

Ventura County
area committee

As stated in the N.A. Tree, "the service structure of N.A., as we have described it, does not exist in N.A. today. It is an ideal towards which we can strive, and in so doing, make recovery available to a greater number of addicts." (p. 16, final P.). The service structure of N.A. is in its formative years. Few area committees have existed longer than one year, and regions, as described in the Tree, appear nearly non-existent at this time. If there are any regions, there seems to be only two in California, and, at best, ^{Now I'm told 13} a few elsewhere, but certainly no more than 5-6. Yet groups are flourishing in many places and while they might not properly call themselves a region, they too are part of the N.A. group conscience.

"Our second Tradition ensures that major policy decisions can only be made according to the spiritual conscience of an entire fellowship. This means that each of us, through our service structure, maintains the right to have a say in what happens in N.A." (p.15, last P.) Then why is the Tree approved literature when so many group representatives and their elected area representatives flatly state they are unsatisfied with portions of the Tree, yet before they even received copies of the Tree it was already approved? The Tree was first approved by the Literature Committee. This committee is a subcommittee of the World Service Board, i.e. the Trustees. As the Tree states, "these committees meet throughout the year and are composed of Trustees, members, and an occasional non-addict." (p. 15). After this Literature Committee approved the Tree, it was approved by the Board itself. The second revisions of the Tree apparently followed this same procedure. The Tree, then, has been approved by the World Service Board. However, "the internal structure of the World Service Board is different from the rest of our service branches." (p.15, last P.) It can be said then that

one branch of our world service structure has approved this literature. "The Trustees do not, however, have the authority to control N.A. or change the nature of our fellowship." (p. 15, last P.).

The branch of world service which is missing in this formulation is the World Service Conference. The Board of Trustees has stated that the forthcoming business at the Convention is the World Service Conference. "Our conference is the one time each year when all our service branches come together forming the complete N.A. tree." (p. 16, top P.).

According to the Tree, the World Service Conference first has a general opening meeting, then it breaks up into committees to discuss "topics... of major importance to N.A. as a whole." (p. 16, 4th P.). "These committees include: the literature committee, finance committee, W.S.O. committee, ..." (p. 16, 5th P.). Delegates, Trustees, and officers of the W.S.O. serve on these committees to "discuss all input within their scope; resolve items which do not require major policy decisions; and prepare resolutions for policy items." (p. 16, 5th P.). The resolutions the committees prepare are then placed on the agenda for the Conference and put to a vote of the entire Conference when the committees all re-assemble. As the Tree points out, the Conference "does not speak for N.A. as a whole ... However, the conference can, because of our service structure, initiate action which will benefit all members." (p. 16, 7th P.).

This World Service Conference does seem to offer the proper balance of input among the several branches of the world service structure, i.e. the Board, the W.S.O., and the N.A. groups as represented through the regional delegates. However the present day composition of N.A. is such

that if we are to follow the Tree verbatim at this World Service Conference the result will be an underrepresentation of the fellowship of the groups through their delegates , and a corresponding overrepresentation of the Board and W.S.O.

The reason this lack of balance and proper representation will occur is as follows. At the Conference the regional delegate is the servant who represents the various groups and areas comprising his region. According to the Tree each delegate serves on only one committee which are formed at the Conference. Additionally, each committee also has at least one Trustee.

The Tree states that "a good example (of a region), as it exists today, are the Northern and Southern regions of N.A. in California." We all know that N.A. groups have sprung outside of California. However there are few of these. Suppose there are three groups in Nebraska, having weekly meetings. Can they be considered a region? If so, then their delegate will actually represent only three groups yet his vote and input at the World Conference will equal that of the delegate from a region of California, who might represent at least 50 groups. This seems an anomaly. But a greater discrepancy exists in the relationship today of these delegates to the Board and W.S.O. at the Conference. It seems improper to consider a geographical region having only three to four N.A. groups as a region; and , in any event, by the latest result of convention registration mailings, there are few active N.A. groups outside of California, i.e. the World Directory describes many outside groups, but to date at least 25 have been found to be either nonexistent, folded, or completely unavailable.

So, even if we consider these outlying areas where a few N.A. groups exist as regions, what we are left with, then is two regions in California and, at best, three to four regions elsewhere. If each state had a region then we'd have at least 50 delegates at the Conference. And each of these 50 delegates would be on a committee at the Conference and, along with the Board and the officers of the WSO would participate in matters affecting N.A. as a whole. But when we now only have at ^{Now in 1960 10-13} best 5 to 6 delegates, if that many, an imbalance results. These delegates will each serve on the various conference committees. They are proportionally outnumbered by the Trustees and officers of the WSO. This imbalance frustrates the intent of the World Service Conference which is to be a time "when all our service branches come together forming the complete N.A. tree." (p. 16, top P.).

To follow this one region- one vote at this time means that the groups of N.A. are presently represented by ^{maybe 10-13} 5 to 6 voices at the Conference. This is not to say that the Board and WSO do not also represent these groups and the fellowship. These branches represent different aspects. As the Tree puts it, the Board provides the "soul" and the WSO provides the heart of world service. But the "mind" of the world service structure is provided by the delegates. ^{Trustees & WSO at the world conf} The result here is an imbalance of the relation between the mind and the heart and soul. Until the groups' representatives are provided with an effective input into the World Service structure, that is, until they are given an adequate proportional voice in the Conference structure to "initiate action which will benefit all members", the World Service Structure cannot operate as a balanced entity.

To correct this situation, we might consider that until there are sufficient numbers of active regions, that the groups of N.A. be represented not by delegates, but by their area representatives at the Conference for the time being. Such a re-formulation of the area input is necessary and in complete agreement with the spirit and intent of the Tree which states "the definition of a region is ultimately one of need, any N.A. areas which can show this need can be considered a designated region." (p. 10, 2nd P.). The present areas as they exist in California show a need for such representation.