



Sobriety Variety



Published by the Hill Country Intergroup

1339 Lamar Square Drive, Suite 204, Austin TX 78704

Volume 6, Issue 10 - October 2006

If Only...

He slumped into his chair and raised a hand. He wanted to share. His arms were filled with jail-scarred tattoos. As he began, his head fell into his hands. His despair was palpable. His fate was sealed. Caught on a lesser violation with a breadth prior convictions it was clear he was going down for a long time. No reprieve.

Yet, his concern was not for himself alone, though he was concerned. His immediate concern was for those young kids in jail with him. When he told them he had spent twelve years in prison and was looking at a lot more, they were delighted. They thought he was "cool." His wish was that he could convince them that it wasn't cool at all. If only they would listen.

Perhaps his wish was to save himself as a young man. If only he had listened. If only he had ...

Though there is no way of proving it, we believe that early in our drinking careers

most of us could have stopped drinking. But the difficulty is that few alcoholics have enough desire to stop while there is yet time.

- Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 32.

I came into the program as a young man. AA was a lot different then. In those days, when you were an "old-timer" you were actually old. If you came in at forty-five years old, they called you "the Kid". I was all of twenty-two. They didn't know what to make of me. Why was I there?

"I spilled more on my tie than you drank in your entire life!" one old-timer laughed.

"Well... at least I got it all in my mouth, Grandpa!" I would quip.

I wasn't going to let them get to me. I wasn't sure if I was an alcoholic, but I knew one thing, I was twenty-two and I didn't think I would make it to twenty-three. I was scared and it was either AA or the nut house. This had to work.

There were plenty reasons to reject AA. I could find a hundred excuses... they were too religious, they didn't follow religion close enough, they were book-thumpers, they smoked, they were unreliable, they were irritable, they were racists. THEY WERE JUST PLAIN CRAZY!

Prayer of Bill the Tailor

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"

(Prov. 18:24) so with that belief I stand firm on this:

God is my best friend, he cares about the things I care about.

He loves me even when I'm unlovable.

He is always there to listen and advise when I need to talk things over.

God is my heavenly father.

He holds me in the palm of his hand.

He watches over me as the apple of his eye.

He wants me to grow up to be like him.

God is my rock, he is my refuge when I'm afraid, my strength when I am weak, my sure footing when I stumble.

God is my shepherd.

He finds me when I'm lost.

He gives me the rest when I'm tired.

He leads me when I don't know which way to go — that's been a lotta times.

God is my physician.

He mends my heart when it is broken.

He restores my peace of mind when I'm upset.

He heals my body when I'm sick.

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Given any time and any meeting one is bound to run into one of these characters... providing the perfect excuse to reject AA and try... what?

There was nothing left for me. I had hit my bottom, so I stayed in AA.

My sponsor told me that I must "give" in order to "get" but what did I have to give? I was a dead man. I stood no chance of making it. So that's what I shared.

I was a liar, but I had to tell this one truth. I wasn't going to make it. If only the newcomer could see that one truth perhaps they wouldn't follow my path.

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 58.

If the program was the path to success, perhaps the newcomer could take it, if only they could see that my path was failure....

I told a truth... one truth... for their sake. I wasn't following the program. I was just going to meetings and I was miserable. "If you want what I have...", well... you know.

I don't know if I changed minds, but I changed my own. That little seed of charity was enough. Thinking of my fellow alcoholic for a few moments, caring about their welfare for that brief time was enough. Telling that one truth was enough to get me through that first year. For next year it would take more, but for that first year it was enough. If only they had...

I have been sober continuously since November 14, 1977.

My name is no secret but as per tradition, I am anonymous in print, so call me Israel.



Sign Up Now!!!!

Answer the Intergroup *HOTLINE* phones

from your home (or cell phone)*

One night per quarter - 6:00 PM to 8:00 AM

OR

Sat. or Sun. day time - 8:00 AM TO 8:00 PM

Sat. or Sun. night time - 8:00 PM TO 8:00 AM

*Calls will be forwarded to your phone from the Intergroup office.

The service commitment is one night per quarter (every three months).

Requirements for this valuable service work are:

- 1) Six (6) months of continuous sobriety
- 2) Have taken AA's Twelve Steps
- 3) Familiar with the seventh chapter of the Big Book
- 4) Willing to make the above commitment for one (1) Year

ALSO

Work the phone desk at the Intergroup Office

Three hour shift between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM., M-F

Call Clint Ritter at (512)448-9017

From 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Monthly Meetings at Intergroup

- *Intergroup Reps*, 2nd Monday at 6:30 PM
- *Board of Trustees*, 3rd Thursday at 6:30 PM



AA History – Early Akron Recommended Reading List

"...the following literature has helped many members of Alcoholics Anonymous..."

- Alcoholics Anonymous (Works Publishing Company).
- The Holy Bible
- The Greatest Thing in the World, Henry Drummond.
- The Unchanging Friend, a series (Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee).
- As a Man Thinketh, James Allen.
- The Sermon on the Mount, Emmet Fox (Harper Bros.).
- The Self You Have to Live With, Winfred Rhoades.
- Psychology of Christian Personality, Ernest M. Ligon (Macmillan Co.).

September Volunteers at Intergroup

Office:	Hotline:					
Jim H.	Billy C.	Danyale B.	Mary T.	Emma Jane C.	Janna S.	Scotty H.
John P.	Jimmy F.	Barb S.	Ruben G.	Kelly F.	Paul B.	Christa D.
Bill H.	Patty	Miquelle K.	Dan/Kathy	Joe B.	Gayle B.	Darrius P.
Robert G.	Roland P.	Dave B.	Chinwe O.	Ned L.	Marty C.	
Dennis "Pete" P.	Kevin	Cory H.	Julie A.	Pam R.	Tom B.	
Leslie Ann D.	Michelle J.	Patrick G.	Joe McF.	Paul W.	Holly H.	
Marty C.	Pam R.	Michelle J.	Roland P.	John G.	Bob L.	
Karen D.	Scotty H.	James B.	Marc J.	Karen S.	Craig W.	
John B.		Larry K.	Connie/Mike	Linda/Mike	Megan	

- Abundant Living, E. Stanley Jones.
- The Man Nobody Knows, Bruce Barton."

[Comments from "The Early Akron Recommended Reading List: The Works It Contained and their Significance for Understanding Early Akron A.A. by Glenn C. (South Bend, Indiana)]

THE BIBLE was the second item on the list, right behind the Big Book. But earlier in the pamphlet it was made clear that there were certain places in the Bible that they wanted the newcomers to especially focus on: the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, the letter of James, 1 Corinthians 13, and Psalms 23 and 91. This was a typical early twentieth-century Protestant liberal selection of passages to emphasize, but they were also especially useful for A.A. purposes because none of them required the newcomer to believe in the divinity of Christ or that salvation could only be found by praying to Jesus.

HENRY DRUMMOND, The Greatest Thing in the World (45 pages long). His book was a beautiful commentary on 1 Corinthians 13. He was closely

associated with Dwight L. Moody in the 1870's, so we might describe him as one of the best examples of the richness and depth of thought which we can find in some parts of the nineteenth century evangelistic movement.

Drummond was a Scotsman, who was Professor of Natural Science at the College of the Free Church of Scotland, and had written a book

(famous in his lifetime but forgotten today) called Natural Law in the Spiritual World, which was an attempt to make peace between science and religion. This is important, because early A.A. had no sympathy whatsoever with religious people who were completely anti-scientific in their attitudes and who tried to deal with modern science by rejecting its findings. Early A.A. realized that there was a spiritual dimension of reality which went beyond anything which the scientific method could investigate, but they also realized that the profound discoveries of modern science could neither be denied nor neglected.

The modern evangelical movement, at its beginnings in the 1730's and 40's, had an enormously respectful attitude toward the new science. Both Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, the movement's two greatest theologians, were deeply interested in Newtonian physics, the new biological discoveries, modern medicine, electricity, and modern psychology. The evangelical movement remained



September Donations From Area AA Groups

Bridge to Shore	\$740	Wed. Rush Hour (Pflugerville)	\$50	Burnet Noon Group	\$300
Allandale	\$60	Liars Club (North)	\$403	Northland	\$442
Back to Basics (Granite Shoals)	\$50	Sunday Morning Sidewalk Mtg. (Bastrop)	\$125	Beautiful Downtown Driftwood Group	\$50
East Austin	\$120	Keep 1st Things 1st -	\$116	Central	\$60
Round Rock Big Book	\$13	Friday Night (Bastrop)	\$240	Lake Travis Serenity	\$150
Westlake	\$350	Hilltoppers	\$200	Brushy Creek	\$70
Into Action (Lockhart)	\$30	Emmaus	\$55	Westlake	\$350
Thurs. Nite Men's	\$60	Gattis Scool Rd. Group	\$16	North Austin 24	\$50
Dry Creek	\$95	Mon. Rush Hour (Pflugerville) -	\$50		
1825 (Pflugerville)	\$132	Suburban	\$15	Total:	\$4,392

positive in its attitude to modern science down through most of the nineteenth century, as we see in Henry Drummond. But then the Fundamentalist movement, with its often negative attitude toward modern science, began developing in a series of events which took place in 1895-1919.

JAMES ALLEN, As a Man Thinketh (34 pages long). He published his book in 1908 or a little before. I would also put his ideas in the same general category as New Thought, even though he was English. He may or may not have read any of the American authors in the general New Thought genre, which is why I hesitate to call him "New Thought" in the narrow sense of the term.

(to be continued in the next issue)

The first AA group to be formed in Akron, Ohio used spiritual materials they could find from various religious groups of the time. Much of the AA-related material in those days was not considered religious per se though nowadays we would see it as overtly so. That is how I read the history. Your mileage may vary. - your editor

HCIA Birthday Club New Members - September

John B. - 21 years
Steve B. - 22 years
Kim B. - 5 years

The Prayer of Bill the Tailor

(Continued from first page)

God is my savior. He forgives me when I let him down.

He delivers me when I am in danger. He saves me from the trouble I bring on myself.

God is my source.

He is my bread when I'm hungry, my water fountain when I'm thirsty, my bank even when I'm broke.

God is my law.

He is the ruler of my thoughts, the inspiration of my words, the initiator of my action.

God is my everything. Who is he to you?

God bless you all.

-- Bill Williams

Bill recited this prayer at the Kentucky State A.A. Convention around 1982.

A lifelong Baptist, he knew most of the Bible by heart. He had a tailor shop in Chicago. He joined A.A. in December 1945, as one of that city's earliest black members. Bill died on May 15, 2003, still travelling and speaking to A.A. groups almost to the end. May God bless his soul.

(edited biographical notes from Glenn C.)

Contact us

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