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Dear Bob;

First of all, thanks so much for thinking of me when you decided to share the information you had received from Mexico. I consider it a great compliment to be thought of at a time like this. I do have some thoughts on the matter that I can share with you.

I should begin by saying that I really don't expect any action from the General Service Board, AAWS Board, or GSO management. The past pattern has been to simply mouth the worn out expression "we had a right to do this." Apparently totally oblivious to any kind of responsibility which might include such things as being mindful of the impact an action could have on the unity, the service or the recovery of large numbers of AA members. The very members who *delegated* the duties to those who are so freely running amuck with them. We should all remember these duties were, indeed, delegated—that is placed in trust—not transferred into the unqualified ownership of the trustees.

This brings me to the topic of your move to censure the General Service Board. It will probably be helpful if I start out with some definitions. That way we can both be clear on the points I wish to make. The key words I want to define are: censure, trust, and breach of trust. Since we are dealing in the legal realm, I'll use Barron's Law Dictionary (Third Edition) as the basis for definitions.

## CENSURE

"The official reprimand by a legislative or other formal body of one of its own members. – A censure is more severe than a simple reprimand. Being under censure makes one the object of disgrace."

"In ecclesiastical law, a spiritual punishment consisting in withdrawing from a baptized person, whether belonging to the clergy or the laity, a privilege which the church gives him, or in wholly expelling him from the Christian community."

## TRUST

"Property, real or personal, held by one party for the benefit of another – It implies two interests, one legal, and the other equitable."

## BREACH OF TRUST

"Violation of a trustee of a duty which equity lays upon him, whether willful and fraudulent, or done through negligence, or arising through mere oversight and forgetfulness."

## EQUITY

Most generally "justice" Historically "equity" developed as a separate body of law in

Having described these definitions, our current course of action can more easily be discussed. These words all illuminate an attitude and body of actions that we have seen at work in the recent years within the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Censure is not only the proper course of action, at this point, is long overdue. Time and time again, in the recent past, AA members have pointed to the deviation from spiritual principle that was evident in the actions of the AAWS and GS Boards. The activities of AAWS most often being active deviations, and those of the GS Board passive ones. As is clearly pointed out in the breach of trust definitions, this breach occurs either actively or passively.

I recall that in the 1992 Conference there was a motion which contained language to the effect that our boards had acted outside the accepted spiritual principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. An enormous battle then ensued just over those words—deviation from spiritual principle. Obviously, had we passed that Advisory Action we would have provided the basis for a legal ruling of a breach of trust.

We have also heard, many times over in this ongoing controversy, the phrase; "You have to trust your trusted servant." Indeed, Bill is very clear in his writing that constant interference in the activities of our trusted servants will 'demoralize' them. That is, however, only part of the picture. Quite simply stated, our trusted servant process works like this: We trust our servants until their actions prove them untrustworthy. At that point we either correct their actions, or recall and replace them.

In the first case, we place our *active* trust in a Loving God and the divine principles It has given us. We trust that our servants will be guided by those two forces—should they be receptive to these forces of good will. That is, in a simple way, an expression of respect for God and our fellow AA's.

Should that scenario fail, we must then exhibit a respect for ourselves. The effect of action on this self-respect is the necessity of recalling and replacing those who are unable or unwilling to operate according to the divine forces we subscribe to for our survival. In this instance the "**ecclesiastical law**" part of the censure process finds true meaning for us. We do not cast out those who have not served according to our principles—we merely remove their opportunity to take certain actions on our behalf.

Now on to the practical aspects of the move to censure. There ought to be, it seems to me, two aspects to your approach. First, is the statement of censure. Here it would be best to use the petition approach. A document ought to be created and signed, by the delegates from Panels 43 & 44 and members of the GSO staff (excluding management personnel). We must remember that the documents concerning the Conference point out that when items are considered which are regarding the performance of either the staff or trustees, that those under consideration not be among those voting.

In addition, the censure should contain clear and concise language which describes what will constitute an "equitable" remedy of the current situation. Past experience is extremely clear on the fact that when this is not done all that results in an illusory Tenth Step and then its back to the status quo. Perhaps the best approach to this would be to hold a conference call of all signers of the censure document.

Finally, of those who signed the censure document, a small committee ought to be formed to examine and prepare for a move to reorganize the General Service Board of

Alcoholics Anonymous. The attempt at reorganization would, of course, be the last course of action taken. However, the preparation would be a vital element in communicating both the dedication to principle felt by those involved and the intention to affect a remedy to the current course of events. If those who consider signing the censure are not willing to carry it out to this length, it would be best if they left matters as they are, since their interference will only serve to confuse the issue, aggravate the controversy, and provide no real solution.

The final question we must all answer is this: "Are our principles real? Do they actually work in providing for our survival? Is our survival really in the hands of a Loving God?" Should the answer be anything less than "yes" to all three of these questions, then our supposed principles are nothing more than a convenient facade we present to the world in order to gain their respect and admiration. Much like the elixir (read 'snake oil') salesman of the old west. Riding from town to town offering the illusion of relief while providing only for a greater despair.

My heart and spirit go with you, Bob, in this endeavor. No doubt there will be those who take exception to your actions. Others will attempt to disclaim or discredit you. The final judge of your actions, however, must be you. Is this the very best you can do for Alcoholics Anonymous? Should your answer be 'yes', you will rest easy because you will rest with your Creator. That has been my experience, and I pray it will be yours.

Yours in Love & Service  
Denny