

*The*  
**A.A. SERVICE MANUAL**

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*Combined With*

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**TWELVE CONCEPTS**  
*for* **WORLD SERVICE**

*by Bill W.*



*2018-2020 Edition*

**REFLECTING ACTIONS OF THE  
2018 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

## Why Do We Need a Conference?

*The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: "We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.*

*"We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.*

*"We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."*

***The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*** — Both titles in a single booklet. The manual opens with a history of A.A. services; explains the Conference structure and its year-round importance; includes the Conference Charter and General Service Board Bylaws. The Concepts — principles of service that have emerged from A.A.'s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning — are set forth by Bill W.

**Delegate** — The A.A. member elected every other year to represent the area at the annual Conference meeting in New York and to bring back to the area the results of that meeting.

**Director** — A person who serves on the corporate board of directors of either A.A.W.S. or Grapevine. Nontrustee directors are A.A. members selected for business or professional experience that relates to the activities of the corporation. The directorate of both corporate boards also includes trustees and A.A. staff.

**District** — A division within an area, represented by committee member(s).

**D.C.M.** — District committee member. An experienced G.S.R. elected by other G.S.R.s to represent the groups of their district in area committee meetings and to coordinate service activities in the district.

**District meetings** — Meetings of the D.C.M.s and G.S.R.s of groups in a district.

**General services** — Movement-wide services, performed by anyone in the general service structure (G.S.R., D.C.M., delegate, etc.).

**G.S.O.** — The General Service Office, which provides services to groups in the U.S. and Canada and publishes A.A. literature.