

## **The End of the Beginning**

Thank you for your trust, hospitality, and attention as I have crisscrossed the Area these past three (and a bit) months. It has been a joy to visit you all in this condensed way. It has also served as a reminder to me of the beautiful variety within the districts, a variety that gives us unity and strength. Unity not uniformity is the hallmark of our Area and I am grateful for that.

Without exception, each time I got to relate what I saw, felt, and heard at the 69<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference, it felt like the first time and each time was different. With more time for reflection, my understanding of the Conference evolved over time and continues to evolve.

Now I get to look forward to my next trip to New York, in January next year, when (as one of the thirteen conference committee chairs) I get to attend the quarterly meeting of the General Service Board, the one at which the Agenda Topics are finalized.

As an Area, we now get to decide what we're ready to vote on that might affect A.A. as a whole and whether you want me to write a letter about that to the Conference Coordinator before the December 15 deadline.

Now, I also get to pause (a little) and take a vacation back to the land of my birth and reconnect with my character defects, ooops—I mean family, and also to take some time to relax and reflect before our Fall Inventory.

Throughout my travels the thing that has impressed me the most has been your thoughtful questions, which tell me that our A.A. democracy is alive and well. That we have such a spirit of enquiry tells me how much you all love, as I love, this program of recovery that has saved our lives and now places us in the most responsible of places, to be helpful to others.

With service as my lodestone I look forward to the next installment of our never-ending Conference process, together.