

1 **Concept Seven**

2 ***The Charter and Bylaws of the International Service Board are legal instruments,***
3 ***empowering the trustees to manage and conduct international service affairs. The***
4 ***Annual Meeting Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the COSA***
5 ***purse for final effectiveness.***
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7 Our COSA leaders are trusted servants who do not govern the fellowship, but they do need to
8 be empowered to lead, guide, and grow the organization. Concept Seven reminds us to avoid
9 the creation of a single seat of power in our fellowship and our lives, opting instead for balance
10 between different types and sources of power. We are also encouraged to remember the
11 wisdom of trust, respect, and cooperation between groups.

12 COSA is registered as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of
13 Kentucky, USA. Articles of Incorporation were submitted in place of a charter during the
14 incorporation process in 1993; there is no charter on record. The *Bylaws of the International*
15 *Service Organization of COSA, Inc.*, (ISO) were drafted into existence at the time of COSA's
16 incorporation as a nonprofit organization. They are available on the COSA website for anyone
17 who would like to gain a more thorough understanding of how the business of the fellowship is
18 managed. The bylaws are a physical document which gives the ISO board legal authority over
19 matters related to both the fellowship's business and its service matters.

20 The Annual Meeting of the board and delegates, known as the Annual Delegate Meeting, does
21 not have a written charter on record. The delegates are empowered simply by the fact that they
22 are elected by their groups to represent the collective voice of the fellowship and to convey the
23 will of the fellowship to the ISO board at the annual meeting. The traditional representation of
24 the COSA groups by their delegates at the annual meeting effectively grants the delegates
25 sufficient power to balance the legal rights of the ISO board. In representing the many COSA
26 groups, the delegates also represent the financial power of the donations put forth by those
27 groups. In place of a charter, the annual meeting relies on a spirit of cooperation and a quest for
28 unity that are reflected in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

29 Concept Seven helps to ensure that an effective balance of power exists between the board and
30 the delegates. It lays the foundation for the two groups to work together without fear of being
31 overruled or disregarded by the other. The board's legal right to veto or overturn any
32 suggestions or decisions made by the delegates reminds the delegates to make thoughtful,
33 reasonable requests and to act only in the best interests of the groups they serve. The
34 traditional influence of the delegates, along with their power to direct the fellowship's donations

35 toward or away from certain projects, encourages the board to support the delegates whenever
36 they reasonably can. Both the board and the delegates do their best work for the fellowship
37 when they respect each other's power and trust each other to use that power for the benefit of
38 those they serve.

39 Our personal and professional lives may benefit from our understanding of Concept Seven as
40 well. We all have limitations in our abilities and in our authority in any given situation, and we will
41 likely find ourselves working with other people from time to time. If we approach those situations
42 with respect for our own objectives as well as for the objectives of the other people, we may
43 more easily see how we can help each other. This may lead us to trust others to work on our
44 behalf and encourage us to work on their behalf. Once we have trust and respect, a sense of
45 shared commitment to each other's growth and accomplishment can develop. In such
46 situations, we are aware that both parties have the power to build up or tear down the bonds
47 that join them. Leveraging the balance of power between groups and people almost always
48 results in strong walls that surround them and bind them together instead of walls that divide
49 them.

50 It is inevitable that we will encounter many sources of power and authority in the world. When
51 we strive to build trust and respect between those sources of power, we cultivate balance as
52 well. The balance exemplified by Concept Seven creates a collaborative environment in which
53 each side can safely exercise its influence without the need to assert its ultimate authority over
54 the other.