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November 11, 2017

To: SENY AREA 49

Motion from District 404: We are seeking the support of our Area in asking the Conference for a pamphlet for atheist & agnostic members.

Is there a need?

Even as far back as 1976, a subcommittee of the Trustees' Literature Committee concluded that "this pamphlet is vitally needed to carry the message to both newcomers and old timers." Their reasons included:

- "The number of non-believers in the program, or who need the A.A. program but are discouraged by its theism, may be more substantial than is probably realized."
- "The chapter 'To The Agnostic' in the Big Book is fine as a start but more material is needed to assure non-believers that they are not merely deviants, but full, participating members in the A.A. Fellowship without qualification."
- "This pamphlet will probably also help the God believer in A.A. to understand his/her own spiritual values better, as well as to develop tolerance and understanding of many newcomers to A.A."

Today, the experience of atheist & agnostic members in District 404 confirms these reasons are as important today as they were over 40 years ago. In the United Kingdom, this need has already been recognized and addressed – recently their General Service Conference created a pamphlet called "*The God Word: Agnostics and Atheists in AA*". We're looking for the same action here in the US & Canada.

Am I voting on whether my group wants or needs this pamphlet?

No, that will be a decision for each group to make later. There are over 50 pamphlets now to choose from, and not every group needs or wants them all. You're being asked to support the groups and members who do need this, even if you and your group are not among them.

Please turn page over

Doesn't "Pathways To Spirituality" address this need?

Five years ago the Conference Literature Committee went to work on an pamphlet for atheists & agnostics, gathering approximately 200 stories. A few small excerpts were eventually included in a 2014 pamphlet "*Many Paths to Spirituality*". It has received mixed reviews from all corners of AA and it doesn't fulfill its original intent. It's not something you're likely to find at any of the agnostic or secular groups in NYC.

We have created all sorts of "3rd Tradition literature", as our Delegate John W. has put it. These are pamphlets written by and for minority groups to welcome newcomers and help educate our fellowship at large:

- "*Too Young?*", "*A Message to Teenagers*", and "*Young People in A.A.*"
- "*A.A. for the Older Alcoholic—Never Too Late*"
- "*A.A. for the Woman*"
- "*A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic*"
- "*A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic*"
- "*A.A. for the Native North American*"
- "*A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs*"

While we don't expect this pamphlet to be a best-seller, for those for whom it matters, it matters a lot. To hear from AAs with the same experience that AA is always inclusive, never exclusive is so important – regardless of what we do or do not believe.

What would the next steps be if this is passed?

If the Literature Committee agrees with us, they may recommend to the Conference as a whole to create a brand new pamphlet, or adapt the pamphlet already approved by the United Kingdom General Service Conference. It will then require two-thirds of the US & Canada General Service Conference to approve their recommendation.

A similar motion has already been passed and submitted to the Conference by District 10 of Area 83 (South-Central Toronto), and the Trustees Literature Committee has decided to forward this onto the Conference Literature Committee to be considered this year. While this will get discussed at the Conference even if this motion fails, if the request comes from Area 49 as well, it will likely be given weightier consideration. If this motion fails, District 404 will still be submitting the request in keeping with our conscience.