

Gerry F., a past Western Canadian Regional Trustee, made a report to the 1995 General Service Conference that is quite prescient and, I believe, precisely sums up a genuine challenge in AA today.

From Gerry F.'s report to the 1995 Conference:

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I think that the greatest hurdle this Fellowship will face in the next ten years will not concern copyrights nor whether litigation is public controversy nor the proliferation of self-help psycho-babble. I feel that the greatest hurdle we face today and in the foreseeable future is the spill-over into our Fellowship of the cynicism and distrust that are exhibited in our North American society at large in regard to its public servants.

I have noticed with growing concern that letters from members of the Fellowship are more and more suspicious of the motives of the leaders we have chosen to serve us. There was a time within my short 18 year experience in this Fellowship when arguments abounded about principles and what the best course of action might be. But there was always the underlying premise that both sides thought they knew what was the greatest good for the longest time. And when the vote was taken, and upwards of two-thirds voted for fuchsia colored name tags, the proponents of the brown tags might have their minority say, but would accept the decision of a Higher Power "as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

I sometimes wonder if we can still do that. More often I hear the minority either questioning the motives of an "influential" leader in swaying the majority; or else, insisting that the body wasn't well informed, and then when the group does have the information, saying that the body is not responsible (not listening) and that it has become a law unto itself. The thing that's missing is acceptance by the minority of the group conscience decision.

Not one of us is given a torch big enough to lead the drunks of the world out of the darkness and into the light. Instead, each of us has been given a candle that burns for a short while with a flickering flame. If we stand together, the light will outshine the greatest torch. If we argue and bicker and blow at each other's candle so that each of us starts shielding our own little flame, then the alcoholics of the world will continue to suffer in darkness - and so will we.