

KIT

KEEP IN TOUCH

Area 62 Newsletter

Welcome to Area 62 South Carolina Newsletter

KIT is distributed at each Area
Assembly to the DCM.

Submit articles and/or events to
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You can also view the newsletter on
line.

www.area62.org

KIT(Keep In Touch)presents the experience
and opinions of members of Alcoholics
anonymous on the disease of alcoholism.
Opinions expressed here are not those of
Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor
does publication of any article imply
endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous
or the South Carolina Area Assembly.

Please do not be concerned if your
submission did not appear in this issue of
KIT. Your submission may be incorporated
in a future issue. If for any reason the KIT
committee decides to not publish a
submission, we apologize.

The KIT Committee members would like
to thank everyone for taking time to write
for this publication. If you have any
questions or comments regarding the
publication of KIT, please contact a
Committee Member.
We welcome your input.

One more way to carry the message...

the written word.

MARCH, 2006

Should We Go Easy On the God Stuff?

As an adolescent I had been defiant. My parents had insisted I attend church every Sunday. At about age 14 they finally broke the news to me that I would be going away to boarding school. I was thrilled. Finally free of my parents harsh rules! However, I found myself at an evangelical Christian school in Greenville, SC. They had a boarding school for high school students. This place was, in my opinion, fanatical and it had Barb Wire around it! The best way I can say is that it was not a pleasant experience for this alcoholic. After surviving this school, I decided that organized religion was not for me! I pretty much turned my back on "God Stuff" at that point.

One of the first things I recall hearing after coming to A.A. was the remark, "A.A. is a spiritual program, not a religious program." I was glad it was not a religious program, but I did not know what a spiritual program was, And I was not about to ask anyone! I looked up spiritual in the dictionary. The description that stood out to me was "Spiritual - Of the dead". I decided to keep my mouth shut and observe because I was also told that this was "The last house on the block for me".

Fortunately I got a sponsor who believed in studying the big book. She held my hand as I took the steps. She suggested (strongly) that I study the book and report back to her. I found that the Book was presented in such a way that I could not argue with it.

I had a terrible time with the "God Stuff". And she suggested I used her Higher Power until I could find one of my own. I was able to take step two as best I could, but revolted at the idea of step three. I thought if I took that step I would have a life filled with going to AA meetings, selling flowers at the airport, and listening to Debby Boone albums! She lovingly suggested I get to know others in our fellowship that had taken the third step and watch what they did outside of AA meetings. At this time Star Wars was popular and I chose "The Force" to be my Higher Power. Thus, a whole new world has been given to me.

As I studied I found the following information in our Big Book:

I.Ebby Thatcher carried the message of hope to Bill Wilson toward the end of November 1934. At the bottom of page 9 in the Big Book it states: "But he (Ebby) did no ranting. In a matter of fact way he told how two men had appeared in court, persuading the judge to suspend his commitment. They had told him of a simple religious idea and a practical program of action." Ebby had been sober for two months at the time he visited Bill.

In the next paragraph it states "He had come to pass his experience along to me - if I cared to have it. I was shocked, but interested. Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless. "

Toward the bottom of page 10 Bill states "I simply had to believe in a Spirit of the Universe, who knew neither time nor limitation." In the next paragraph he states: "With ministers, and the world's religions, I parted right there. When they talked of a God personal to me, who was love, superhuman strength and direction, I became irritated and my mind snapped shut against such a theory." (Boy, that statement hit home to me!)

On page 11, middle paragraph it states "But my friend (Ebby) sat before me, and he made the point blank declaration that God had done for him what he could not do for himself. His human will had failed. Doctors had pronounced him incurable. Society was about to lock him up. Like myself, he had admitted complete defeat. Then he had, in effect, been raised from the dead, suddenly taken from the scrap heap to a level of life better than the best he had ever known!"

On page 12 Bill goes on to state: "Despite the living example of my friend there remained in me the vestiges of my old prejudice. The

(continued page 3)

Dr. Silkworth's Rx for Sobriety The A.A. Grapevine, June 1945

Anyone who tried to impress a drinking alcoholic with the approach, "You can't have your cake and eat it, too," would probably draw a scornful, "So what! Who wants any cake? Tony, make it a double this time." The same idea expressed as, "You can't have your bottle and drink it, too," might get his attention because to a drinking alcoholic a fresh unopened bottle, brimming brightly with abundance, is a symbol of good things to come. He knows well enough, of course, that he can't drink it and still have it, but he blocks his mind to the inevitability of that horrible moment when the last bottle will be empty.

The untapped bottle remains a symbol to the non-drinking alcoholic, at least to the alcoholic who has dried up in A.A. So long as it stands unopened it represents drinks he has not taken, and the good things of life he has found by not drinking.

Yet now and then a persevering soul tries to have both the figurative and the liquid contents of the bottle. He tries to make an impossible compromise. In the opinion of a man who has administered personally to at least 10,000 alcoholics, the attempt to make this kind of compromise is one of the most common causes of failure to get a safe hold on A.A. Dr. W.D. Silkworth, genial and beloved little patriarch at Towns Hospital, New York, for twelve years and now (1945) also in charge of the new A.A. ward at Knickerbocker, also New York, defines it as the "alcoholic double-cross."

"The majority who slip after periods of sobriety," says Dr. Silkworth, "have double-crossed themselves into thinking that some how they can have the unopened bottle and drink it, too. Even though they have been in A.A. and going to meetings, and following parts of the program, they have accepted it with reservations somewhere. They actually have been one step ahead of a drink. Then they began playing around with the notion they can drink a little and still have the good things of A.A. The outcome is an inevitable as the bottle becoming empty once it has been opened by the alcoholic."

When Dr. Silkworth discusses A.A. "slips" his usually cheerful face becomes serious, even a little grim. Through his long years of practice in the field, he has become increasingly

sympathetic, but not case-hardened, to alcoholics. He understands what they experience. Having been one of the first in his profession to support A.A. and having guided scores of alcoholics into A.A., he also appreciates the fact that a "slip" for an A.A. involves an extra degree of remorse and misery.

Dr. Silkworth is particularly emphatic on one point. "Slips are not the fault of A.A. I have heard patients complain, when brought in for another drying out, that A.A. failed them. The truth, of course, is that they failed A.A."

But this mental maneuvering to transfer the blame is obviously another indication of fallacious thinking. It is another symptom of the disease."

A quick way to get Dr. Silkworth's appraisal of A.A. is to ask him how he thinks "slips" can be prevented. "First," he explains, "let's remember the cause. The A.A. who 'slips' has not accepted the A.A. program in its entirety. He has a reservation, or reservations. He's tried to make a compromise. Frequently, of course, he will say he doesn't know why he reverted to a drink. He means that sincerely and, as a matter of fact, he may not be aware of any reason. But if his thoughts can be probed deeply enough a reason can usually be found in the form of a reservation.

"The preventive, therefore, is acceptance of the A.A. program and A.A. principles without any reservations. This brings us to what I call the moral issue and to what I have always believed from the first to be the essence of A.A."

"Why does this moral issue and belief in a power greater than oneself appear to be the essential principle of A.A.? First, an important comparison is found in the fact that all other plans involving psychoanalysis, will-power, restraint and other ingenious ideas have failed in 95 per cent of the cases. A second is that all movements of reform minus a moral issue have passed into oblivion."

"Whatever may be the opinions one professes in the matter of philosophy - whether one is a spiritualist or a scientific materialist - one should recognize the reciprocal influence which the moral and physical exert upon each other. Alcoholism is a mental and physical

issue. Physically a man has developed an illness. He cannot use alcohol in moderation, at least not for a period of enduring length. If the alcoholic starts to drink, he sooner or later develops the phenomenon of craving."

"Mentally, this same alcoholic develops an obsessive type of thinking which, in itself a neurosis, offers an unfavorable prognosis through former plans of treatment. Physically - science does not know why - a man cannot drink in moderation. But through moral psychology - a new interpretation of an old idea - A.A. has been able to solve his former mental obsession. It is the vital principle of A.A., without which A.A. would have failed even as other forms of treatment have failed."

"To be sure, A.A. offers a number of highly useful tools or props. Its group therapy is very effective. I have seen countless demonstrations of how well your '24-hour plan' operates. The principle of working with other alcoholics has a sound psychological basis. All of these features of the program are extremely important."


"But, in my opinion, the key principle which makes A.A. work where other plans have proved inadequate is the way of life it proposes based upon the belief of the individual in a Power greater than himself and the faith that this Power is all sufficient to destroy the obsession which possessed him and was destroying him mentally and physically."

"For many years I faced this alcoholic problem being sure of one scientific fact - that detoxication by medical treatment must precede any psychiatric approach. I have tried many of these orthodox psychiatric approaches and invented some new ones of my own. With some patients I would be coldly analytical, if they were of the so-called 'scientific' type who is apt to have a superior attitude toward anything emotional or spiritual. With others, I would try the 'scare' method, telling them that if they continued to drink they would kill themselves. With still others, I would attempt the emotional appeal, working both the patient and myself into a lather. He might be moved to the point of shaking hands dramatically and telling me, with tears streaming down his face, that he was never going to take another drink. And I knew that the probability was he would be drunk again

within two weeks or less."

"Since I have been working with A.A. the comparative percentage of successful results has increased to an amazing extent."

"The percentage of success that A.A. has scored leaves no doubt that it has something more than we as doctors can offer.

It is, I am convinced, your second step. Once the A.A. alcoholic has grasped that, he will have no more 'slips'." 

Hope, Faith and Birds

by Amanda F.

It has been a long day for Noah. He has been building a big old boat, loading everyone up, and now it is time to set sail. Land Ho? He don't even know.

"Where are we going?" his wife and kids ask, and continue to ask for the next 39 days.

The elephants stinky dumps and monkeys picking eachother's fleas are the least of Noah's problems. He was ordered by God himself to bring on board two of each creature, but why these two horrible alcoholics?

"Noah, this is the most HOPELESS mission," they gripe, "We will never get off this boat."

Next thing Noah knows, the dove he had sent out hours ago when the rain stopped, is perched on the poop deck with an olive branch in it's beak.

"Awww..." says the crew.

"Land is near," says Noah, "and when we get there, you two drunks are going to an AA meeting. You could learn something there about faith."

And so, like those on Noah's arc, I am checking my miserable butt into a big refuge on a hill, away from the stormy seas of Jack Daniels and liquor stores, without a clue of what will become of me in forty days and forty nights. Is there HOPE for ME? Will any birds bring me a message?

Here on this SS Recovery, I have had the time to consider my situation. How hopeless am I really? Hopelessness is the belief my situation will never improve. Is it really my place to pronounce myself hopeless? That seems like a job for someone higher, wiser, and more powerful. Someone I could get to know by moving on up some steps.

(con't. on page 4)

The God Stuff? (con't from front)

word God still aroused a certain antipathy. When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me this feeling was intensified. I didn't like the idea. I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature, but I resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving His sway might be."

Ebby suggested: "Why don't you choose your own conception of God?" "That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last."

"It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness I might build what I saw in my friend." At that point Bill (still drinking) attended Oxford Group meetings with Ebby.

II. On December 11th or 12th Bill once again went to Town's Hospital where he had his "white light experience." "There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost." From that sentence to the end of page 13 Bill goes over the third through the twelfth step of our program. Bill summarizes this in the last sentence on page 13: "Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements. At this point Bill takes what he has learned and his "white light experience" and begins preaching to others. He had no success getting others sober, but he remained sober.

III. Bill discussed his theory with Dr. Silkworth and Dr. Silkworth told Bill to hit hard on the disease concept!

In the Doctor's Opinion Dr. Silkworth states: "We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve." Dr. Silkworth goes on to say "In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives."

Later in this chapter he says: "This (the alcoholic's drinking sprees) is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery." (Therefore we have the problem: the allergy to alcohol and the solution: a spiritual experience!)

IV. On Page 16 in the forward to the Big Book it states: "From this doctor, the broker (Bill) had learned the grave nature of alcoholism. Though he could not accept all the tenets of the Oxford Groups, he was convinced of the need for moral inventory, confession of personality defects, restitution to those harmed, helpfulness to others, and the necessity of belief in and dependence upon God."

V. It states on page 13 of the Forward that: "To show other alcoholics *precisely how we have recovered* is the main purpose of this book." In researching this topic I also found where on page 45 in the chapter "We Agnostics" it states: "Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem." From this point on the Big Books focus is on finding this Power.

Dr. Bob is quoted in the last paragraph of Dr. Bob's Nightmare as saying: "If you think you are an atheist, agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you. If you still think you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails, if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you were getting another drink. Your Heavenly Father will never let you down."

(con't. on page 4)

The God Stuff *(con't from page 3)*

I submit to you that the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous is all about "The God Stuff". I will be forever grateful to have been lovingly walked through our 12 steps and found a Power that loves me and wants me to be happy, joyous, and free. All it took was the desperation that only the dying could have. May The Force Be With You.

Southeast Regional Forum Nov. 16, 2002
Patty T., Area 62, Panel 52 

God Doing for Me...


Submitted by Jay W., Seneca, SC

I was early in sobriety and, I suppose from all my years of drinking, my reading skills weren't quite where they needed to be. On top of that, my nerves were just a bit of a task. My home group had gotten the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, a cassette; so I decided to try it.

For some reason, the radio in my truck quit working at the same time I started my sobriety. Looking back now, I am able to see that this was a good thing. You see, because of this sort of "test", I was able to look deep within myself, and do a great deal of soul searching.

The following week, I had to go out of town on business, so I thought this would be a good opportunity to listen to the first 164 pages of the Big Book. I headed out at around 4:00 in the morning, and listened for about an hour. I wasn't making a very good connection. Yes, I could see the problem. I was just having a very hard time seeing the solution.

At this point, I decided that I had heard enough, so I thought that I would just put some music in. Well, the first tape seemed to drag. I realized that I'd recently bought a brand new tape, so I took it out of the wrapper and put it in. It, too, seemed to drag. I thought something might be wrong with the tape player, so I put the Big Book tape back in and it played just fine. During the entire trip, nothing but the Big Book tape would play in the cassette player. Coincidence? I think not.

Now, after four years of sobriety, I can read the Big Book and be thankful. I can see where God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. I do not believe in coincidences any more. I thank God of my understanding for the program of Alcoholics Anonymous today. 

Hope... *(con't from page 3)*

The first 3 steps are my great black and white hope. From recovery I have learned I can approach the first step in a state of hopelessness, because it is time to surrender. Time to accept that me and Jack will never be a match made in heaven. It is up to God to continue giving me another day, another chance, and another hope. I can't make my own diagnosis or say threatment is a waste of effort. In the Doctor's Opinion I read even someone educated in the science of medicine can not call me hopeless. Sure, "amongst physicians, the general opinion is most alcoholics are doomed." But wait! Don't pick up that drink yet. "The only hope, is through what we call a moral psychology."

What does that mean? For me it means accepting the concept of total abstinence from a depressant substance which robs me of hope. It means learning day by day to have total FAITH in a power that only wants the best for me.


I am not hopeless. If I was, why did God put into my mind and heart the women I have met here in rehab who also found their way to be living proof there is hope for all of us? Why did this facility answer the phone every two hours with such a hopeful tone of voice like there was a chance things would be okay once I arrived?

Recovery. It is to me the dove with the olive branch. It is good news. It is the poem by Emily Dickenson which says:

"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul...and signs the tune without the words...and never stops at all."

Hope will always be there. Like the birds that used to sit on the fence and squak away while I was trying to sleep off the night before. Hope is like the birds that tweet cheerfully and made me realize the day had come and I had been up tweeking all night.

I don't have to take the fist drink. I have been inspried by the women in recovery. If they can sober up, so can I. We cannot give up on each other. We have hope that the major disasters of our life turn out to be blessings.

Recovery is not just a bird with a sign that there is land out there, it is a good land, and I want to make it. 

Calendar of Events

Area Assembly Meetings:

June 17-18

Hosted by Districts 50 & 51
Workshop by Howard L.
(Southeast Trustee)

October 7-8

Southeast Conference:

August 10-13 Louisville, KY

Regional Forum:

December 1-3, Atlanta, GA

Westside AA Group History

Submitted by Nikki M.

The Westside Group of Alcoholics Anonymous began meetings at St. Mark United Methodist Church in early February, 1991. Harold G., Ebie G., Janie L., and Sam V. were the organizing members of the group. Registration of the Group was applied for in June and the Group Service number 171371 was issued in the fall of 1991.

Meetings were held Monday through Friday at 5:30 pm. Eventually the Monday, Friday and later, Wednesday meeting were eliminated due to fluctuating attendance. The group conscience decided to have two meetings each week and attendance improved. The Tuesday meeting was a Step Study reading from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and Thursday's closed meeting was a Big Book Study. These were the first such meetings offered in Greenwood.

The elected Trusted Servants for 1992-93 were Sam V. - GSR, Cal S.-Alternate GSR and Burl W. - Secretary/Treasurer. The group was active in service, attending most District 11 meetings and hosting the newly formed District 12 meetings in September 1994 and 1995.

