

**Notice to the RCA Fellowship:
Topics to be Considered at the 2010 Annual Business Meeting
on Friday, July 23, 2010 in Niagara Falls, Canada**

Reminder:

The RCA World Service Organization's 2010 Annual Business Meeting:

When;

Friday, July 23, 2010, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
The Friday of the Annual Convention Weekend

Where:

Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre
7021 Stanley Avenue
Niagara Falls. Canada L2G 7B7

**Notice Prepared By:
RCA-WSO Structure Committee**

April 22, 2010

Table of Contents

<i>Item</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Notice of annual business meeting topics.	1
2. Exact wording of each proposal to be provided later.. . . .	1
3. Request that each group review the topics.. . . .	1
4. Important notice about the new RCA delegate forum.	1
5. The burden imposed on member groups by this notice.	1
6. Organization details are of little interest to many in the Fellowship;.	2
Information on the Four Topics on the Agenda for the 2010 Annual Business Meeting.. . . .	2
Category I: Proposed Changes to the Bylaws:.	2
Topic 1. Authorizing participation at the RCA convention by teleconference or equivalent method.	2
Motion.	2
Board’s rationale.	2
Structure Committee comments on the topic one proposal.	3
Topic 2. Proposal to eliminate the use of by-mail voting at the annual business meeting.. . . .	3
Motion.	3
Board’s rationale.	5
Structure Committee comments on the topic two proposal.	7
Category II: Topics for approval by Fellowship that do not involve changes to the bylaws.	12

Topic 3.	The 1996 version of the third edition of the Blue Book should maintained and be made available to all who request it..	12
	Motion.	12
	The member’s rationale.	12
	Structure Committee comments on the topic three proposal.	12
Topic 4.	Request that the Board of Trustees include in the Policies and Procedures manual certain provisions related to committees and committee service...	12
	Motion.	12
	The member’s rationale.	13
	Structure Committee comments on the topic four proposal.	13

April 22, 2010

**Notice to the RCA Fellowship:
Topics to be Considered at the 2010 Annual Business Meeting
on Friday, July 23, 2010 in Niagara Falls, Canada**

1. Notice of annual business meeting topics: Notice is hereby provided to the RCA Fellowship of matters that will be considered at the RCA WSO annual business meeting on July 23, 2010. This notice of the topics to be considered is provided in order to meet the 90-day notice requirement of the bylaws so that by-mail voting will be permitted as to these topics.

2. Exact wording of each proposal to be provided later: The RCA WSO is incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the state of Missouri. Applicable Missouri law requires that notice of proposed bylaw changes be provided to the Fellowship within a window of 30 to 60 days prior to the annual business meeting. To comply with the notice requirements of the applicable Missouri law, after May 24, 2010 but before June 23, 2010, notice will be provided to the Fellowship of the final, specific wording of each proposal to be considered at the business meeting. After this second notice, ballots will be provided to those RCA member groups whose delegate couples can not attend the business meeting and who wish to submit by-mail votes on the matters to be considered.

3. Request that each group review the topics: Each member group is asked to review the topics that are listed in this notice and to begin the process of determining the position, if any, that your group may wish to take on these matters. The primary purpose of the bylaw amendments adopted at the 2006 convention in Boston was to ensure that decisions made at the annual business meeting would be more reflective of the collective group conscience of the entire Fellowship, and not just be based on the views of those RCA members in attendance at the business meeting.

4. Important Notice About the New RCA Delegate Forum: In an effort to provide for the exchange of more information within the Fellowship on the topics to be considered at the 2010 annual business meeting, the Board of Trustees has set up an RCA Delegate Forum. The intent is to provide for a more thorough exchange of information on the merits, both pro and con, of each of the proposals to be considered at the business meeting. The board and the committee are hopeful that RCA members and delegates will post their thoughts regarding each proposal on the forum. We all hope that the use of the forum will enhance our efforts “to seek the collective group conscience of the entire membership.” For access to the RCA Delegate Forum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/search?query=RCA+delegate> Please try out the forum so that its utility can be assessed. Your comments on any suggested improvements are also welcomed.

5. The burden imposed on member groups: While it is recognized that there are many demands on the time of RCA members and that priority must be given to continued individual and couple recovery, each member group is requested, **if you are at all able**, to review these topics and to begin the process of determining the position your group wishes to take with respect to each matter listed in this notice. **Thereby you will help ensure that actions taken at the annual business meeting will truly reflect the collective group conscience of the Fellowship.**

6. Organization details may be of little interest to many in the Fellowship; It is recognized that some of these matters involve organizational details that may be of little interest to many RCA members and groups whose primary focus is appropriately on individual and couple recovery. But these details are often important to the efficient and effective operation of the RCA WSO as it attempts to provide necessary support to the Fellowship. If your group is uncertain as to the meaning and significance of any of the topics listed in this notice, your group might consider seeking advice from long-time and trusted members of RCA as to their views on the merits of the various topics listed in this notice.

Information on the Four Topics on the Agenda for the 2010 Annual Business Meeting.

Category I: Proposed Changes to the Bylaws

The following two proposed amendments to the bylaws have been submitted by the Board of Trustees for consideration at the 2010 annual business meeting. For adoption bylaw amendments require a 75% majority of the vote of those voting “yes” and “no.”

Topic 1: Authorizing Participation at the RCA Convention By Teleconference or Equivalent Method.

This proposed amendment submitted by the Board of Trustees involves the addition of a new provision to the bylaws. If adopted, this provision would be in effect for the RCA convention in 2011.

Motion:

Move to amend the bylaws to add the following new section:

3.6.1.4 Meetings by Teleconference or Equivalent Method. The Delegate Couples are authorized to meet by teleconference or video-conference or by any other technical means that allows the Delegate Couples in attendance at the R.C.A.C..to hear each other at the same time.

The Board’s Rationale:

It is important that RCA be governed by an informed group conscience of its member groups. Allowing electronic participation at the R.C.A.C. will help member groups and delegate couples with limited finances to be fully represented at the annual business meeting without having to incur travel expenses. It is hoped that this will increase the number of member groups represented at the R.C.A.C. Groups are still encouraged to send delegate couples to the annual meeting site whenever feasible.

Comments of the Structure Committee on Topic 1:

The Structure Committee recommends that this amendment be adopted by a vote of five in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions,

Five members of the Structure Committee support the following statement:

The Structure Committee fully supports this proposal and applauds the efforts of the Board of Trustees to explore the feasibility of remote, electronic participation, participation that meets the suggested requirement stated in Robert's Rules of Order that "all participants be able to hear each other at the same time."

But, the committee offers a note of caution: the feasibility of whatever means of remote, electronic participation is chosen must be carefully and thoroughly demonstrated prior to its use at an important event such as the annual business meeting. As part of this feasibility assessment, all associated costs should be carefully considered. Additionally, careful attention must be given to the details of efficient meeting procedures. There are many details that must be considered.

The committee believes that it is vital to provide the maximum opportunity for all member groups to participate in the Fellowship's decision-making process. Careful evaluation and demonstration of the feasibility of remote electronic participation is one of the steps that should be taken towards the goal of providing the maximum, reasonable opportunity to participate.

Topic 2: Proposal to Eliminate the Use of By-Mail Voting at the Annual Business Meeting.

This proposed amendment submitted by the Board of Trustees involves modification to existing provisions of the bylaws. If adopted, this provision would be in effect for the RCA convention in 2011.

Motion:

Move that the bylaws be amended to not allow by-mail voting at the RCA convention.

1. The current bylaw wording of those sections to be amended is as follows:

3.6 Collective Group Conscience of the Membership. To ensure that the services provided by the W.S.O. are guided by the collective group conscience of the entire membership, the Delegate Couple for each Member Group shall have one vote on each matter considered at the annual R.C.A. convention (R.C.A.C.). (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1 Delegate Couple. Each Member Group shall select from the member couples of the group, a Delegate Couple, to represent the group at the R.C.A.C. and to vote for the group on all matters considered at the R.C.A.C. (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1.1 Member-Group Voting-by-Mail. The Delegate Couple for each Member Group may vote by mail for those matters (as decided by R.C.A.C. or by the board) for which adequate prior notice (minimum of 90 days) and information is provided to the Member Groups. (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1.2 Member-Group Voting-by-Proxy. If a Member Group will not have a Delegate Couple attending the R.C.A.C., that Member Group may vote by proxy at the R.C.A.C. by designating a Delegate Couple from another Member Group to represent it at the R.C.A.C. A proxy designation may be for all of the matters considered at the convention or it may be limited to specific matters to be considered at the convention. If a Member Group will not have a Delegate Couple attending the R.C.A.C., that Member Group may vote both by mail, on those matters for which by mail voting is permitted, and by proxy, on those matters for which voting by mail is not available. No delegate couple shall hold more than one proxy. (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1.3 Procedures for Voting by Member Groups. It shall be the responsibility of the Group Contact Couple (GCC) of each Member Group to notify the Board of Trustees of the Delegate Couple representing the Member Group or, in the alternative, of the designation of the Delegate Couple representing the group by proxy if the group chooses that option. The delegate couple shall also be responsible for the group's submission of any votes by mail when the group elects to vote by that means when voting-by-mail is available. The Board of Trustees shall establish the deadlines for initial and modified designations by each Member Group and shall establish necessary procedures and forms required to implement delegate voting, by-mail voting, and proxy voting. Since the fundamental objective is to seek the collective group conscience of the entire membership, the Board of Trustees shall provide for voting-by-mail to the extent feasible and insure adequate time for an informed group conscience and full discussion. (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

2. The bylaws as amended by this proposal would read as follows with additions shown in bold italics and deletions shown by cross-out. These are no changes proposed to sections 3.6 and 3.61 which are included here for completeness.

3.6 Collective Group Conscience of the Membership. To ensure that the services provided by the W.S.O. are guided by the collective group conscience of the entire membership, the Delegate Couple for each Member Group shall have one vote on each matter considered at the annual R.C.A. convention (R.C.A.C.). (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1 Delegate Couple. Each Member Group shall select from the member couples of the group, a Delegate Couple, to represent the group at the R.C.A.C. and to vote for the group on all matters considered at the R.C.A.C. (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1.1 Member-Group Voting-by-Mail. The Delegate Couple for each Member Group may vote by mail for those matters (as decided by R.C.A.C. or by the board) for which adequate prior notice (minimum of 90 days) and information

is provided to the Member Groups. *By-mail voting is only allowed when all of the ballots counted are sent by mail, as in special balloting occurring between R.C.A.Cs. Ballots mailed in by absentee delegates will never be counted together with votes of delegates who are in attendance at the R.C.A.C. in person or electronically.* (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1.2 Member-Group Voting-by-Proxy. If a Member Group will not have a Delegate Couple attending the R.C.A.C., that Member Group may vote by proxy at the R.C.A.C. by designating a Delegate Couple from another Member Group to represent it at the R.C.A.C. A proxy designation may be for all of the matters considered at the convention or it may be limited to specific matters to be considered at the convention. ~~If a Member Group will not have a Delegate Couple attending the R.C.A.C., that Member Group may vote both by mail, on those matters for which by mail voting is permitted, and by proxy, on those matters for which voting by mail is not available.~~ No delegate couple shall hold more than one proxy. (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

3.6.1.3 Procedures for Voting by Member Groups. It shall be the responsibility of the Group Contact Couple (GCC) of each Member Group to notify the Board of Trustees of the Delegate Couple representing the Member Group or, in the alternative, of the designation of the Delegate Couple representing the group by proxy if the group chooses that option. The delegate couple shall also be responsible for the group's submission of any votes by mail when the group elects to vote by that means when voting-by-mail is available. The Board of Trustees shall establish the deadlines for initial and modified designations by each Member Group and shall establish necessary procedures and forms required to implement delegate voting, by-mail voting, and proxy voting. ~~Since the fundamental objective is to seek the collective group conscience of the entire membership, the Board of Trustees shall provide for voting-by-mail to the extent feasible and insure adequate time for an informed group conscience and full discussion.~~ (This provision adopted August 4, 2006 to take effect as of the R.C.A.C. 2007.)

The Board's Rationale:

The intent of allowing vote-by-mail at the R.C.A.C. was to promote greater participation by member groups in arriving at an informed group conscience of the fellowship. It is questionable as to whether this has been achieved. While we have received more votes on each issue it is questionable how informed this group conscience has been.

Currently, member groups voting by mail are unable to participate in, or even hear the discussion during the annual meeting. Many times delegate couples come to the convention intending to vote a certain way on an issue but are persuaded to vote differently by new information they receive during the discussion. Delegate couples who vote by mail do not have

the same opportunity to hear discussion nor to change their votes. They are locked in to a vote that may not be in the best interest of RCA as a whole.

Often amendments proposed at an annual meeting can influence how delegate couples vote on an issue. Delegate couples voting by mail have no way to participate in the amendment process. The standing rules we have had to adopt in past years to count the votes of those present with those casting ballots by mail also limits the ability of those present at the R.C.A.C. to properly amend a motion even if all those present at the meeting agreed unanimously on the amendment. The amendment process is an important tool in meeting procedure for reaching consensus. Our fellowship has been at a great disadvantage for the past three years in not having this tool available to us.

The standing rules we have adopted to accommodate vote-by-mail are complex and confusing. Most delegate couples are not well versed in meeting protocol. Parliamentary procedure and Roberts' Rules of Order can be very confusing and intimidating to those unfamiliar with them. Adding an additional level of complexity does not serve the best interest of our fellowship.

This proposed change will still allow us to vote by mail on issues that come up between annual meetings (e.g. the approval of the 4th edition of the blue book scheduled for this year). The key difference is that in these instances *all* groups will be voting by mail; by-mail votes will not be mixed with votes of delegates present at a "live" meeting.

Finally, Robert's Rules, the authority we currently use to govern our business meetings, says we should never mix the votes of meeting attendees with ballots mailed in by absentees. Here is the quote from Robert's Rules 10th edition page 409 lines 4-15:

An organization should never adopt a bylaw permitting a question to be decided by a voting procedure in which the votes of persons who attend a meeting are counted together with ballots mailed in by absentees. The votes of those present could be affected by debate, by amendments, and perhaps by the need for repeat balloting, while those absent would be unable to adjust their votes to reflect these factors. Consequently, the absentee ballots would in most cases be on a somewhat different question than that on which those present were voting, leading to confusion, unfairness, and inaccuracy in determining the result.

It is hoped that delegate couples unable to attend the R.C.A.C. will soon be able to participate via teleconference depending on the outcome of another proposed bylaw amendment this year. This will allow them to hear and participate in the discussion, including amendments and repeat balloting if necessary. Hopefully the number of delegate couples participating in the annual meeting will not decrease and the quality of the decisions will certainly increase.

Comments of the Structure Committee on Topic 2:

Majority Position of the Committee:

The majority of the Structure Committee is opposed to making any changes to the voting process at this time. The majority of the committee is opposed to both the board's proposal and the alternate proposal of one member of the committee that is discussed below. The position of these committee members is that no change should be made now, particularly in light of the feasibility demonstration that is planned for the 2010 business meeting and opportunity to evaluate the usability of remote, electronic participation at the 2011 business meeting.

These members object to the board's proposal because it may just return the Fellowship to the situation that existed prior to the 2006 changes. Their position is that actual experience with remote, electronic participation may very well serve to give the Fellowship information, as well as confidence, as to what changes should be made. These members also do not support making the changes suggested in the alternate proposal described below by a member of the committee. One of the major concerns expressed in regard to the alternate proposal is that it would discourage attendance at the business meeting since no final decisions would be made at that meeting.

One member has commented that more effort should be made to get more delegate couples to actually attend the annual business meeting in person. This member suggests that more could be done to encourage those couples registered for the annual convention to focus on the annual business meeting. The convention committee and the outreach committee can play key roles in these efforts. The Niagra Convention Committee has been trying some new initiatives this year to encourage attendance at the annual business meeting.

In summary, three members of the committee are opposed to making any changes at this time. One member of the committee supports the board's proposal and one member of the committee supports the alternate proposal in the comments that follow.

Comments of One Member of the Structure Committee: It is time to re-evaluate the voting process that was added to the bylaws in Boston at the August 2006 annual business meeting. Changes are needed to improve the process. But the board's proposal has a serious deficiency. Thus it should not be accepted.

The 2006 Changes: The goal of the 2006 changes was to provide the maximum opportunity for all RCA groups to participate in the decision-making process by making all three traditional methods of voting available at the business meeting: voting by those present; proxy voting; and by-mail voting. The guiding objective for the 2006 changes was "to seek the collective group conscience of the entire membership." This objective is specifically stated in the last sentence of section 3.6.1.3 of the bylaws adopted in Boston. Much of the debate in Boston focused on the fact that Robert's Rules of Order strongly recommended against the use of proxy voting as well as against a voting process that combined by-mailing voting with voting by those present. Those RCA members voting in Boston chose to defy conventional wisdom by providing for all three methods of voting at the business meeting.

Deficiency in the Board’s Proposal. The serious deficiency in the board’s proposal is that it would return the decision-making process to the unacceptable status that existed prior to the 2006 changes: all decision will be made by only by those in attendance at the business meeting.¹ Historically, only a small proportion of the Fellowship attends the annual business meeting. Less than 20% of the member groups have been represented by delegate couples attending the last three annual business meetings.

Participation at the 2007, 2008, and 2009 Meetings: The number of member groups having delegate couples in attendance are as follows: in 2007, 22 groups were represented (18.3% of the member groups); and in 2008 and again in 2009, 18 groups were represented (15.0% of the member groups).² These proportions are based on an estimate of 120 active RCA groups. Those groups voting by mail made up substantial proportions of the total number of groups participating. In 2007 eight groups voted by mail representing 25.8% of the groups participating, while in 2008 there were six such groups representing 23.1% of the groups participating, and in 2009 there were fifteen groups representing 39.5% of the groups participating. By-mail voting has substantially increased the Fellowship’s participation in the decision-making process.

Substantial Consistency of the By-Mail Votes: In the first paragraph of its rationale, the board asserts that: “While we have received more votes on each issue it is questionable how informed this group conscience has been.” This assertion is based on nothing more than speculation and conjecture: the actual voting data shows substantial consistency between the by-mail votes and the votes of those present at the meetings. Clearly those voting by mail do not hear the debate at the meeting. But the important question is whether any new issues were raised in that debate, issues that had not been considered by those voting by mail. The purpose of the discussion on the merits of each proposals, pro and con, that has been included in the notices sent out by the Structure Committee has been to bring relevant issues to the attention of those receiving the notices, particularly those voting by mail. While it is possible that new issues have been raised in the debate at the meetings, it is also possible that most if not all the issues raised had been considered by those voting by mail.

¹ While the board should be applauded for its proposal to provide for remote, electronic attendance at the annual business meeting, the feasibility, particularly in terms of cost, remains to be demonstrated. The extent to which this method will actually increase attendance at the all-day business meeting is unknown. There are a number of reasons why the option of remote participation is only a limited, potential solution: attendance at the all-day meeting requires many to take a day off during the work week, using a day of limited personal leave for which there are many competing demands; the effect of the varying time zones limits the hours of convenient attendance; scheduling conflicts on the day of the meeting may preclude attendance; and the stress of participating in a seven-hour teleconference is likely to deter some.

² These counts overstate somewhat the group participation at the annual meetings since the counts are of the number of delegates actually present by the end of the meeting. For example, at the 2009 meeting three couples arrive during the afternoon session with two of those couples only available to participate in the vote on the last of the 10 proposals considered. The business meeting started with only 13 delegate couples present. Similarly, in 2007 and 2008 not all delegates couples were able to arrive for the start of the business meeting, although there were not quite as many late arrivals as in 2009.

As noted, the actual voting data shows that the by-mail votes are substantially consistent with the votes of those at the meeting.³ Over the last three business meetings, for **eighteen of the twenty proposals for which the votes were combined, the outcomes of the vote would have been the same whether only the votes of those present were counted or whether only the by-mail votes were counted.** For the other two proposal, the final decisions were made using a by-mail vote following the business meeting.⁴

Potential Defect in the Current Voting Process: The principal reason that the voting process requires change is that the current process would impose an unnecessary burden on those voting by mail if a large number of topics were to be proposed for consideration at a business meeting.⁵ A one-day business meeting permits consideration of only a limited number of proposals. Based on the proceedings at the last three annual business meetings, that limit is in the range of seven to ten proposals depending on their complexity. Under the current process, all proposals submitted for consideration prior to the business meeting are sent out on a ballot for use by those groups voting by mail. Under the current process, if a large number of proposals were submitted, those voting by mail would have to consider all of the proposals despite the fact that only some of them would be addressed by the delegates at the meeting. Fortunately, this situation has not yet occurred, although it almost did in 2009.⁶

The Complexity of the Standing Rules: The second reason for a change in the process is that the procedures that govern the conduct of the business meeting, the standing rules, are quite complex. This point is also raised in the board's rationale. The complexity is a direct result of the procedures required to combine the by-mail votes with the votes of those present at the meeting, while at the same time providing an opportunity for amendments to be considered. To accomplish both objectives, the standing rules require that a sequence of votes be taken at the

³ If any RCA member would like to review the voting results from the last three business meetings, a short summary providing the data has been prepared. A more detailed report assessing these results has also been prepared by a member of the committee. If you would like a copy of either the data or report or both sent to you by e-mail, send an e-mail request to: structure@recovering-couples.org.

⁴ Not only are the comparative voting results consistent in terms of outcome, they are also consistent in terms of the comparative proportions of those voting in favor of each of the proposals, independent of outcome. For only one of the proposals was there a substantial difference in the proportions, but this difference had no effect on the outcome for neither the votes of those present nor the by-mail votes reached the required 75% majority needed for passage of this proposed bylaw amendment. The details are in the report referenced in footnote 3.

⁵ All RCA members have the right to submit proposals for consideration at the annual business meeting. Neither the committee nor the board has the authority to decide which proposal will be considered or the order in which they will be considered. That authority rests solely with the delegate couples attending the meeting.

⁶ At the 2009 meeting, ten proposals were considered. Fortunately, three of the initial thirteen proposals were withdrawn prior to the point at which ballots were sent out to the member groups. The events of 2009 demonstrate that there is a substantial risk of this situation arising in the future.

meeting.⁷ The same set of standing rules were used in 2007 and in 2008. A simplified set of rules were used in 2009. While it is not certain, an unintended consequence of the 2009 rules may have been that the delegates attending the meeting were discouraged from proposing amendments in spite of the procedures in the simplified rules covering the amendment process.⁸

An Alternative Solution: The solution for both of these problems is to convert from a one-step voting process to a two-step process. The first step would take place at the business meeting where the delegate couples in attendance would fully consider each proposal including all appropriate amendments that might be offered. Decisions would be made by a majority vote of those in attendance at the meeting.⁹ There would be no by-mail or proxy voting at this first step of the process.

In the second step, all proposals as amended at the business meeting would be sent out to all member groups for a by-mail vote following the business meeting. Robert's Rules acknowledges the advantage of a by-mail vote sent to all the groups:¹⁰

A vote by mail, when authorized in the bylaws, is generally reserved for important issues, such as an amendment to the bylaws or an election of officers—on which a full vote of the membership is desirable even though only a small fraction of the members normally attend meetings. Situations of this kind frequently occur in scientific societies or in alumni associations whose members may be in many countries.

Review of the twenty one topics considered at the last three business meeting shows that all involved important issues: in fact seventeen of the proposals covered bylaw amendments.

The Fellowship has already successfully conducted by-mail voting following a business meeting. At the 2007 meeting, the bylaw amendments covered by topics one and two were

⁷ The votes were combined only for the original proposal. Only those in attendance vote on amendments.

⁸ But it is also possible that amendments were not made because of the votes taken on each of the ten proposals considered, votes that were taken prior to the opportunity to consider amendments under the simplified rules. For three of the ten proposals, the combined votes in each case were 100% in favor. For two more of the proposals there was only one vote in opposition among the combined votes while in another there were only two votes in opposition. Moreover, some proposals are not as amenable to amendment as others. An amendment procedure was available in the rules approved by the delegates at the beginning of the meeting; that procedure just was not used. No amendments were offered for any of the ten proposals considered.

⁹ All of the standard parliamentary options would be available to the delegate couples at the business meeting including, when appropriate, the referral of a proposal back to a committee for further work or clarification.

¹⁰ *Robert's Rules of Order*, § 45, page 409, lines 19 to 26 (10th ed. 2000).

modified by the delegate couples at the meeting and sent out to all the member groups for by-mail voting following the meeting.¹¹ Moreover, at that same meeting, the delegate couples approved the process by which Fellowship approval of the fourth edition of the Blue Book will be sought: a by-mail ballot sent to all member groups.

Full Compliance with Recommendations of Robert's Rules: The two-step voting process recommended here does in fact meet the primary objective of the board's proposal in that the use of by-mail voting at the annual business meeting would be eliminated. Further, the proceedings at the annual business meeting would be in full compliance with the recommendations in Robert's Rules in that proxy voting would also be eliminated. Most importantly, the two-step process provides every RCA group the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Moreover, standard parliamentary procedure would apply at the business meeting, and the complexity of the recently used standing rules would be avoided.

Amendment of Proposals During the Last Three Meetings: The board asserts in its rationale that the standing rules in the last three annual business meetings prevented those present from properly amending "a motion even if all those present at the meeting agreed unanimously on the amendment." The facts do not support this assertion.

At the 2007 annual business meeting, three of the seven proposals considered by the delegate couples were amended. As has been noted, the amended proposals covered by topics one and two were sent out in a by-mail ballot to all member groups following the meeting. In the case of the third amended proposal, topic 7, the delegates decided that there was not time for a subsequent by-mail vote so the decision on the modified proposal was made based solely on the votes of those present—the by-mail votes on that proposal were never counted. The minutes of the 2008 business meeting record the fact that there was amendment proposed to one on the four proposals considered. That amendment was rejected by a large majority of the delegates present. There were no amendments offered at the 2009 business meeting, a fact has been addressed earlier in these comments. The board's assertion is simply incorrect.

Conclusion: The board's proposal is defective in that it returns the decision-making process to the status that existed prior to the 2006 changes: only the small proportion of groups having delegates in attendance at the business meeting have a voice in the decisions being made. There is an alternative: an improved voting process that eliminates the use of by-mail voting at the business meeting while maintaining the opportunity for all member groups to participate in the RCA-WSO's decision-making process. This alternative would bring the voting process into full compliance with the relevant recommendations of Robert's Rules. Retention of the current voting process is preferable to acceptance of the board's proposal.

¹¹ Any delay in the final decisions resulting from the Fellowship-wide by-mail vote would be minimal. If 60 days were allocated to getting out the ballots and a summary of the issues raised at the business meeting and if 90 days were allocated for the by-mail vote, the second step in the process would be completed in 150 days.

Category II: Topics for Approval of Fellowship That Do Not Involve Changes to the Bylaws.

The following two proposals have been submitted by an RCA member for consideration at the business meeting. The vote required to pass these proposals is a majority vote of those voting “yes” and “no.”

Topic 3: The 1996 Version of the Third Edition of the Blue Book Should Be Maintained and Made Available to All Who Request It.

Motion:

That the current 3rd edition be maintained and made available to all who request it.

The Member’s Rationale:

There is an interest, by some members and groups, to continue to use the 3rd edition Blue Book. Availability should be maintained for those members.

Comments of the Structure Committee on Topic 3:

The committee is split on this proposal: two members favor it; two members are opposed, and one member abstains. The two members opposed are of the position the once a Fellowship approved Fourth Edition becomes available, the Fourth Edition should become the standard for the Fellowship. One of those members opposed has asked that information be provided to the Fellowship as to the quantity of the third edition that is currently on hand. The WSO currently has approximately 700 copies of the third edition on hand. None of the committee members are opposed to continuing to sell the third edition as long as the current inventory is available.

The two members of the committee supporting this proposal provide the following comments. We recommend Fellowship approval of this proposal. There are some groups that have been using the third edition since 1996. If a group chooses to continuing using the third edition, they should have that option. Fundamental to 12-step spirituality is the allowance for individual couple and group choices. Each member group is autonomous; RCA unity calls for unity of purpose and not lock-step uniformity of practice.

Topic 4: Request that the Board of Trustees Include in the Policies and Procedures Manual Certain Provisions Related to Committees and Committee Service.

Motion:

Move that the Board of Trustees be requested to include the following provisions in the Board’s Policies and Procedures Manual:

1. All board members must serve on a W.S.O. committee while serving on the Board of Trustees.

2. The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall maintain contact with the all W.S.O. service providers on a regular basis and shall maintain discretionary communications with the various W.S.O. committees.
3. The Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees shall maintain communications with all W.S.O. committees on a regular basis.
4. The Treasurer of the Board of Trustees shall work with a W.S.O. finance or budget committee and shall maintain some level of ongoing participation with this committee. The treasurer shall serve on the 7th traditions committee.

The Member's Rationale:

Committees need to have the ongoing presence of board members. This enhances connectivity of the board with the various committees and with the other members of the board at their business meetings. There is a flow of knowledge and continuity of committee mandate from year to year. It will also help the board members to gain a conscience other than their own or just the board's. Those volunteers serving on the board need to be active participants and listeners in the work that is being done by committees.

Comments of the Structure Committee on Topic 4:

The Structure Committee is split on this proposal: two members support this proposal and three members abstain. Three of these members (included one who abstained on the merits of the proposal) support the following statement which acknowledges that the Fellowship has the authority to consider and act on this proposal.

In our opinion, this motion comes within the scope of the following provision of the bylaws:

4.1.10 On-line Policies and Procedures. The Board of Trustees shall establish, publish, and maintain a Board policies and procedures manual in accordance with the following requirements:

....

5. Consistent with the status of the Board of Trustees as a subordinate board, the Fellowship shall have the right to modify or invalidate any policy or procedure adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Fellowship may exercise this authority by majority vote of the Fellowship taken at the annual business meeting or taken by means of by-mail voting.

The board is subordinate to the Fellowship. Robert's Rules defines the differences between independent boards and subordinate boards as follows:¹²

¹² *Robert's Rules of Order*, § 1 at page 8, line 33 to page 9, line 8 (10th ed. 2000) (emphasis supplied).

In a nonstock corporation that has no assembly or body of persons constituting a general voting membership, as a university or foundation, the board of directors, managers, trustees, or governors is the supreme governing body of the institution. Similarly, in a stock corporation, although the board of directors is elected by stockholders who hold an annual meeting, it constitutes the highest authority in the management of the corporation. **A board within an organized society is an instrumentality of the society's full assembly, to which it is subordinate**

Moreover, it further states:¹³

In any event, **no action of the board can conflict with any action taken by the assembly of the society**; and except in matters placed by the bylaws exclusively under the control of the board, **the society's assembly can give the board instructions which it must carry out**, and can countermand any action of the board if it is not too late (as it would be, for example, when a contract has already been made).

Thus, under both the bylaws and Robert's Rules, the Fellowship has the authority to give direction to the Board of Trustees which is a subordinate board. The matters covered by this motion are within the Fellowship's authority.

¹³ *Robert's Rules of Order*, § 49 at page 466, line 7 to 14 (10th ed. 2000) (emphasis supplied)