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October 25, 1955

"OUR RESPONSIBILITIES"

The Year 1955 will go down in AA history as a momentous one with the adoption of the permanent Charter on July 3, 1955, in St. Louis by the Society of AA attending the 20th Anniversary Convention for the General Service Conference as a means of conveying to the Fellowship itself responsible custody of the Third Legacy of World Services. This Legacy has been placed in our hands that we may extend to all who ask it the same help we came seeking and so sorely needing, and that we may, to the extent of our ability, relieve Bill of the enormous responsibilities which he has carried these twenty years.

We are now the proud possessors of an heritage of "Recovery, Unity, and Service", the like of which has not been known to man perhaps since the inception of the Christian Era.

It is our duty as good AA Members to face up to those responsibilities to the best of our ability not only that we ourselves may survive, but so that the countless millions who will follow us also will gain a new lease on life through finding the meaning of the two words "love" and "service".

The structure of AA, from the group level up to the General Service Board, made your sobriety and mine possible. It gives us the vehicle through which we can work and help each other, and as mentioned above, it makes it possible for the New Member to find us - the alcoholic who does not yet know there is a way of solving his or her alcoholic problem.

When we speak of "Money and its Place in AA", we are not speaking of very much money by any standards usually associated with money needs. In fact, we are speaking of a very small amount of money, but that small amount is very important. This subject lends itself to rather specific statements - Dollars are a definite measurable sum. If you need dollars and do not have them, it is necessary to do some thinking and planning.

Whether a group is in a small town or a large city, there are certain money requirements - the ad in the newspaper, the telephone, the rent for the group location, the literature. As more groups are formed in an area, a Central Office becomes necessary, with a full-time secretary to receive calls for help and transmit them where they belong. Committees are formed to carry out public relations, handle institutional help, guide the Central Office policies and administer the funds needed for these services. As we function along these simple lines in our respective areas, so General Service Headquarters serves throughout the world. They make it possible for us to have literature for the new member and to guide us in our public relations, so that our good name is protected the way we want it. Even more important, our General Service Headquarters makes it possible for you and me to find AA wherever we may go in the world.

In 1951 the General Service Conference was set up as a link between the groups and the General Service Board. We have the responsibility as individual members, through our group, to pay the expenses of the delegate to an annual conference. Therefore, we have money requirements for the group, the Central Office (if we have one), and General Service Headquarters. All of this is for the purpose of attracting the person who does not yet know AA. This is our financial need - the place of money in AA.

What is the specific amount we are talking about for each of us? This is not an easy question to answer, but we can be specific so far as General Service Headquarters is concerned. They have calculated that to properly finance their responsibilities, the specific amount per member is \$2.00 per annum. Not a very large sum! How well have we carried out this request?

At the General Service Conference in St. Louis, four alternate procedures for increasing financial support of General Service Headquarters' expanding service operations were endorsed - now that the Conference Fund has been abolished:

- a. The "Oklahoma Birthday Plan", whereby anniversary celebrants contribute \$1.00 per year of sobriety, up to a maximum of 10 years.
- b. The earmarking of specific meetings for G.S.H. support.
- c. Setting up of special coin receptacles for Headquarters' funds.
- d. Special reminders to members that only four cents per week adds up to more than \$2.00 per year.

A study of the 1954 Group Directory shows the following interesting statistics:

1. In 10 States more groups failed to contribute than did.
2. Groups in 17 States contributed less than \$1.00 per member.
3. Of these, 5 States contributed less than 70¢ per member and 2 States 50¢ or less per member.
4. There were 6 States that contributed more than \$1.50 per member.
5. Of these, one State (Oklahoma) was the only one to contribute more than \$2.00 per member. They came up with the astonishing figure of \$3.47 per member.
6. The next highest was \$1.67 per member - then \$1.63, \$1.56, and \$1.53.
7. 23% of the groups in the United States contributed the suggested amount of \$2.00 per member.

HERE'S THE BOX SCORE ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR GENERAL SERVICE HEAD-
QUARTERS FOR 1955:

As AA world services continue to expand, here's how our financial picture looked at the end of the first nine months of 1955:

Contributions from Groups, 1/1/55 - 9/30/55	\$ 58,996
Headquarters Expenses, 1/1/55 - 9/30/55	\$ 89,227
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Need we add any additional comment? These figures show that we have failed by a large margin. Lack of information is not a proper excuse because we have been informed at least twice a year of the need by General Service Headquarters.

There was a period in AA when there were two things to "soft-pedal" - God and money. You have paid your initiation fee when you walk in the group. There are no dues and no fees, but there are financial needs. When will we realize our responsibility for meeting them? It is possible we have forgotten "first things first" and mixed up the cost of social affairs with our responsibilities?

No one should object to a dance, a picnic, or any decent form of entertainment. The big question is - "Can we afford it?" "First things first" should mean, among other things: 1. Individual sobriety. 2. Helping the other fellow gain his sobriety by supporting the vehicle which makes it possible. This means supporting the group. Tradition No. 7 - "Every AA Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions". The Groups support the other important links: The Central Office, and General Service Headquarters. The financial support of these functions are inseparably woven into the place of money in AA.

As individual members, we speak of gratitude to AA and what it has meant to us. Are we grateful enough to give the equivalent of a double shot when the basket is passed! Are we grateful enough to match it with the cost of a movie or the cost of cigarettes! What is our financial status now as compared with the time we found AA? What are our prospects in our work and what is our general manner of living? Our financial support is an integral part of the 12th step work. It makes the 12th step possible by furnishing a means and a place through which we can complete the attraction of the new member.

Generally upon observation when the membership of a group are informed, they will respond. You cannot expect a member to put in a dollar when the leader passes the basket with no explanation at all, or at the most a statement that we have coffee and donuts to pay for. Coffee and donuts used to be about 10¢. The logical AA member puts a quarter in the basket and thinks he has been generous. Therefore, the financial needs of AA can be comfortably taken care of without any strain on anyone, through a process of continuous explanation at the group level. This can be accomplished very simply with a brief financial report monthly, and if the leader at each meeting will explain in passing the basket that our financial needs are simple but important, because this group believes it is essential to support General Service Headquarters, in addition to our own rent, literature, donuts and coffee.

These simple and essential money needs will help carry the message, which is one of the primary purposes of our organization. Proper financial support is a specific, tangible way of expressing gratitude. Thanksgiving time is nearing. Why not make this our traditional period of showing gratitude for what AA has done for us? How about making this article an item of discussion at some of your next regular meetings - then count noses and send at least \$2.00 or more per member to: GENERAL SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, P.O. BOX 459, GRAND CENTRAL ANNEX, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

Sincerely yours in AA,

E. E. (Jack) HENRY, DELEGATE
N/E Texas Area
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE