

Why Do We Need A Conference ?

The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairman of our board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting:

"We may not need a General Service Conference to insure our own recovery. We do need it to insure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to insure recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth which brought us back to life.

"We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effects of the human urge for power and prestige which we must insure can never invade A.A. We need it to insure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

"We need it to insure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to insure that the doors of halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to insure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

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