the non-believer who cannot accept AA as appropriate for an intelligent person. Atheism is a philosophy that is reasonable and must be respected; it must be made evident how it can fit within the philosophy of AA. Atheism is an important force in the post-modern world and needs its own special category within AA literature.

Since the goal of AA is to reach all people, including atheists, it is imperative to break through their wall of resistance by addressing them directly.

Please consider this seriously; I am afraid my father is going to suffer horribly all his life, or soon die (as might countless other atheist alcoholics), if he can't snap out of it and give AA a chance. That is one thing he will never do unless the "higher power" idea is presented to him in terms an atheist can truly appreciate. Try to get Christopher Hitchens to write it!

I hope you will take this e-mail very seriously and forward it to the appropriate Minister of Pamphlets.

Please write to me and let me know that this was received.

Thank you very much,

Rebuttals to AA Member's 4 August 2009 Email to the GSO Literature Committee

- The AA Member states in her email to the Literature Committee that her Dad is an atheist who *"has been an alcoholic for thirty years"* and approaches AA with scorn. She suggests that the Literature Committee produce a pamphlet that is *"framed in a wholly non-supernatural way to make sense to the non-believer who cannot accept AA as appropriate for an intelligent person."* She recommends that the Atheist Christopher Hitchens write it and suggests the name of the pamphlet could be *"AA for the Complete and Total Atheist."*

Our first thought is that she has missed the spiritual concept of *"Live and Let Live"* which is one of the mottoes cited at the end of the chapter "The Family Afterward."

(Big Book page 135)

In addition to encouraging her to continue attending meetings of Al-Anon, we believe the following excerpts from the Big Book will help her deal with her father's obstinacy and closed mindedness.

*"We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic, but you can quickly diagnose yourself."* (Big Book page 31)

*"..be careful not to brand him as an alcoholic.."* (BB page 92)

*"If he thinks he can do the job in some other way, or prefers some other spiritual approach, encourage him to follow his own conscience. We have no monopoly on God; we merely have an approach that worked with us. But point out that we alcoholics have much in common and that you would like, in any case, to be friendly. Let it go at that."* (Big Book page 95)

- In her email she also states: *"I don't think things like 'As We Understand Him' will cut it for hardcore atheists... The fact is, some atheists seem to believe they are far smarter than religiously- or agnostically – inclined folks... AA is to them a snakes' nest of religious piety and superstition, and only regarded with haughty disdain... I know it (the 'religious aspect' of AA) is addressed in the literature. But it needs to be framed in a wholly non-supernatural way to make sense to the non believer who cannot accept AA as appropriate for an intelligent person."*

We believe the following excerpts from the Big Book explain why her Dad ,and other atheists, might feel this way:

*"Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things make us bristle with antagonism. This sort of thinking had to be abandoned. Though some of us resisted, we found no great difficulty in casting aside such feelings. Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one else will prejudiced for as long as some of us were."* (BB page 48)

*"If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you. If you still think you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails, if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you were getting another drink.*

*Your Heavenly Father will never let you down!"*

(Big Book - Last two paragraphs of The Doctor's Nightmare)

