

2021 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

The following statement is also added at the end of each proposal: *If this proposal receives a 60% positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.*

Proposal 2021 – 1

Submitted on 10-8-20 by CA1089 from Sebastopol, CA

Issue: We propose that in future printings of Chapter 19 in the BRB, the second personal share under TRADITION THREE (p. 503) either be deleted entirely, or be edited to remove any reference to the speaker's dislike of gay people.

Background: In the second personal share on page 503 of the BRB, the speaker declares that, as a newcomer, "I disliked gays...ACA should not allow them to be part of our regular ACA meetings." In an attempt at humor, the speaker adds, "[a]fter all, we should only have respectable dysfunctional people at the meetings." The apparent point of the share is that, thanks to Tradition Three, the newcomer eventually discovers that "gays at the meetings... [are] generally likable people." This supposedly inspiring story of a bigot becoming slightly less dismissive of gay people is actually alienating and hurtful to many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) ACAs. Cracking a joke about considering gay people not "respectable" evokes the very real (and not at all funny) rejection and violence that many LGBTQ people have experienced not only in the larger society, but also at the hands of the very families of origin we came to ACA to heal from. Abuse and rejection of LGBTQ youth are leading causes of LGBTQ homelessness, murder, and suicide. This supposedly light-hearted share would obviously be inappropriate if it described someone hilariously discovering that, to their surprise, Black or Jewish ACAs are "generally likable people." It is especially inappropriate as an illustration of a Tradition that is supposed to make all ACAs feel welcome. We ask that the share be either removed from the BRB or edited to refer only to the specific individuals the speaker disliked, rather than to an entire oppressed minority group.

WSO Analysis: WSO has a Representation, Equity and Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee (formerly known as Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility). The Literature Committee has invited members of this committee to participate in WSO's literature review process. The Literature Committee also will review the paragraph cited in this ballot measure and consider whether it should remain in the BRB.

Proposal 2021 – 2

Submitted on 10-8-20 by MD0060 from Arnold, MD

Issue: We propose that WSO add page numbers to the Kindle edition of the Big Red Book that correspond to the pages in the print edition.

Background: Currently the Kindle version of the BRB does not have visible page numbers. Consequently, those who use the Kindle version in meetings struggle to find the correct place to join in the group's readings. Other Kindle books have successfully matched page numbers to their corresponding print editions. Should this pass, we have ACA volunteers who have agreed to help with this page number project.

WSO Analysis: WSO is researching the options for doing this and plans a new version of the Kindle BRB. More information will be available by the 2021 ABC.

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Proposal 2021 – 3

Submitted on 10-8-20 by IG626 from Bethesda, MD

Issue: We propose that Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) officially change its name to Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families (ACADF).

Background: Except in official name, we are already Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional families. It says it on the website and the Big Red Book. Yet, because it is not reflected in our name, we have a special section of each meeting where it is made explicit to newcomers that they are welcome even if they did not have alcoholic parents. But many adult children never make it to their first meeting and never visit our website, because they disqualify themselves by simply saying “I am not the adult child of an alcoholic, so I don’t belong there.” We know it is extremely difficult to change something as foundational as a name. But is holding on to an outdated name worth missing even one adult child who might find recovery? We personally know of many adult children who disqualified themselves for years before realizing they were welcome in our fellowship. This unintentional exclusion is exactly what we are trying to prevent in Tradition 5, “Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.” The costs of this change will only be a onetime expense for ACA. And our fellowship has matured to the point where it is financially capable of taking this important step. As adult children we know what it is like to live in shame and abandonment; let’s not have even one more adult child think they are not welcome in our fellowship by changing our name to what we are, Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families (ACADF).

WSO Analysis: WSO has included dysfunctional families in our literature for at least a couple of decades. In 2020 a motion was passed to place Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families more consistently on all literature. Officially changing the name would require revising ACA’s legal documents of incorporation in the state of California. Legal costs for doing this are undetermined.

Proposal 2021 – 4

Submitted on 10-8-20 by CA1089 from Sebastopol, CA

Issue: We propose that WSO assemble a committee—comprised (wholly or in part) by transgender, non-binary, gender-fluid, and/or other gender-non-conforming ACAs—to determine whether and how to make future printings of the BRB more gender-inclusive.

Background: The BRB contains hundreds of binary-gendered references to ACA members, family members, the Inner Child, the Inner Loving Parent, and Higher Power that have been experienced as painful, alienating, and exclusionary by some gender-non-conforming ACAs. Passages referring to the Inner Child as “he or she” or to siblings as “brothers and sisters,” for example, make some non-binary and gender-fluid ACAs feel invisible. A committee of ACAs who have felt harmed or excluded by the gendered language in the BRB would be best suited to propose more gender-neutral and gender-inclusive language to help make all ACAs feel welcome and seen.

WSO Analysis: *WSO has a Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee. The Literature Committee has invited members of this committee to be part of the formal review process for all WSO literature. During its October 2020 quarterly call, the Literature Committee initiated discussions of a dedicated review of Diversity issues in ACA literature, including issues related to gender identity. A similar analysis is underway regarding spiritual concepts and terminology.*

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Proposal 2021 – 5

Submitted on 10-25-20 by IG630 from Culver City, CA

Issue: We propose that WSO use the acronym ACA/DF in order to include people whose parents are not alcoholics.

Background: Many members especially newcomers are confused because they do not have alcoholic parents. They are part of dysfunctional families. By including the initials DF in the acronym we can encourage more people to heal from their childhood trauma. and have a better understanding of the fellowship. The new acronym will be aligned with the broad message of healing in the literature.

WSO Analysis: To make this change, WSO would need to change ACA to ACA/DF in the literature and on the websites.

Proposal 2021 – 6

Submitted on 10-29-20 by NY109 from Brooklyn, NY

Issue: We propose that the ACA WSO Literature Committee begin planning a 20th Anniversary revised edition of the Big Red Book, with new testimonials and updated content, to be more inclusive of all experiences of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, and a broader range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Background: The experiences described in the BRB reflect a predominantly white, North American, and heterosexual worldview. This is understandable, given the size of the fellowship and its limited geographical range at the time the literature was developed in the early 2000s. Still, the absence of diversity of testimonials from ACAs presents an unintentional act of exclusion, one that limits the health and the growth of today's global fellowship. As the core piece of literature within ACA, we propose that WSO undertake to publish a newly revised edition, soliciting testimonials from a larger pool of Adult Children, and revising the content to better reflect its members' experiences.

WSO Analysis: The 10th anniversary edition essentially followed the original text, with minor changes. This proposal suggests a more significant rewrite, which would require substantial additional editorial planning. Along with Proposal #8, which also requests revisions to existing literature, this proposal has been referred to the Literature Committee to initiate a more detailed analysis.

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Proposal 2021 – 7

Submitted on 10-30-20 by IG659 from Johannesburg, South Africa

Issue: We propose that WSO produce a version of the BRB and other literature where the level of language is aimed at junior high-school level rather than university-grade English, so that the content is more easily understandable to people for whom English is a second language, rather than their mother tongue.

Background: In South Africa, we have 11 official languages. But English is used as the language for government documents, which is the common second language for the majority. Many, many people in other countries all around the world also speak English as a second language – it has become the international second language for most thanks to computer technology, but vocabulary is inevitably limited for the majority of these people. Examples are words like ‘indictment’; ‘evangelize’; ‘predicament’; etc. We believe that that literature that uses a much simpler version of English will make a huge difference in more effectively achieving the intention of Tradition 5, not just in South Africa, but throughout the world. This is not intended to replace translations, but to provide an introductory means of “carrying the message” for the many countries around the world where the fellowship is not yet big enough to justify a translation. English is commonly the means by which the first exposure to ACA is achieved, it is the “starter kit” language which in time allows the fellowship to establish enough to grow to the level of mother tongue translations. This proposal would obviously apply to the intended “small” BRB, but is not limited to just this, it is intended to apply to Step workbooks and all ACA literature.

WSO Analysis: Since 2017, the Literature Committee has specified that new literature should be easy to translate and not require advanced reading skills. The evaluation criteria are available at <https://acawso.org/literature-evaluation-criteria/>. This proposal suggests a comprehensive revision of existing literature, which would require substantial volunteer resources. This proposal has been referred to the Literature Committee to initiate a more detailed analysis.

Proposal 2021 – 8

Submitted on 10-30-20 by IG659 from Johannesburg, South Africa

Issue: We propose that WSO develops a 12 & 12 (similar to the AA 12 & 12) book with each Step and Tradition condensed to something that could be read in 15 – 20 minutes, in a format designed to be used as the basis for the common Step/Tradition/Topic/Share meeting cycle, but not limited to just this use.

Background: Working through the cycle of the steps and traditions in meetings over the course of 12 months has a proven track record in other 12-step fellowships as a good way to get familiar with the program, and we believe that our ACA fellowship will benefit greatly from having this available as a standard text. Such a book would also provide a solid overview of the ACA understanding of the steps and traditions.

WSO Analysis: If this proposal makes it to the ABC agenda and a motion is passed, it will be sent to the Literature Committee for potential implementation. Independent of the Proposal process, groups (meetings, Intergroups and Regions) are also encouraged to submit literature proposals and drafts to the Literature Committee. The submission process is detailed in Section XII.C of the OPPM (Submitting Literature Proposals).

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Proposal 2021 – 9

Submitted on 10-30-20 by IG659 from Johannesburg, South Africa

Issue: We propose that a Topic book that covers the very unique and specific challenges that ACA deals with be developed. Ideally this would be in a format that each individual topic could be read in 15 – 20 minutes, so can be used as the content of a topic meeting.

Background: ACA has some very unique and specific differences to other 12-Step fellowships, such as the need to develop a Loving Parent; finding clarity in Step 2; protecting the Inner Child when doing steps 8 & 9; the fellow-traveler approach to sponsorship; the idea of taking a blameless inventory of parents in Step 4; the idea of a “harms done to me inventory”; dealing with PTSD and Trauma; etc. We believe that a book that addresses each of these topics in a format designed to be used for a topic meeting would ensure that the information is communicated accurately, consistently and effectively. We would be very happy that this be combined with the 12 & 12 book suggested in Proposal 8.

WSO Analysis: If this proposal makes it to the ABC agenda and a motion is passed, it will be sent to the Literature Committee for potential implementation. Independent of the Proposal process, groups (meetings, Intergroups and Regions) are also encouraged to submit literature proposals and drafts to the Literature Committee. The submission process is detailed in Section XII.C of the OPPM (Submitting Literature Proposals).

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Proposal 2021 – 10

Submitted on 10-30-20 by IG659 from Johannesburg, South Africa

Issue: We propose that a pamphlet/trifold be developed to outline/describe the significant differences between the ACA fellowship and other 12-step programs. Specifically, that:

- Step 1 is not a one-sentence response, that it is layered and complex and takes substantial time and effort to break through the denial
- Step 2 involves coming to clarity, that many adult children have no frame of reference for healthy behaviour, so cannot “return” to sanity but may be finding it for the first time
- Step 4 involves a blameless inventory of our parents because, as our founder Tony A suggests, we have in essence become and/or married them.
- Step 6 involves a massive voyage of discovery of “if not what I know, then what to replace it with” that can involve major re-education (and really the only time self-help books may genuinely be useful, once we have identified the problem in Step 4)
- Step 8 & 9 includes, as part of the “except when to do so would injure them or others” our Inner Child/ren
- That what we are aiming for is emotional sobriety.
- That we focus on developing our on Loving Inner Parent as a fundamental part of our recovery.
- That sponsorship needs to avoid both compliance or defiance, so we use a fellow-traveler/support system rather than a prescriptive, authority-figure approach. And no doubt other distinctions that the WSO team would identify when developing this.

Background: Many people coming into ACA from other 12-step fellowships assume they “know the ropes” and so struggle to adjust to the ACA approach without some substantial clarity on the differences. This is about providing a quick clarity of the differences for newcomers to ACA from other fellowships.

WSO Analysis: If this proposal makes it to the ABC agenda and a motion is passed, it will be sent to the Literature Committee for potential implementation. Independent of the Proposal process, groups (meetings, Intergroups and Regions) are also encouraged to submit literature proposals and drafts to the Literature Committee. The submission process is detailed in Section XII.C of the OPPM (Submitting Literature Proposals).

2021 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2021 – 11

Submitted on 10-30-20 by IG659 from Johannesburg, South Africa

Issue: We propose that WSO consider setting up an ACA International Literature Scholarship fund for members who cannot afford ACA literature due to the price of the literature in their local currency, the exchange rate for their currency against the dollar, or due to their individual financial constraints.

Background: Literature is an essential tool of recovery for all adult children seeking recovery. In areas of South Africa such as Soweto, the price of literature is currently unaffordable for the majority of the population. In a country where almost 50% of the population is living below the poverty line; the level of unemployment is over 30%; and mental healthcare is unaffordable for the majority, it is imperative that this vital vehicle of carrying the ACA message be made accessible to as many people seeking help as possible. We strongly believe that lack of financial resources should not be a reason not to find ACA recovery because they cannot afford the primary tool. Furthermore, in a country like this, it is the PHYSICAL LITERATURE that is the primary means of carrying the message – internet access and affordability of data is far too inaccessible for the majority to use online resources. We also believe that an ACA literature scholarship fund that will provide more affluent ACA members an opportunity to be of Tradition 5 service to the fellowship in a way that will not only reduce the cost of literature for ACA members that cannot afford it, but will also enable the fellowship to grow and continue fulfilling its purpose of carrying the message to still-suffering adult children all over the world.

WSO Analysis: WSO acknowledges that access to affordable literature is an ongoing challenge. To address the exorbitant cost of international shipping to most countries from the United States, WSO has initiated local printing options to help reduce these costs. There are still many countries where local printing is not yet an option. The Finance Committee supports an International Literature Scholarship Fund and, as of the time of writing this analysis, is making plans to collect targeted contributions by implementation of a software plugin. These earmarked contributions would be accounted for in a separate fund and distributions would be made upon approval by the Board. This fund would be maintained at no additional cost to WSO.

NOTE: if both this Proposal and Proposal 17 make it to the ABC agenda, the ABC Chair will entertain a motion to combine them as they are essentially the same.

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Proposal 2021 – 12

Submitted on 10-31-20 by ISR0007 from Haifa, Israel

Issue: We propose that WSO add a second regular ACA world annual virtual event in addition to the yearly AWC, aiming toward the global membership and connections around the world.

Background: Due to COVID-19, the ACA World Convention (AWC) in 2020 was conducted virtually over 18 hours straight allowing time zones around the world to participate, under the name “Global Connections”. This event had strong positive results on connecting members from all around the world, helping with coming out of isolation on a global level and empowering local fellowships. Following this success, we propose that WSO will organize a similar yearly event as a regular ACA event, possibly between the annual ABC-AWC, that will follow similar format to the 2020 AWC. We suggest the name of the event to be “Global Connections Day” and the date to be set around October or November each year – so in the middle between the ABC-AWC happening on April.

WSO Analysis: Because of COVID-19, WSO hosted a worldwide virtual convention in 2020. It required substantial volunteer hours to organize, but also involved workshop presenters from around the world and more than doubled participation. WSO is studying the cost and benefit of hosting some virtual AWC programming in future years.

Proposal 2021 – 13

Submitted on 10-31-20 by ISR0007 from Haifa, Israel

Issue: We propose that WSO create an ACA app for mobile devices.

Background: Few other 12&12 fellowships now have apps to support the members with information, access options, logging 10 step inventories, connecting with fellow travelers, making 7th tradition donations, shopping in our store etc. Giving the online nature of our membership, this can be a great support for member to engage with the ACA program more easily and in an up to date manner. We propose WSO will commission such an app to be created and maintained.

WSO Analysis: WSO does not currently have special workers or budget designated for this project. The cost estimate for creating an app could be \$14,000 or higher, depending on the app’s functionality. This would also require additional annual expense to support.

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Proposal 2021 – 14

Submitted on 10-31-20 by WEB0120

Issue: We propose that WSO support exploring the challenges and opportunities associated with the world of online ACA recovery, learning more about the impact on individual recovery, and on the well-being of online meeting groups, including the service structures needed to support these groups over time.

Background: In a world of face masks and social distancing, our meetings have been disrupted. Many meetings moved online, temporarily. Some new meetings were established there, permanently. What's more, during this stressful time, many citizens, with time and discontent, have newly found ACA recovery and online meetings. This huge shift in the ACA "delivery model" raises fundamental questions. Most importantly, "How does an online experience impact individual recovery?" Other key questions that may merit study:

- What other challenges are experienced in online recovery meetings and how can these challenges be mitigated?
- How do online groups address our spiritual foundation of anonymity?
- How do we meet the need for having fellowship?
- Additionally, how does an online meeting support the creation of Step Study opportunities for their members?
- How do they meet the requests for fellow travelers and sponsors?
- How do online meetings square their new, or redefined roles with the limited service positions that are described in the BRB?
- Could consistency of 'online' service positions - more uniformity of titles and descriptions - create less confusion between meetings?
- What are the impacts on 7th Tradition donations and the funding of our Service Structure?

Answers to these, and potentially other questions, are needed. The WSO is uniquely positioned to support enquires. Surveys of ACA members and groups, using carefully designed questions, could reveal important themes particular to 'virtual recovery' and the functioning of online gatherings. Such research will help WSO develop or update best practices, in support of both group health and individual recovery in the online environment.

WSO Analysis: The Service Network Committee is currently writing a Service Manual that will replace the Handbook chapter of the BRB. It will include information about online meetings. There is also a Best Practice/Member Toolbox page on the WSO Service Website (<https://acawso.org/category/best-practices/>) where the Fellowship can share their experiences.

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Proposal 2021 – 15

Submitted on 10-31-20 by the WSO Global Members Sub-Committee

Issue: We propose that the ACA fellowship approve the Global Members Subcommittee as a Standing WSO Committee.

Background: The member services committee is strained by the growing needs of the global subcommittee. The Global Members Subcommittee is responsible for providing support to 148 countries. Subcommittees receive only a fraction of their parent committees' budget and are only allotted a brief amount of time at the WSO monthly meeting to report on their members activities. As a comparison, the European committee represents 45 countries and is allotted standing committee status. The support from the global subcommittee has been instrumental in growing the fellowship internationally as well as providing a critical connection for these countries to ACA as a whole. Global has quickly grown out of the subcommittee role and can significantly benefit their member countries with the additional resources given to a standing committee. This proposal is fully supported by the chair of the member services committee.

WSO Analysis: The Board recently passed a motion to do an annual review of the Committee structure to help ensure our mix of committees aligns with fellowship needs. The Global Members subcommittee's status will be part of this review.

2021 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2021 – 16

Submitted on 10-31-20 by the WSO Global Members Sub-Committee

Issue: We propose that WSO create an International Literature Scholarship Fund to help offset literature costs for meetings in emerging countries.

Background: As ACA's we know how important the Big Red Book (BRB) and other ACA literature have been to our recovery. In countries where ACA literature is printed, such as the United States, we have come to take for granted our access to affordable literature. However, in some countries where ACA's must import literature, they have had to tolerate pricing that is up to two or even three times as high due to shipping costs and exchange rates. Additionally, sometimes the prevailing wage in emerging countries is so low that a BRB may cost as much as worker can earn in a week. Unfortunately, in some emerging countries and remote regions of more developed countries digital copies are not a viable solution due to the inaccessibility to the internet and cost of data. As we carry the message to the adult child who still suffers (Tradition 5), we don't want the newcomer who may be unsure of the program to be deterred by prohibitive literature costs. WSO instituted a "Lights on Program" that helps start one new meeting in each country, however this is not enough to support a national ACA program. Other fellowships have successfully used a scholarship fund to support emerging countries literature needs. This new fund can help start and sustain meetings on their path to becoming self-supporting, as WSO continues to explore the feasibility of printing literature in more countries.

WSO Analysis: WSO acknowledges that access to affordable literature is an ongoing challenge. To address the exorbitant cost of international shipping to most countries from the United States, WSO has initiated local printing options to help reduce these costs. There are still many countries where local printing is not yet an option. The Finance Committee supports an International Literature Scholarship Fund and, as of the time of writing this analysis, is making plans to collect targeted contributions by implementation of a software plugin. These earmarked contributions would be accounted for in a separate fund and distributions would be made upon approval by the Board. This fund would be maintained at no additional cost to WSO.

NOTE: if both this Proposal and Proposal 11 make it to the ABC agenda, the ABC Chair will entertain a motion to combine them as they are essentially the same.

2021 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2021 – 17

Submitted on 10-31-20 by the WSO Global Members Sub-Committee and MD0060 from Arnold, MD

Issue: We propose that the Annual Business Conference (ABC) grant a representative from the proposing group of each ballot item (on the agenda) 3 minutes to speak to its meaning, intent, and importance. This would occur after the initial reading of the item but before general comments begin.

Background: Historically, the rule varies as to whether authors can present their ballot items at the ABC prior to the delegates' discussion. Before each ABC, in our group consciences, as we vote on whether these ballot items should appear on the agenda, we make our best interpretation of the author's intent. Inevitably on some proposals, members disagree on the purpose or meaning of an item. Unfortunately, it is not possible for a member of the proposing group to explain their intention at each group conscience. In the past, this problem has also existed at the ABC as it was often difficult for one of the authors to be physically present. With the advent of virtual attendance this barrier has been removed. An opportunity to clarify the intent of their ballot item could be especially essential for members from emerging countries who have had to write their proposal in a language other than their own. Allowing the author of a proposal to speak for 3 minutes has the potential to lead to a more efficient and fruitful discussion among the delegates. This measure would ensure that each group has an opportunity to present their ballot item with clarity at the ABC.

WSO Analysis: Starting with the 2021 Ballot process, authors of all Proposals will be given the opportunity to present their Proposals during Town Hall meetings that will happen in January and February. Recordings of these Town Halls will be available on the service website.

Proposal 2021 – 18

Submitted on 10-31-20 by the WSO Global Members Sub-Committee

Issue: We propose that the Annual Business Conference (ABC) and the ACA World Convention (AWC) should occur annually with live online access to the International fellowship. This proposal should be included in the Operating Procedures & Planning Manual (OPPM).

Background: Currently, WSO is required to hold the ABC but it is optional whether they hold an AWC. Online access to the workshops at the AWC is vital to growing our fellowship and increasing our inclusiveness worldwide as not everyone can attend the AWC physically. This would increase awareness of the AWC and potentially increase attendance both virtually and physically. The attendance of the 2020 AWC exceeded expectations and demonstrated the need of holding the AWC annually with online access. The AWC allowed the International community to be connected to the ACA fellowship in a way that was previously not possible and has resulted in increased growth of our fellowship worldwide.

WSO Analysis: The OPPM already states that the ABC and AWC are both held annually, with the AWC occurring immediately following the ABC. It also states that the ABC be held virtually, as well as in person. The AWC is not currently mandated to have a virtual component.