

Dr. Bob's Farewell Address

“My good friends in AA and of AA, I feel I would be very remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to welcome you here to Cleveland, and not only to this meeting but to those that have already transpired. I hope very much that the presence of so many people and the words that you have heard will prove an inspiration to you - not only to you, but may you be able to impart that inspiration to the boys and girls back home who were not fortunate enough to be able to come. In other words, we hope that your visit here has been both enjoyable and profitable.

I get a big thrill out of looking over the vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness. If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months, and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.

There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words “love” and “service”. We all understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts on our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to

our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.

Given at:

AA's First International Convention

Cleveland, Ohio

July 30, 1950

Dr. Bob succumbed to cancer on November 16, 1950.