

General Service Conference Final Report excerpts regarding PLBB

2016

- Conference Literature Committee suggested that the need for "plain-language" recovery literature be explored by the trustees' Literature Committee.

2017

- Plain-language recovery literature - The [trustees' Literature] committee discussed the possibility of expanding the availability of "plain-language" recovery literature, in response to a 2016 Additional Committee Consideration suggesting that "the need for 'plain-language' recovery literature be explored by the trustees' Literature Committee." The committee agreed that a survey directed to the delegates and area corrections and accessibility committee chairs would be the most effective way to determine the need for recovery literature in plain-language format. The committee chair appointed a subcommittee to work on developing a survey and report back to the July 2017 meeting.
Plain-language recovery literature - The committee discussed the possibility of expanding the availability of "plain-language" recovery literature, in response to a 2016 Additional Committee Consideration suggesting that "the need for 'plain-language' recovery literature be explored by the trustees' Literature Committee." The committee agreed that a survey directed to the delegates and area corrections and accessibility committee chairs would be the most effective way to determine the need for recovery literature in plain-language format. The committee chair appointed a subcommittee to work on developing a survey and report back to the July 2017 meeting.

2020

- Item that was reviewed, discussed and forwarded [by the trustees' Literature Committee] to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature: Request for input and feedback for the trustees' Literature Committee's consideration of whether proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large-print versions of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution.
- Items that were discussed and no action taken [by the trustees' Literature Committee] included: While the committee took no action on the below, specific proposed agenda items, the committee noted that the items touch on what it considers to be an expressed, broader need that is reflected in similar requests. The committee is exploring this need through subcommittee efforts and by seeking wider group conscience discussions. The committee noted that the background provided for these items will be helpful in these discussions related to the agenda item to consider if a common solution can address proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large-print versions of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.
 - Consider the development of a contemporary and comprehensive new workbook to study the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts
 - Consider a request to create a dictionary to complement the Big Book

- Consider a request allowing Jewish rabbis and Muslim leaders and Indian Ancient Vedas scholars, et al, to have diverse spiritual language in the Fifth Edition Big Book rather than the current predominantly Judeo-Christian language
- Consider a request to develop a Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous with the removal of the chapters "To Wives," "The Family Afterward," and "To Employers"
- The [Conference Literature] committee considered if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large-print versions of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution.
- The [Conference Literature] committee requested that the trustees continue to explore this topic. The committee requested that the trustees make available to the Fellowship, as soon as possible, in Spanish, English and French, the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)," which was presented to the committee during their May 2, 2020 agenda reduction meeting. The committee noted the importance for the Fellowship to be informed about the nature of the accessibility challenges with regard to A.A. literature.

2021

- [Conference Literature Committee] Consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print versions of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution: The committee discussed the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature's committee consideration on proposed agenda items related to the accessibility of the Big Book and possible common solutions and agreed to continue exploring this topic.

The committee discussed the request for the presentation "The Big Book: Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access (70th General Service Conference 2020)" which was presented to the committee during their May 2, 2020 agenda reduction meeting, to be provided to the Fellowship, as soon as possible, in English, Spanish and French. The committee agreed with the importance for the Fellowship to be informed about the nature of the accessibility challenges impacting A.A. literature. The committee requested that the Publishing department explore reproducing the presentation according to the request.

The committee discussed plans for continued exploration of the topics which were presented in the background for the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature. The chair appointed a subcommittee comprised of Deborah K., chair, Cathy B., Katie H. and Carolyn B.-W. to:

1. Determine the specific literacy level of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.
2. Continue exploring how non-Conference-approved literature is being utilized by A.A. members to carry the message for the purpose of better addressing any perceived gaps and their solutions at the local level for accessibility and relatability to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

3. Request additional input on this topic from other trustees' committees in 2020 on this topic, including but not limited to Public Information, Corrections and Treatment and Accessibilities committees.
4. Undertake any other areas of exploration as they become identified.

The committee received a progress report and video production from the Publishing department. The committee received a verbal update from Publishing that work is in progress for production of the presentation in Spanish and French.

The committee agreed for the presentation to be made available to the Fellowship through delegates via the Conference dashboard in a downloadable format. The chair will work with the staff secretary to produce a communication about its availability for the committee to review. The announcement will accompany the dash- board posting.

The committee received a progress report from the subcommittee and noted that the subcommittee has met requested aims while continuing to consider past proposed Conference agenda items and how they relate to the overall considerations within this topic.

The committee noted that the video presentation was made available as requested, with an announcement and link to the video to members of the 69th, 70th and 71st General Service Conferences.

The committee discussed a progress report from the subcommittee and noted the report's focus on accessibility and relatability of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, in terms of the A.A. message reaching a wider demographic of alcoholics. The committee expressed appreciation for the significant scope of considerations as well as the suggested possibilities to guide ongoing discussions for moving forward.

The committee also noted the specific options outlined in the report to discuss digital material related to the message of recovery along with the idea to develop a plain language version of the Big Book. This idea of a new book is not meant to replace the Big Book, rather to overcome relatability and accessibility barriers so the A.A. message might reach more still-suffering alcoholics.

The committee agreed to forward the progress report from the subcommittee to the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature.

- Advisory Action—A draft version of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), be translated into plain and simple language and be developed in a way that is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible and that a progress report or draft be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature.

2022

- Consider request for group level review and vote on the final draft of the plain language version of the book Alcoholics Anonymous: The [trustees' Literature] committee discussed the proposed agenda item and took no action.

The committee noted that such an undertaking would not be prudent to implement. The committee also noted that the current Conference process includes the opportunity for

groups and members to participate with a voice and a vote on agenda items through their groups, districts, areas and various service gatherings.

- Draft version of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), translated into plain and simple language which is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible: The [trustees' Literature] committee discussed the 2021 advisory action to develop a draft version of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), translated into plain and simple language which is accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible. The committee reviewed background provided by the Publishing department and recognized that a timeline spanning several years is expected for the possible completion date of this project.

The chair appointed a subcommittee to include Carolyn W., chair; John W. and Mike L. and asked the Publishing department to work closely with the subcommittee in the development of draft content using three chapters of interest such as Chapter Five of the Big Book.

- The [Conference Literature] committee reviewed a progress report regarding the translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language. The committee requested that a progress report or draft manuscript be brought back to the 2023 Conference Committee on Literature.
- Floor Action (Conference declined to consider)—With the translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language, that the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts, not be translated into plain language in any way: that these remain in the existing form in English as in previous editions of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Note: Several agenda items were submitted to the 2022 Conference Literature Committee for review concerning the PLBB. These ranged from the PLBB being written by an AA member, discontinuing the project, creating a Big Book workbook, make a "side-by-side" of the PLBB, provide clarification on the plans to create PLBB, and that PLBB not contain the words "Alcoholics Anonymous" or "Big Book" in its title. To all of these items, the Conference Literature Committee reported, "The committee noted that oversight of the development of the plain language book is within the scope of the Tools to Access the Big Book (TABB) subcommittee."*

2023

- ...for the first time, due to the efforts of the Trustee's Literature Committee, a draft piece of literature (the plain language translation of the Big Book) has been made available to all Conference members via the concept of our "Reading Room" with a two-hour session to be moderated at the end of Conference week in order to gather delegate input on the draft to help guide its final development in the coming year.
- The [Conference Literature] committee reviewed a progress report regarding the translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition) into plain and simple language and agreed with the general direction of the project. The committee requested that the project continue to move forward and that a draft or progress report be brought back to the 2024 Conference Committee on Literature.

- The [Conference Literature] committee discussed new proposed agenda items (PAI's) related to the plain language Big Book translation and took no action. The committee acknowledged the concerns of members, groups and areas in the Fellowship regarding the oversight of the process of a translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth edition) into plain and simple language. The committee noted that these concerns will be addressed at a special session during the 2023 General Service Conference.
- Additional items that were reviewed, discussed and forwarded to the 2023 Conference Literature Committee:

Plain Language Big Book PAIs:

The trustee's' Literature Committee agreed to forward to the 2023 Conference Literature committee all new proposed agenda items related to the Plain Language Big Book as one grouped item. The committee also discussed requests from some members regarding access to the draft of the Plain Language Big Book. After legal consultation, the committee agreed to provide a monitored closed reading room for Conference members only during the 2023 General Service Conference, where Conference Literature Committee members will be given first viewing of draft chapters in a controlled environment.

- Items that were discussed and no action taken included:

The [Conference Literature] committee discussed the following proposed agenda items, individually:

- PAI#42: The committee discussed a request to develop a study guide/workbook, written by A.A. members and published by A.A., to help people access the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and took no action. The committee noted that consideration of future projects in plain and simple language will be discussed after completion of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition), translated into plain and simple language.
- PAI#68: The committee discussed a request that the "plain and simple version of the Big Book," currently under development, should not contain the phrases "Alcoholics Anonymous" or "Big Book" in its title or any subtitles and took no action. The committee noted that there is not a widely expressed need at this time.
- PAI#94, #95, #179: The committee discussed a request to provide the Final RFP sent to the selected Vendor for transparency in the decision made related to the original scope assigned to the Plain and Simple Language translation of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Fourth Edition) and took no action. The committee noted that contracts are not under the purview of the trustees' Literature Committee.