

MEMORANDUM

TO: Conference Members
FROM: Executive Director
DATE: August 6, 2008
RE: Question regarding Al-Anon Declaration and A.A. Responsibility Statement

The WSO was asked at the 2006 WSC to send a copy of questions it receives from Conference members and our responses to all Conference members so that they can share leadership by responding to recurring questions in their Areas. The WSO believes that the following question and our response might be one of those topics.

Question: The Al-Anon Declaration (“*Let It Begin with Me* When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and—*Let It Begin with Me*”) seems to closely parallel A.A.’s Responsibility Statement (“I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”). Was this intentional or is there some other reason why the statements seem to be nearly the same in structure and form?

The similarity between the Al-Anon Declaration and A.A.’s Responsibility Statement appears to have been intentional. Here are the facts regarding the Declaration’s origin:

The November 9, 1973 minutes of the International Convention Committee for Al-Anon/Alateen activities in the 1975 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon/Alateen participation stated the following:

“Henrietta told the Committee of a call she received from AA telling how impressed they are with our proposed choice of theme—‘Let It Begin With Me.’ They might even want to adopt it as the overall Convention theme.”

The Convention Committee for Al-Anon/Alateen activities then recommended that this theme be used as a declaration. The recommendation was brought to the Policy Committee in January 1974. In April 1974, the Policy Committee reported to the World Service Conference that: “The slogan ‘Let It Begin With Me’ is to be worked into a declaration, similar to AA’s ‘I Am Responsible,’ and it is to be printed in a small leaflet to be introduced at the 1974 World Service Conference.”

The theme chosen for the 1974 World Service Conference was “LET IT BEGIN WITH ME.” At the opening dinner, Conference Chairperson Penny B. stated, “You also have a small card at your place. This is the Declaration built on the theme of our Conference. Let us repeat it together: “When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen be there, and LET IT BEGIN WITH ME.”

In 1975, the Conference was asked to approve decisions of the Policy Committee. These did not appear as a Conference motion. The *1975 Conference Summary* lists the Policy decisions, as revised by the Conference, and states that they were approved as amended. Among them was the following from the March 19, 1974 Policy Committee meeting:

“The following was adopted as Al-Anon’s declaration: ‘LET IT BEGIN WITH ME—When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there and LET IT BEGIN WITH ME.’