

Concept Six

The Annual Meeting of the board and delegates recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most International service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Annual Meeting, acting as the International Service Organization.

The first five Concepts of COSA give us clear guidance about how individuals and groups may participate in the process of managing COSA's business. Concept One states that "final authority for COSA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship." Concepts Two through Five guide our decision-making process, including the way we manage differences of opinion. A shift occurs as Concept Six places responsibility for **managing the overarching** business of the **entire international** fellowship squarely on the shoulders of the board members. While our primary purpose of carrying the message to those who still suffer is spiritual in nature, accomplishing that purpose requires tangible human efforts. Concept Six tells us that the responsibility for those efforts lies with the International Service Organization (ISO) board.

In Concept Six, "chief initiative" refers to a primary and important right to initiate action. "Active responsibility" denotes an accountability or duty that is characterized by action rather than by contemplation. We are reminded here that the ISO board is charged with overseeing the practical implementation of most service-related matters. Those matters include but are not limited to literature development, web services, management of the operating funds, and public communication.

Once each year, COSA delegates gather together with the ISO board for the Annual Delegate Meeting. This meeting provides an opportunity for discussion, collaboration, and voting which establishes a group conscience on issues that affect the worldwide fellowship. In the months preceding the Annual Delegate Meeting, delegates each discern their home meeting's group conscience regarding the business items on which votes will be taken. After the delegate meeting, the ISO board members continue to

meet monthly and communicate frequently, maintaining the momentum required to carry out the plans that were established during the meeting with the delegates. As a smaller group, the board is able to more quickly take action and make swift progress toward the fellowship's goals than a larger group would be.

It is important for us to understand that Concept Six does not give the ISO board ultimate authority over the fellowship or its daily business. It simply states that when the time comes for action to be taken regarding matters of worldwide service, the board is responsible for doing so. They are not entirely responsible for making the decisions that determine what that action should be. Once the delegates who represent the whole fellowship have reached consensus with the board on a desired plan of action, they wisely turn over the implementation of that plan to the board. The board members are then accountable to the fellowship for exercising their chief initiative and putting plans into action. In recent times, there has been increased communication during the year between the board and the delegates and their groups due to weekly fellowship emails, video conferencing, and a greater reliance on electronic communication. In this way, feedback can be exchanged during the year when necessary.

The first word of Step One is "We" because this is a program based on working together, interdependently striving to accomplish our primary purpose through various actions. The services provided through the board's activities are the very components that enable our local groups and meetings to be there when we need them: online meeting facilities, literature, the COSA website, and more. Our inverted triangle of leadership puts the many individual voices of COSA members around the world at the top, and the ISO board at the bottom, as our servant leaders charged with accomplishing the plans of the fellowship.

We see Concept Six at work all around us in healthy group dynamics. Some examples are: When the fellowship votes to approve new literature, the publication of that

literature is facilitated by a small committee under the direction of a board member. Once a local meeting decides through group conscience to purchase medallions or literature, responsibility for placing the order and bringing the materials to the meeting is given to just one or two people. Large corporations are often run by small boards which take direction from proxy-holders who represent their stockholders. A family may work together to decide on their next vacation destination, but the arrangements are made by just one or two people who are authorized to act on everyone's behalf. In most cases, practical action can be accomplished more quickly by a small, nimble group than by a large one.

Ultimately, Concept Six is a reflection of our willingness to trust the process and turn over control of outcomes to our Higher Power. COSA as a whole makes decisions through our network of individuals, local meetings, Intergroups, delegates, and board members. When it comes to taking decisive action toward practical results around our world service matters, we turn to the ISO board for initiative and accountability.