

Delegate's Corner: July 2023

The 73rd General Service Conference is now in the rear-view mirror, and with more time to reflect, I have come to realize that a lot of what this year's Conference focused on was healing. We have often strived to be a harmonious fellowship, but we are still a collection of people – and sometimes, with people, conflict arises.

This year's Conference had the early potential to be quite acrimonious. There had been controversies with the Board in the past (motions to censure are nothing new in our history dating back to Bill W.), and some people didn't like some actions the Conference took in the past, but this year was quite a maelstrom.

And yet, despite all the initial rancor, the Conference stood firm this year that AA has much more in common than we have that separate us. Our recovery from a spiritual malady, our primary purpose that each alcoholic seeking refuge can find shelter with us; these unite us in a way that our disagreements (important as they may be) are.

And now that the Conference did the housecleaning that needed to occur – improving communication, insisting on the importance of process, emphasizing continuing discussion – we can now again focus outward on the millions of people who have yet to find the rooms of recovery. And we are missing a lot of people.

Our triennial membership survey (much delayed, and coming out later this summer) shows us that we are still missing many minority groups and women. As a fellowship, we also skew older. I am hopeful that there are ways to improve our message – not change it, but improve its delivery – so that we can attract every person stung with the same malady that we have recovered from.

So the Conference process continues. Someone, somewhere, is coming up with an idea that will refine our message. They will share it with their group, and their GSR will share it at the District. That District might share it with their Area, and eventually, a proposed agenda item will materialize. It could become an Agenda Topic that we all discuss next year, the year after, or the year after that. And then, suddenly, that good idea one person had will save the lives of hundreds of others ten years down the line.

This process is magic. Thanks for letting me peek behind the curtain.

Yours in service,

Eric L., Panel 73 Delegate