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HOW many Basic Texts??????

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Why are there seven editions (1) of our Basic Text?

Was it necessary to create seven editions of our Basic Text? Well, yes and no. "Yes and no," you say, "that doesn't make any sense." You're right, it doesn't. To understand that "yes and no" answer, we must look at the history of how and why the Text was changed, starting with the First Edition.

The first fellowship written and group conscience approved Basic Text was released for a short time (1983), then quickly recalled when it was discovered that individuals at the World Service Office had made unauthorized and unapproved changes to the 4th and 9th Traditions text. (2) Clearly, the unauthorized version could not be further distributed, and after the Fellowship demanded that the correct version be printed and distributed, the Second Edition was published immediately. It's worth noting that most informed members today recognize that the 2nd edition is/was the only Basic Text that was group conscience developed and approved.

Not to be deterred, the "powers that be" at the WSO and WSC still felt threatened by the clear understanding in our Traditions that demand that N.A. groups have "the power" in N.A. Service. (3)

Without sending their editing back to the groups in the standard

way (distribution to all registered N.A. groups with ample time to deliberate, pray and make decisions), the WSO deleted, through a manipulation of accepted voting procedures of the WSC, deleted clear language defining the 4th and 9th traditions. It was reported by the WSO that the groups had responded (and apparently really quickly) in favor of the deletions, and produced the 3rd Edition. What wasn't reported by the WSO that many groups and members of NA left the fellowship at that point, believing the WSC had violated, and would continue to violate the Traditions.

In 1985, the World Service Board of Trustees, without any notice to the fellowship, formed a closed "literature committee" off limits to fellowship input, which ultimately manufactured the "Little White Book, newly revised." This was offered to the fellowship for approval only, with no review and input phase. But approve it the fellowship did, and the Little White Book changes were applied to the Basic Text. Thus was born the Third Edition, Revised. (See how errors in that work threaten recovery even today. (4))

Around that time, the WSO Board realized that the Text was a cash cow. The book was sold for a high price, higher even than was originally agreed to by conference participants. Looking for ways to increase profits, they contracted with the Hazelden Foundation, the largest supplier of treatment-related material, to sell the book. Unfortunately, Hazelden did not like our grammar and content. They did not like the 'addict to addict' context that we can relate to, and wanted the book edited to **their** perception of a "professional standard," including **their** perceptions of the treatment industry.

So the closed World Lit Committee and the WSO asked the fellowship for an okay to edit the Basic Text once again, making "grammatical changes" without distorting the meaning. (just like the "non-substantive" changes they are asking for in the 2012 CAR). (5) Unfortunately, the professional writer they hired without a group conscience decision from the fellowship went much further than the WSC motion directed. The resulting 4th edition was clearly written for other professionals, and changed the meaning of much of the clearly understandable language we addicts use. Additionally, before the re-written 4th edition was even approved by the fellowship, the WSO had

accepted funding from Hazelden for it, and thousands of copies were published and distributed widely.

Clearly, the 4th Edition should have never been written, much less re-written by professionals without the fellowship's approval. The fellowship certainly felt that way and demanded that it immediately be recalled. In yet another unprecedented move by the manipulation of conference procedure, the WSC combined the 3rd Revised and 4th Edition, giving birth to the 5th edition, a compromise that satisfied Hazelden. The kicker is the fact that book distributors like Hazelden pay a wholesale price for our literature – far less than you and I, or our Home Groups, are required to pay. Hazelden then turns around and sells it for a profit! It's corporate money, property, and prestige in action – a walking, talking 6th Tradition violation.

The 5th edition stayed with us for quite a while. Fast forward about five years, around the same time that World Services informed the fellowship there were significant “fund flow” problems, they suggested a 6th edition, changing only the stories in the second half of the book. However, once again, this idea did not come as a request from the fellowship. Nor was it ever suggested (or dreamed of) by the fellowship that when new versions of the Basic Text come out, that suddenly older versions would become unacceptable/“non-approved” literature. (Not a bad marketing technique to REALLY amp up the sale of new versions.)

The fellowship was allowed to vote on what stories would be put in the 6th edition...BUT we were not asked to decide on which stories were taken out. One again, that kind of decision fell to those who believe they know better and had made themselves more powerful than Group Conscience.

We, in our programs of recovery, take inventories then change our behavior to support our recovery. Perhaps a clear view of a service inventory should include some simple adjustments to our literature policy. An appropriate action by the RD's at WSC 2012 would be to **deny the request for unbridled editing rights to be given to the WB**. Other appropriate actions might include that whatever version of the Basic Text a member bought first be declared to be “Approved NA Literature” for that member.