

Working Draft Concepts of Service Defined:

Concept #1:

The ultimate responsibility and authority for SIA world services belongs to the collective conscience of our whole fellowship. Concept One reflects Tradition Two in that, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” Instead, the collective conscience of our groups is the final authority. Our leaders have designated authority only. At this time, polling individual groups is the method through which decisions and changes can be made. As the World Service Conference (WSC) becomes more fully developed, delegated group representatives can, through the WSC, be entrusted to reflect the voice of the group they represent. As members share in the responsibility of SIA service, they will elect trusted servants to represent them.

Concept #2:

The World Service Conference of SIA and its service arms have become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and effective conscience of SIA as a whole. Concept Two emphasizes that the groups, through the WSC, are a strong and separate authority from the World Service Office (WSO). This is for the protection of SIA as a whole. Concept Two ensures that the representative body of the SIA membership (the WSC) will endure regardless of the condition, stability, or strength of the WSO. The SIA body needs two strong arms to continue its mission: The WSO and the WSC. As a unique and separate entity from the WSO, the WSC through its structure and service arms will, once it is fully operational, reflect the representative voice of the SIA membership. The World Service Conference possesses the delegated responsibility and authority given to it by the groups so that the voices of the individual groups of SIA can be heard.

Concept #3:

The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.

Concept Three accepts that delegated trusted servant representing a group can be entrusted to make decisions at the WSC level. If he/she could not, the group representative would simply be a “messenger” and unable to engage in effective discussion. This concept means that a representative of a group is familiar with his/her group’s collective conscience and the SIA Traditions and, thus, will duly reflect the intent of the group he/she represents. Concept Three expresses that the groups can trust that their representatives in service, within the framework of their delegated authority, can decide how to represent their groups responsibly with the guidance of a loving Higher Power. This sort of leadership discretion is the essence of the “right of decision.” Whereas the Board of Trustees plays a leadership role in legal and administrative matters, the WSC and its delegated representatives is entrusted with a leadership role in matters of policy, principles, and SIA program procedures.

Concept #4:

Participation is the key to harmony.

It is important for service leaders to adjust their pace, and incorporate members who are reticent to participate, due to perceived rejections, whether voiced or unvoiced. No one should feel left out. There should never be a sense of entitlement, due to length of service and/or participation in SIA, and every effort should be made to draw in each member's voice. Artificial class hierarchies should not be imposed on the membership due to arbitrary distinctions. It is a spiritual right to all members to feel like they belong. This Concept suggests that there must be a balance between authority and responsibility. At the WSC that balance is represented inasmuch as the WSO and the Board of Trustees have a voice as do the designated group representatives to the WSC. The Conference Committees, also, should reflect a representative balance. Every effort should be made to have the WSC Committees well-represented by SIA members. However, Conference Committees do not have a vote at the WSC, except in matters of procedure that do not directly affect groups, and they do not have the authority to vote upon important SIA matters that reflect the SIA membership at large either at the WSC or during the calendar year. They serve, through informed discussions and meetings throughout the year, the valuable purpose of carrying out the groups' directives, taken from the results of group polls, and proposing good practices and helpful changes at the WSC.

Concept#5:

The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.

Being heard is extremely important for survivors. Therefore, it is important when doing service work, to repeat back what the minority opinion is, and allow time for productive, shame---free dialogue to occur. Leaders need to exercise special care to not indirectly punish members for having minority opinions, and potentially slowing a process down. This is a strengthening and protective Concept that helps members to reflect on decision-making, thus preventing unwise decisions from occurring. SIA's defense against hasty and uninformed decisions is dependent upon its hearing the minority voice. Each individual has the right to submit a written appeal regarding any decision, and the recipient entity of the appeal is obligated to consider the appeal.

Considering Concepts 6, 7, and 8: The SIA WSO Leadership Concepts

The Concept Structure Committee has been offering explanations of the Proposed Concepts of Service of SIA in each newsletter. Below are definitions of Concepts 6, 7, and 8. These three concepts define the separate role of the World Service Office (WSO) and support its full authority and that of its Board of Trustees to manage the WSO as a whole, in a financially and legally sound manner, while upholding the SIA Traditions.

Concept 6: The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the SIA Board of Trustees: Just as the membership entrusts its delegated representatives with the "Right of Decision" (Concept 3) at the World Service

Conference (WSC), the WSC must allow the WSO and its Trustees necessary authority in all matters legal, administrative, and financial which affect the daily running of the WSO in its role as the public face of SIA and as the guardian of its Traditions. As the responsibility of the WSO and its Board of Trustees encompasses many areas, they must be given correspondingly sufficient authority to prudently manage the WSO and acquire whatever resources necessary and financially feasible to run the day-to-day operations of the WSO.

Concept 7: Based on our Charter and Bylaws, the Board of Trustees has legal rights while the rights of the Conference are Traditional. This Concept actually gives equal or superior authority to the WSC, which is made up of the delegated representatives of the groups, over all matters not directly legal and administrative, while both entities are bound to uphold the Traditions of SIA. As the collective conscience of the SIA groups and its members, the WSC has a broad range of authority. Although the WSC entrusts administrative authority to the WSO as described in Concept 6, the WSC as the representative body of the groups has all other powers, under the auspices of the SIA Traditions.

Concept 8: The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of the SIA World Service Office to its Director and its executive committees. This Concept means that the SIA Board of Trustees entrusts the World Service Office, its Director, its future executive committees, and its service workers to carry on the daily routine operations of the WSO and to make decisions necessary for the daily routine management of the WSO. The WSO is charged with sound financial management and may, for informational purposes, prepare a financial report to present at one of the following kinds of meetings: the annual WSC or an Open meeting of the SIA Board of Trustees. The Open SIA Board of Trustees meeting could be held either in conjunction with the WSC, or at a separately announced time. This Concept allows for the formation of World Service Office executive committees that are separate in function from the WSC committees, even though they may have similar names (such as the WSC Finance Committee and the WSO Board of Trustees Finance Committee). The purpose of any future WSO executive committees would be to work with the SIA Director regarding the sound management of SIA as a whole. Any future WSO executive committees would be responsible, under the auspices of the SIA Director, for the day-to-day management of the WSO. The WSC committees may offer advice and suggestions, but they do not make decisions about the routine management of the World Service Office

Reported by the Conference Structure Committee

Concept 9: Good personal leadership at all service levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

We are all reminded that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the program. When we are able to remove our own agenda from a service program, and listen to all members' opinions, service is less of a burden. Leadership in SIA means not assuming all the responsibility for a service function. Sharing the responsibilities, and soliciting opinions, even negative ones, strengthens recovery and the fellowship. While the Board of Trustees assumes primary leadership, it should never advocate for decisions that go against SIA Traditions. While Trustees take on the example for leadership, it is important to keep the following in mind. Most survivors of childhood incest have developed maladaptive survival techniques that were useful when they were young. Three characteristics of survivors that can come in the way of being good leaders are perseverance, quickly reacting as an individual, and caretaking. These characteristics by themselves are not necessarily bad. Being able to persevere through difficult circumstances is admirable, and something to celebrate. But persevering in a disagreement with another survivor, without being able to back down or back away to see a different point of view, can be counterproductive. Reacting quickly to get out of a bad situation, and using clever problem-solving techniques to quickly reach a goal are admirable qualities as well. However, when the goal is not clear, or when one goal could interfere with a bigger picture, rapidly trying to achieve one goal above all others, without obtaining consent of others in the group can actually be counter-productive. The backtracking and damage control involved to correct possible mistakes can cause extra work to be done. Mistakes are always possible when all view points are not considered. See Concept 5, the protective Concept for the fellowship. Lastly, being a caretaker to others, and understanding people's needs, can be quite useful in a crisis. But trying to predict what other survivors will need in a situation, without taking the time to poll the other survivors and ask them about their perceptions, can be counter-productive. It is important to understand that just as freedom of choice was taken from many survivors at a young age, survivors can be susceptible to taking choices away from other survivors, thus preventing a growth process of making decisions, even potentially harmful ones. A good leader recognizes the need for all people to be able to think for themselves, and does not impose a particular viewpoint on other survivors.

Concept 10: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

Clearly defined authority gives trusted servants the freedom to make decisions, and delegate authority when necessary. Personal clashes can be avoided through clear communication as to which committee, person, or governing body is responsible for what task. As long as the SIA Traditions and Concepts are followed, and no group, individual or entity threatens the safety, viability, and existence of SIA, ultimate authority exists in SIA at various levels. It first rests in groups through their Group Consciences; next, at the WSC level through delegated representatives with the Right of Decision; then, at the WSO level through the Board of Trustees who guard the Traditions and protect SIA's existence; and, finally, at the WSO level through SIA's

Director, who sees to the management of the WSO and the Worldwide perception of SIA.

Concept 11: The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.

At the World Service level, new committees will be created and defined as necessary. It is important, following Concepts 6 and 10, for the Committee work to never interfere with the day-to-day responsibilities of the staff members. It is also important for all Committee Chairpersons to be familiar with the SIA Traditions and Concepts and follow them in every way. The workings and make-up of this set of Committees are not to be confused with that of the WSC Committees, although their duties can, at times, require input from each other. In accordance with Concept 10, careful steps must be taken to ensure that the two entities can share information as necessary, and work side-by-side, with all authority and responsibility clearly defined.

12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of SIA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Reaching unanimity when making decisions, and allowing time for discussion, relate to Concept 4, "Participation is the key to harmony." When time is allowed for different opinions to be voiced, the fellowship can only become stronger. Time is a necessary component for this principle to work. We must never attempt to rush through decisions. We also must never make decisions that can risk the long-term survival of the fellowship, such as not keeping a prudent reserve, or by stockpiling great sums of money in the amassment of power. Provided that the rest of the SIA Concepts and the SIA Traditions are followed, no Conference actions should result in inciting public controversy, nor should the Conference attempt to perform acts of government. By following Concept 5 carefully, in terms of respecting minority opinions, and by defining service structures well, no member will be placed in a position of unqualified authority over other members. Lastly, by meeting regularly, and by soliciting continued group representation, the Conference can work towards remaining democratic in thought and action.