

# The District and the D.C.M.

## THE DISTRICT

A district is a geographical unit containing the right number of groups — right in terms of the committee member's ability to keep in frequent touch with them, to learn their problems, and to find ways to contribute to their growth and well-being.

The number of groups per district varies widely, from as few as five in a rural district to 90 or more in a metropolitan district. Population density and the geographic size of the district, which will affect the ability of the D.C.M. to communicate with the groups, would be key factors determining the number of groups a district will have.

**LINGUISTIC DISTRICTS:** To encourage participation of the maximum number of groups, some areas have incorporated linguistic districts within their structure. These districts are made up of groups that conduct meetings in a language other than English. They usually have a bilingual D.C.M. or liaison. Their boundaries may be independent of the conventional geographic district boundaries.

## THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

The district committee member (D.C.M.) is an essential link between the group G.S.R. and the area delegate to the General Service Conference. As leader of the district committee, made up of all G.S.R.s in the district, the D.C.M. is exposed to the group conscience of that district. As a member of the area committee, he or she is able to pass on the district's thinking to the delegate and the committee. (The pamphlet "Your D.C.M.," available from the General Service Office, provides basic information on this service job.)

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT:** Current experience indicates that many districts provide financial support for their D.C.M.s to attend service functions. Invariably, this pays off in increased activity, interest, and group participation.

## Qualifications

- The district committee member has usually served as a G.S.R. and is elected by other G.S.R.s to take responsibility for district activities. If the person chosen is a current G.S.R., a new G.S.R. should be elected to fill his or her position.
- A D.C.M. should have enough sobriety (generally four or five years) to be eligible for election as delegate.
- He or she also needs to have the time and energy to serve the district well.

## Duties

The D.C.M.'s job is primarily that of two-way communication. The D.C.M.:

- Regularly attends all district meetings and area assemblies.
- Receives reports from the groups
- through G.S.R.s and through frequent personal contacts with groups in the district.

- Holds regular meetings of all G.S.R.s in the district.
- Helps the Conference delegate cover the area, which would be impossible for the delegate to do on a group-by-group basis.
- Assists the delegate in obtaining group information in time to meet the deadline for A.A. directories.
- Keeps G.S.R.s informed about Conference activities; this includes setting up opportunities for the delegate's Conference report, occasionally making the Conference report if the delegate cannot be present, and inviting the delegate to regular district meetings.
- Makes sure that G.S.R.s are acquainted with The A.A. Service Manual, the Twelve Concepts for World Service, the G.S.O. bulletin Box 4-5-9, workbooks and guidelines from G.S.O., and any other service material.
- Helps G.S.R.s make interesting reports to groups, and encourages them to bring new A.A. members to service events.
- Keeps groups informed about Conference-approved books and pamphlets.
- Organizes workshops and/or sharing sessions on service activities.
- Regularly keeps in touch with the alternate D.C.M. and the delegate; sends district minutes to the delegate and alternate, and exchanges them with other districts.
- Brings Traditions problems to the attention of the delegate.
- Makes a regular practice of talking to groups (new and old) on the responsibilities of general service work.

### **Term, Eligibility, and Election Procedures**

The D.C.M.'s term of office is two years, coinciding in most areas with the terms of the delegate, committee officers, and G.S.R.s. Some areas, however, rotate half their committee members each year. D.C.M.s are generally elected in the fall of the year. The election should take place after the G.S.R. election and before that of the area delegate, because the D.C.M. is chosen either from among currently serving G.S.R.s or from a combination of past and present G.S.R.s. In most areas, a candidate for an area committee officer or Conference delegate must be a committee member before being eligible for election. While district meetings to elect committee members are most often held in advance of area assemblies, and separate from them, occasionally travel distances make this impractical and/or a hardship. (This usually means more districts should be set up.) If necessary, therefore, meetings to elect committee members can be held immediately before area assemblies at the place where the assembly meets.

The committee member who is finishing a term sets up the election meeting and, in most districts, notifies the G.S.R.s who have just been elected and those who are going out of office.

The method of election should be decided by the area assembly or by the district committee. Some options are:

- Most district committees allow all current voting members of the district committee to vote in district elections.
- Some committees also allow newly elected G.S.R.s a vote, even though they might not take office until some time after the election.

Many district committees include alternate D.C.M.s, a secretary and/or treasurer, and other officers or service committee chairpersons in addition to the D.C.M and G.S.R.s. Sometimes, these jobs are held by

the G.S.R.s already on the committee; sometimes, they call for additional voting members, who are eligible to stand for D.C.M.

Election is either by written ballot or show of hands, with a majority needed to elect. A district may also choose to follow Third Legacy Procedure (see page S21), which requires a two-thirds majority.