

December 1, 1994

Dear Fellow A.A. Member,

Thank you for your letter, sorry for the delay in responding. As a group we try not to be too organized and sometimes it shows.

Our greatest concern about your position toward us is that it may be the result of misperceptions about us, or perhaps you have not actually examined one of our books, or in the extreme, that you have simply been lied to about who and what we are.

Our Statement of Purpose on the copyright page says who and what we are: an A.A. group carrying the message to the still suffering.

In the U.S. there has been no copyright on our basic text for a long time, so it is impossible to violate any copyright concerning the Big Book. The title of any book cannot be copyrighted or registered as a trademark, so it is impossible to violate either by placing it on the cover. Our copyrights cover those portions of the book that are original such as our Statement of Purpose.

The situation in Canada is not as clear. We have been asked by A.A.W.S., Inc. to not distribute our fellowship's book to Canadians. As an accommodation we currently do not sell our books to Canadians. (It should be noted that A.A.W.S., Inc. has no objection to sales to Americans in the United States.) We find the very idea of restraining this, or any group, from carrying the message to Canadians, or, whenever anyone, anywhere, asks for it, is repugnant. We have gone along with this request, for now, because others used the idea of sales to Canadians to create controversy. We will continue to do what we can to preserve unity.

Now about profits. We want to make this very clear, there are none. IWS was started to make our text available to all by eliminating the big mark ups A.A.W.S. Inc. puts on the Big Book that the General Service Board has found to be a violation of the Traditions (though it continues). The prices charged by IWS speak for themselves. IWS makes NO profit.

IWS has no employees, no offices, no prudent reserve, nobody in the group makes money in any way from the sale of books or anything else. Any surplus of money is used to make the next printing less expensive. Our little book is now sold for less than \$.70 per book. The price has been reduced 5 times in 2 years.

More recently, we have heard that our action could divert money from A.A.W.S., Inc.; Tradition 7 is quite clear that we are to be self supporting through our own contributions. The General Service Conference has state that book profits are NOT voluntary contributions and are NOT to be used to support A.A. The General Service Board has repeatedly asked the General Service Office to sell its books at cost (see S130 of the Service Manual). Any attempt to state that our actions are financially harmful to A.A., in any way, is in error.

We hope this answers your questions, but if not, we have included questions and answers about our group that were sent to your Delegate, Trustees, and Area Chairpersons in March.

Whether you agree with us or not at this point, we can assure you that our intentions are the same as yours; to carry the message and follow the Traditions.

We pray that someday you will join with us in seeing to it that no newcomer leaves without a Big Book and that our book will be next to every bed in the prisons and other institutions housing the suffering alcoholic.

Yours in love and service

The IWS Group of Alcoholics Anonymous