

# The Seventh Tradition & The *AA Grapevine*

Facilitating an Informed Group Conscience  
on Direct Voluntary Contributions

## The Spiritual Principle of Self-Support

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”



ESTABLISHED 1935

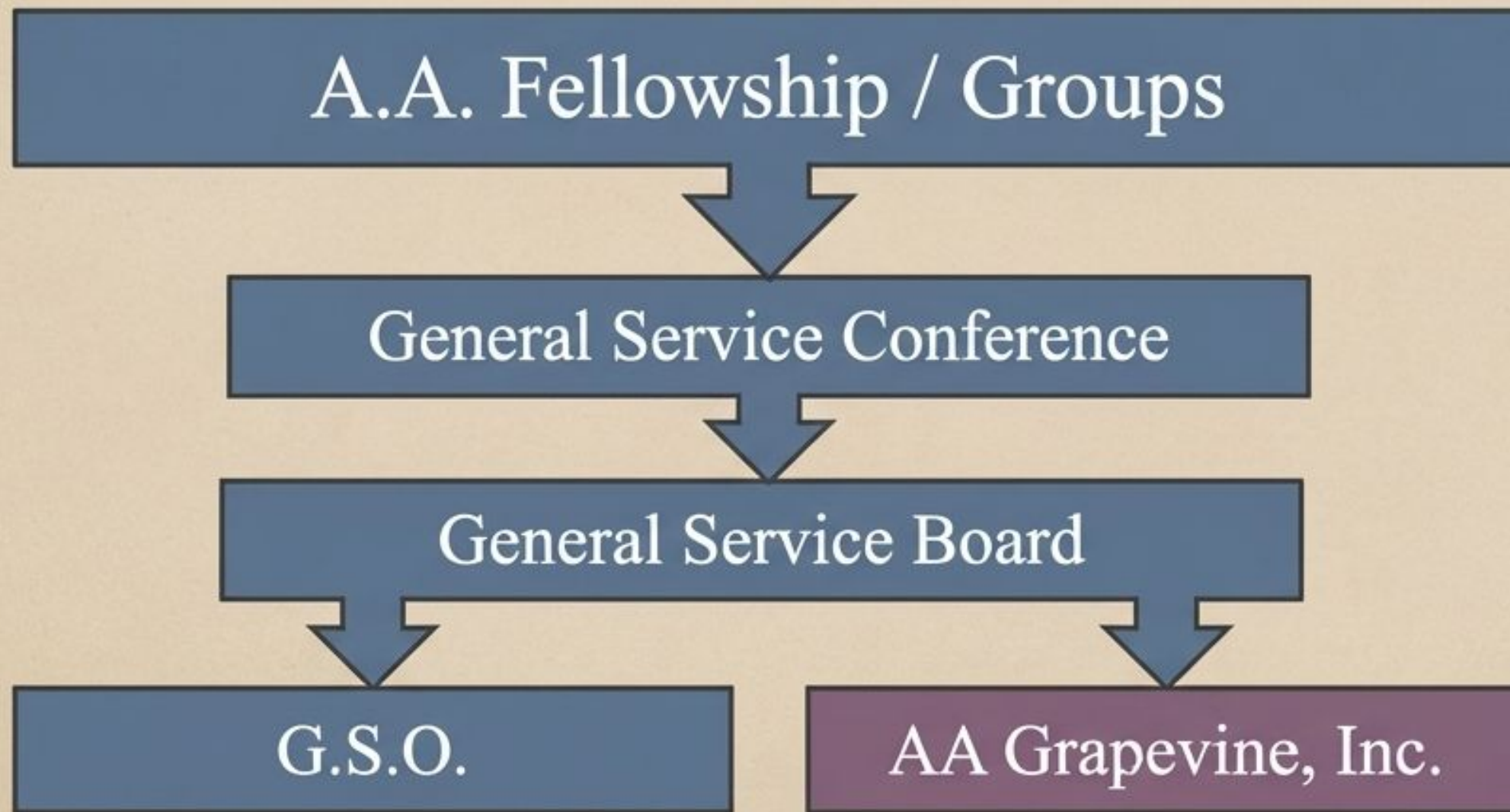
### Core Principle

A.A. pays its own way. This ensures no outside money, no strings attached, and no divided loyalties.

### The Current Focus

The present discussion does not challenge this tradition; rather, it asks us to carefully define what constitutes an 'outside' contribution versus an 'inside' contribution in today's service structure.

# Mapping the Service Structure: Inside or Outside?



Structural Reality: AA Grapevine, Inc. is a separate corporate entity, but it is fundamentally an A.A. service body, created by and directly accountable to the Fellowship through the Conference structure.

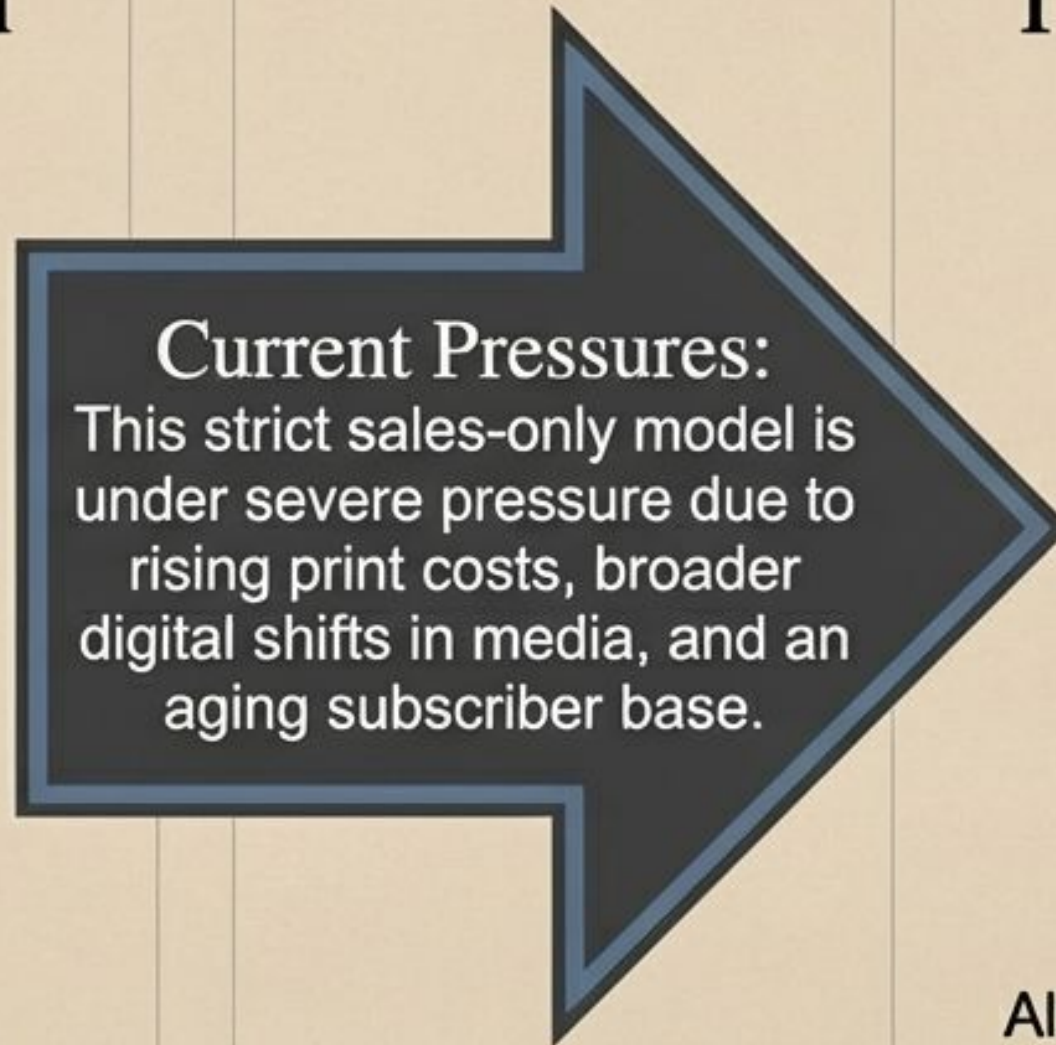
The Defining Question: Are direct contributions from A.A. members and groups to Grapevine technically "outside contributions," or are they simply another form of internal self-support, identical to funding G.S.O. or local intergroups?

# Shifting Realities in the Publishing Model

## Historical Expectation



Grapevine has traditionally been expected to be entirely self-supporting through the direct subscriptions and literature sales of its readers.



**Current Pressures:**  
This strict sales-only model is under severe pressure due to rising print costs, broader digital shifts in media, and an aging subscriber base.

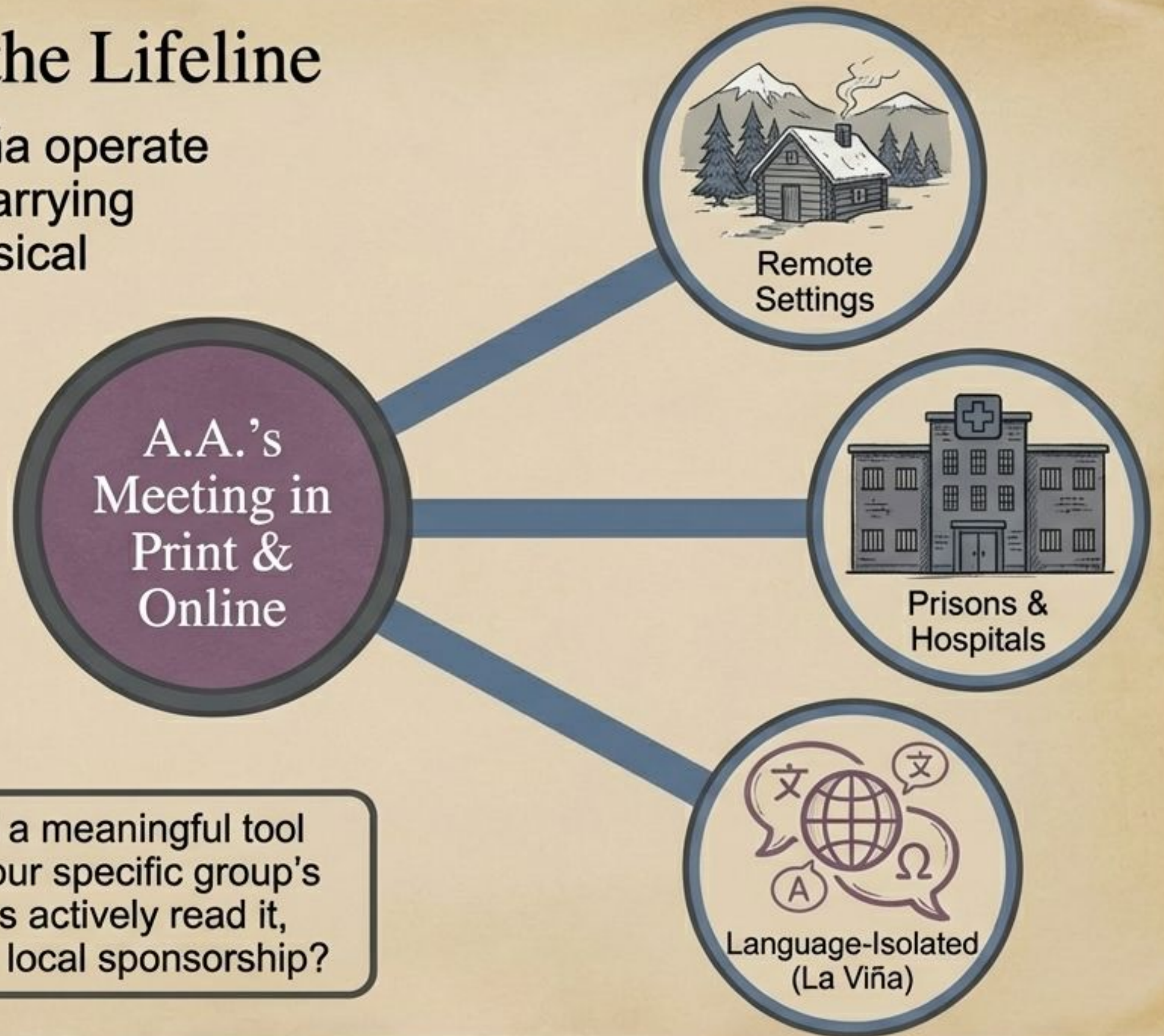
## The Proposed Solution



Allow A.A. members and groups the option to make direct, voluntary financial contributions to AA Grapevine to subsidize these shortfalls.

# Assessing the Value of the Lifeline

The Asset: Grapevine and La Viña operate uniquely as Twelfth Step tools, carrying stories of recovery to places physical meetings often cannot reach.



**Group Diagnostic:** Is this still a meaningful tool for carrying the message in your specific group's experience? Do your members actively read it, share it, or utilize its stories in local sponsorship?

# The Case for Allowing Direct Contributions



## Spirit of Tradition Seven

This represents the Fellowship taking responsibility for its own Twelfth Step tools. It is "us supporting us"—keeping the funding inside A.A. rather than seeking outside money to cover publishing shortfalls.

## Protecting a Unique Tool

If Grapevine/La Viña is valued as a critical lifeline, allowing direct contributions is a highly practical mechanism to ensure it remains available to those who need it most.

## 100% Voluntary Control

No group or member is mandated to give. Groups maintain total autonomy over their fund distribution and can prioritize local needs first, treating *Grapevine* purely as an optional line item.

# The Case Against Allowing Direct Contributions



## The Slippery Slope

Moving away from the historical 'sales-only' model blurs a long-standing spiritual boundary. Contributing directly to a corporate publishing entity could open doors to complex financial structures or subtle fundraising pressures.



## Fund Fragmentation

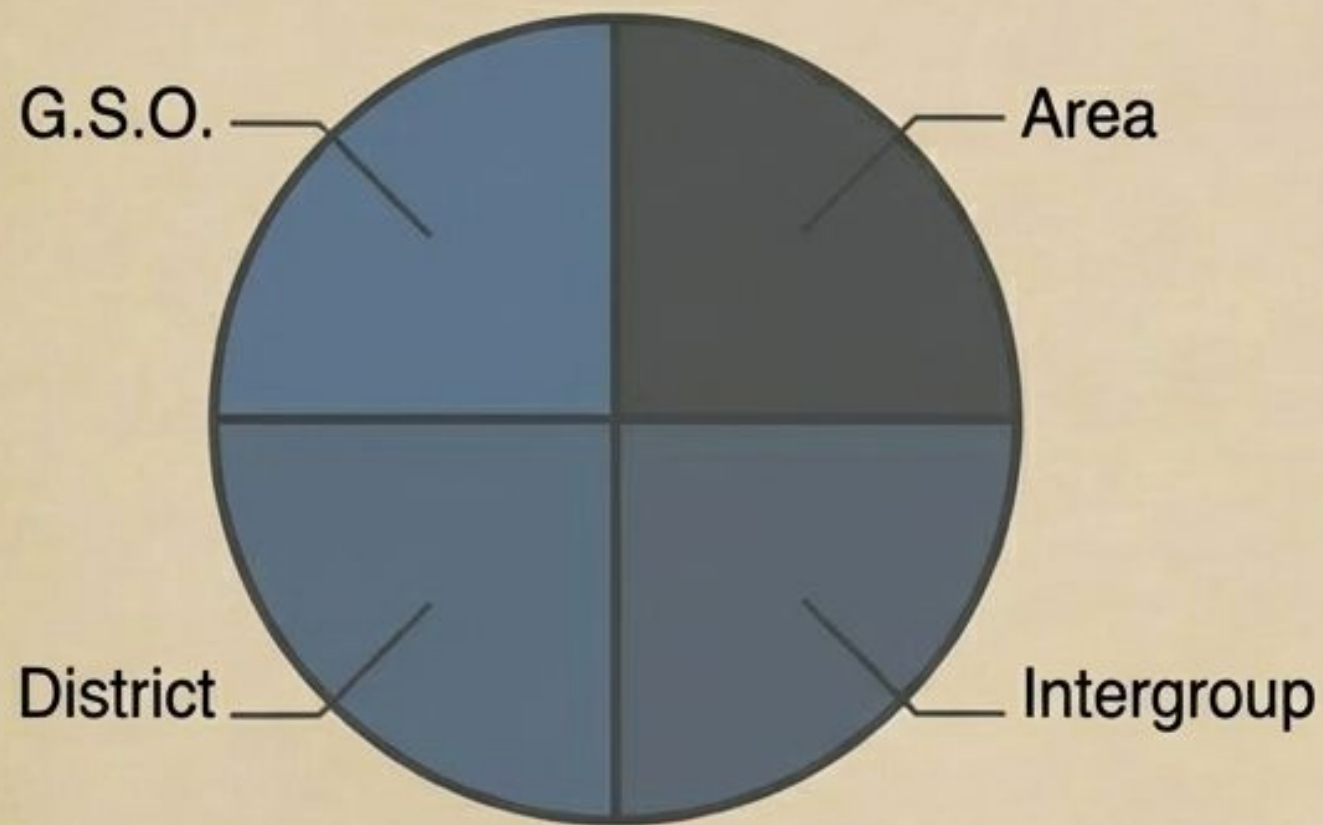
Groups already juggle funding Home Groups, Districts, Areas, G.S.O., and Intergroups. Adding a new direct recipient could confuse new members and dilute the funds essential to existing service structures.



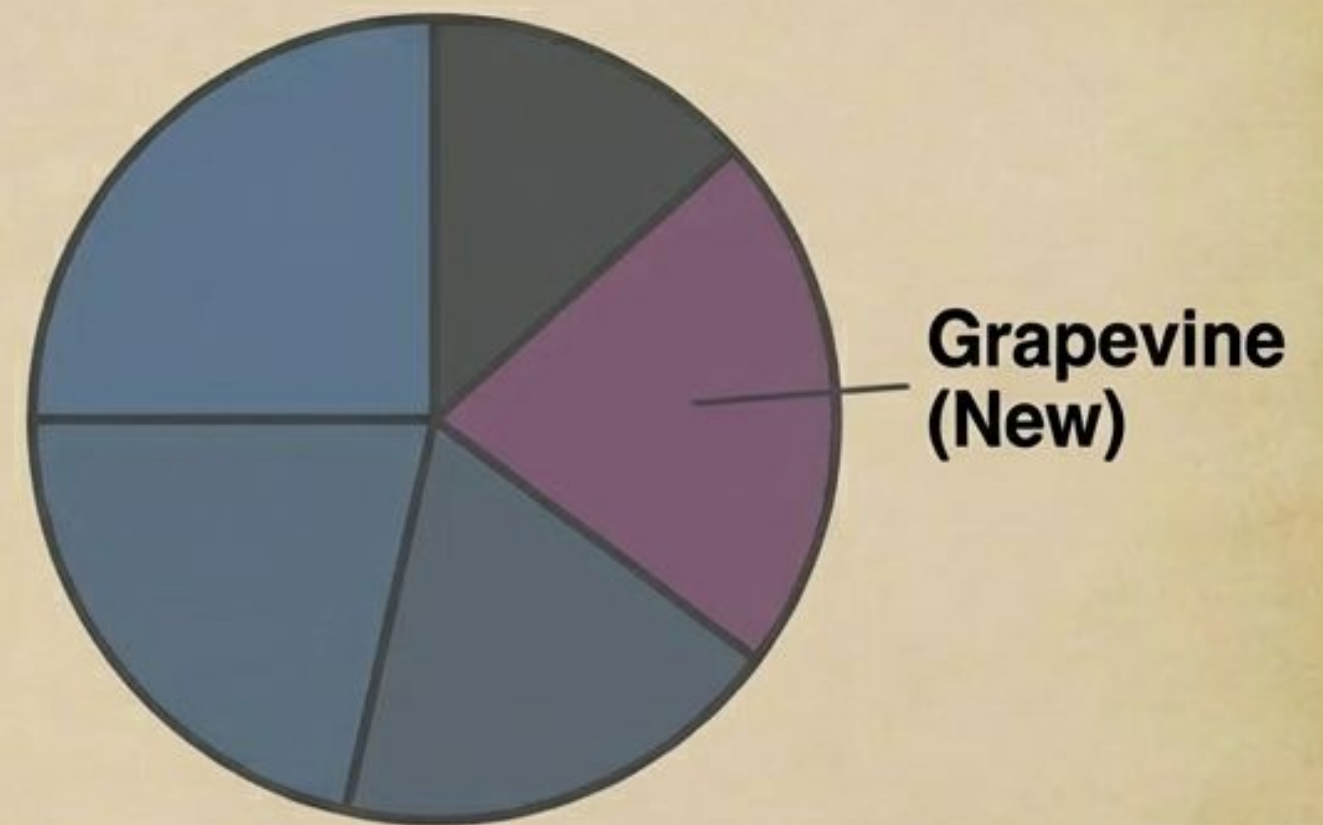
## Question of Relevance

If actual readership is low, some argue that limited Fellowship funds should prioritize heavily utilized, direct Twelfth Step services rather than subsidizing a product with naturally declining demand. Grapevine should adapt its business model instead.

# The Financial Impact on the Seventh Tradition Pie



**Current Ecosystem:** Groups currently balance a well-established set of priorities: Home Group expenses, Intergroup/Central Office, District, Area, and G.S.O.



**Proposed Ecosystem:** Grapevine is introduced as a new, distinct recipient channel for group funds.

**The Core Dilemma:** Does offering a direct contribution option to Grapevine inspire members to expand the total amount of money given, or does it simply slice the existing, finite pie thinner, reducing critical funds sent to G.S.O. and local service bodies?

# A Framework for Group Deliberation

## Q1: Tradition Seven Lens

Does allowing these contributions feel like A.A. being self-supporting, or does it feel like bending Tradition Seven?

## Q2: Practical Experience

Do we, as a distinct group, actively use and value Grapevine or La Viña? Have we seen it aid newcomers or long-timers here?

## Q3: Financial Impact

If we choose to contribute to Grapevine, will we logically have to what we currently send to G.S.O., District, Area, or Intergroup?

## Q4: Spiritual Priorities

Does supporting Grapevine directly align with supporting our primary purpose, or does it simply introduce unnecessary complexity to our group's financial life?

# Documenting the Group Conscience

After reviewing the background material and discussing Tradition Seven, our group **does / does not ▼** support allowing AA Grapevine, Inc. to accept direct voluntary contributions.

Our sense is that Grapevine/La Viña **is / is not ▼** a relevant tool for carrying the message today. Many in our group **do / do not ▼** read it, share stories from it, and see it as “a meeting in print.”

From a financial standpoint, our group **believes / does not believe ▼** the spiritual principle of self-support is maintained by this proposal, provided contributions remain voluntary and groups maintain informed control of their funds.

— Use this structured language to accurately report your group's conscience to your G.S.R. or District representative.