

August 1955

AA's Co-founder Asks Fellowship to "Take Over"

STANDING before several thousand AAs and their families at the last session of a three-day meeting celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous in St. Louis July 1-2-3, Bill W., surviving co-founder of AA, asked the membership to "take its destiny by the hand." With a resounding "aye!" those present—including AAs from Bermuda, Brazil, England, France, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, as well as the U.S. and Canada—adopted the following resolution offered by Bill:

THIRD LEGACY RESOLUTION

Adopted by The 20th Anniversary Convention of AA

(This Resolution Authorizes the General Service Conference to Act for Alcoholics Anonymous and to Become the Successor to Its Co-Founders.)

We, members of the 20th Anniversary Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, here assembled at St. Louis in July of the year 1955, declare our belief that our Fellowship has now come of age and is entirely ready to assume full and permanent possession of the Three Legacies of our AA inheritance—the Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

We believe that the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anony-

mous, as created in 1951 by our co-founders, Dr. Bob S. and Bill W. and authorized by Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, has now become entirely capable of assuming the guardianship of AA's Twelve Traditions and of taking over full guidance and control of the World Service of our Society, as provided in the Third Legacy Manual of World Service recently revised by our surviving co-founder, Bill W.

and the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We have also heard with approval Bill W.'s proposal that AA's General Service Conference should now become the permanent successor to the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, inheriting from them all their former duties and special responsibilities, thus avoiding in future time all possible strivings for individual prestige or personal power; and also providing our Society with the means of functioning on a permanent basis.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous should become, as of this date, July 3rd, 1955, the guardian of Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetrator of the World Services of our Society, the voice of the Group Conscience of our entire fellowship and the sole successors to its co-founders, Dr. Bob and Bill.

AND IT IS UNDERSTOOD: That neither the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous nor the warranties of Article XII of the Conference Charter shall ever be changed or amended by the General Service Conference except by first asking the consent of the registered AA groups of the world. These Groups shall be suitably notified of any proposal for change and shall be allowed no less than six months for full consideration thereof. And before any such Conference action may be taken, there must first be received

in writing within the time allotted the consent of at least three-quarters of all those registered Groups who respond to such proposal.

WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND:

That, as provided in Article XII of the Conference Charter, the Conference binds itself to the society of Alcoholics Anonymous by the following means:

That in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA 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 in the service of Alcoholics Anonymous and may traditionally direct its World Services, it shall never enact laws or regulations binding on AA as a whole or upon any AA Group or member thereof, nor shall it perform any other such 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.