

Three Legacies given to the whole membership of A.A. by its founders and their fellow oldtimers. When this heritage was announced, at the St. Louis Convention in 1955, celebrating A.A.'s 20th birthday, Doctor Bob was already gone. But Bill W. spoke for him and the other pioneers, as well as for himself, in turning over to all of us the responsibility for A.A.'s continuation and growth. "The A.A. Service Manual," current version of the handbook first known as "The Third Legacy Manual," may seem to be simply a guide to organization and procedure, and its approach is indeed practical. At the same time, it is based firmly upon spiritual principles, as Bill explains in his introduction to the manual, reprinted here to recall the development of our Third Legacy.

Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A. The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole; namely, the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., the 3 AA Grapevine, Inc., and our Board of Trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities. Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few old-time A.A.'s, several nonalcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.'s infancy, we oldtimers had been the self-appointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous

Many say General service is politics when in reality it is the way that each individual in the program have a say on the functioning of AA as a whole. The most important position is the GSR, they communicate information up and down the triangle. This is how literature is updated or developed, it helps all the committees at GSO make decisions. The GSR takes group conscience to DCM then to delegate and ultimately to the conference. Individuals will say we never had input on an item, an example being The Plain Language Big Book but it was developed over a period of years, GSRs were aware did they pass the message to their groups or were members not interested in it, but when it was published how many said they knew nothing about. These topics are covered in pre-assemblies so our delegates are aware of the conscious.

Do you want your feelings to be known, get involved, the more involved you get the larger your circle of support will get and you never know who will be there when you are suffering even you are sober. I am your Third Legacy person from district and am available to attend your group business meeting to talk about service.

In Grateful Service Linda D.

3605518736