

Motion To Rescind the “new Revised A.A. Preamble” from the 71st General Service Conference (GSC) floor action

This Motion is to Rescind the “new Revised A.A. Preamble” from the 71st General Service Conference (GSC) floor action, to result in a removal of the Preamble language, but more importantly to remove the position taken and decision made by Alcoholics Anonymous to participate in an outside issue, specifically in that Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole has now formed an opinion relating to a public controversy and debate ongoing in society today.

Reason for Motion:

At the 71st GSC, a floor action brought about a decision to change the Preamble language. With this decision, Alcoholics Anonymous has taken a position as a whole to participate in an outside issue and public controversy, in violation of its own traditions and literature.

The agenda item and the floor action decision made by the General Service Conference regarding use of the phrase “gender-neutral language” refers to the specific reason for the change of the wording of the A.A. Preamble (see Section “Background Information” below for excerpts from committee sessions)*. This is not the first time this phrase has fallen before the Conference Committees and has been previously declined. The decision made was to change wording in the AA Preamble from “men and women” and replace these words with the word “people.” It is not lost on us that this change is listed in a document which also states that AA “does not wish to engage in any controversy.” Herein we, as Alcoholics Anonymous, have made a decision on a controversial, outside issue and have chosen to participate in an outside matter in society. Never before in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous have we, as a whole, taken a position on such a controversial outside issue, because it was in violation of our traditions to do so.

Please keep in mind that this motion has **NOTHING** to do with the subjectivity of “gender neutral” and does not wish to engage in any discussion of it. Those are not our issues to decide in Alcoholics Anonymous pursuant to the A.A. Traditions. Again, the subject of this motion is that Alcoholics Anonymous took a position and made a decision on an outside issue, one that AA should not be making according to its own literature and traditions. *The decision which was made at the Conference in a floor action has now made Alcoholics Anonymous complicit to having an opinion on an issue that is controversial and should be outside the scope of Alcoholics Anonymous.* The phrase “gender-neutral” refers to a highly debated issue within society today. That this issue is debated in society makes it controversial by its very nature. This is a debate about an outside issue that has formed in society, and is one in which Alcoholics Anonymous, by its own traditions and literature, should not be participating.

Our Conference Approved literature indicates that AA does not participate in these issues, debates, or controversies. In our Conference Approved book *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, Pg 124 states “As A.A.’s we do not enter into public controversy, because we know that our fellowship **will perish if we do**. We conceive the survival and spread of Alcoholics Anonymous to be something of greater importance than any weight we could collectively throw back at other

causes.” In another Conference Approved piece of literature, the book *The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions*, Pg 176, states, with reference to our traditions - “Ten – Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.” In this same book (*12x12*), Pg 192, the long form of the traditions, Tradition Ten even goes so far as to state “Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.” These are just a few of the many examples of A.A. not having any opinions on these outside matters in our literature.

It appears that this decision of the Conference has placed us into the very thing our traditions sought to avoid – Alcoholics Anonymous having an opinion on public controversy.

AA, as a whole, has now “expressed a view” in the topic of gender neutrality. It is apparent that A.A has entered into public debate. The action of the 71st GSC has already taken sides and placed all of Alcoholics Anonymous in the middle of a public controversy. Members of Society can now point to Alcoholics Anonymous to bolster their position on this issue. If this action is rescinded, it would at least remove ANY CONNECTION of Alcoholics Anonymous to this controversy going forward.

The Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are the glue that hold this organization together loosely. If we are putting them to the side, to cast votes and participate in controversial outside matters of society, it will only be a matter of time before the *Coming of Age* prediction rings true – that we will be aiding in our own destruction and AA will perish if we continue to participate in public controversy. Therefore, we request that the decision to participate and partake in an outside issue within society as a whole be **rescinded** by the committee, and the former language of “men and women” be used so as not to participate in this outside controversy and the possible demise of Alcoholics Anonymous.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION*

71st General Service Conference Committees

Agenda Items

V. Grapevine and La Viña

E. Review suggested gender-neutral language options for changes to the A.A. Preamble.

From the 2021 71st General Service Conference Final Report:

“A.A. in a Time of Change”

Excerpts from the 71st Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of

Alcoholics Anonymous

Final Report

Grapevine and La Viña

Committee Considerations:

The committee considered gender-neutral language options for possible changes to the A.A. Preamble *and took no action*. The committee felt they needed more information to make a decision.

The committee requested that the Grapevine Board gather additional shared experience from the Fellowship related to the topic of gender-neutral language options for the A.A. Preamble and bring back the results to the 2022 Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña.

(Floor Actions page 58)

It was recommended that:

1. The A.A. Preamble be changed from: Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

To:

In Alcoholics Anonymous we share our experience, strength and hope with each other that we may solve our common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. – **MOTION PASSED**

2. The first sentence of the A.A. Preamble be revised with gender-neutral language by replacing the words “men and women” with the word “people” to read: “Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.” – **MOTION PASSED**

3. Floor action #3 not related to this discussion...

4. The Preamble revision replacing the words “men and women” with the word “people” be presented to the General Service Board for approval as the new revised A.A. Preamble. – **MOTION PASSED**

From the Final Report: The 71st General Service Conference Convenes...

(Page 3)

“The 71st General Service Conference was held virtually for only the second time in its 71-year existence.”

(Pages 4 & 5)

“Emblematic of the 71st Conference’s appetite for change and its search for the most effective means of delivering change to the Fellowship manifested in three floor actions related to new language for the Preamble that pushed discussion and debate late into the night on the final day of the Conference. Committed to developing inclusive language, two separate recommendations were considered and accepted by the Conference, creating a dilemma necessitating yet a third recommendation that sent a final version to the General Service Board for acceptance. The third recommendation recognized the ultimate preference of the Conference for changing the words “men and women” in the phrase “Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women” to read “Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people...”

With that final piece of business accomplished, the 71st General Service Conference came to a close,...

Find the Final Report of the 71st General Service Conference at the link below:

<https://www.area05aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/71st-GSC-Final-Report-AP-English.pdf>