

THE NIGHT CAP

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AN INTERPRETATION OF THE TWELVE STEPS

Step Seven: "Humbly asked Him to
remove our shortcomings."

This step is so self-explanatory that very
little "interpretation" is required.

In taking the previous Step we have prepared ourselves for Step Seven. We have become willing to part with our defects of character -- our myriad shortcomings. There is left but the act of consummation. Resolved that these shortcomings are an impediment to peace of mind and a happy sobriety, we now humbly ask God - as we understand Him to remove these shortcomings.

- Merrill L. "Doc" F.

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WHAT IS A A ?

(The following appeared in a weekly pamphlet issued by the Woodlawn Christian Church for the edification of its members. Rev. Harry L. Owens is minister of the church and editor of the pamphlet. Rev. Owens is quite well known and liked by local A. A. members.)

"You have mentioned Alcoholics Anonymous frequently of late, and I would like to know just what it is." This statement was made to me recently. 1. A. A. is not a religion, not a medicine, but a way of life. One is not asked to join and seek to become a member. A. A. is spiritual. It is founded on faith of God. It is moral! It teaches self-examination, plus unselfish and clean living throughout. It is strong in fellowship. They are a big family: twelve groups in San Antonio. They number 200,000 sober members in the U. S. The whole family helps every member and the member helps the family. They believe in personal sacrifice. Many are

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THE STATE CONVENTION

A.A.'s of San Antonio are still in awe at one of the greatest manifestations of the "Higher Power" they have known.

It was shown in many ways: The perfect, punctual functioning of every one to whom a task was assigned; the happiness and gladness of everyone - from near and far; the thoughtful attention given to each of the splendid talks we heard; the joy in the bond of brotherhood which had delivered us from a common enemy. There were no "big wheels." Every one "fitted his britches." A large gathering of people who have been commonly blessed always discourages an emphasis on the ego.

A. A.'s are said to be procrastinators, but if so, this was the exception. Twenty six people from out of town were asked to appear on the program. All accepted, and all arrived on or ahead of time.

Beginning with an address of our own Bishop Everett H. Jones, the messages given by each were the most inspirational the writer has ever heard.

To do a reportorial justice to each speaker is both beyond the powers of and the space allotted to your scribe. It is enough to say, as one speaker did, "I got my bucket full." Every one got his measure filled, "shaken down, pressed together, and running over."

Now for a few of the facts and figures. Although this was a state convention, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida were represented in the more than 450 registrations; 415 persons attended the banquet on Saturday night and enjoyed the floor show and dancing afterward.

As noticed in the program, the coffee bar opened at 9:00 A.M. on Friday, and

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WHAT IS A.A.?(Continued from Page 1)

ready to help another alcoholic, who is fighting a battle, any hour of the day or night.

One need not be down in the gutter, or drunk twenty-four hours to need their help. Their slogan: "If you drink that's your business, if you have a drinking problem, that's our business."

Here are their famous twelve steps:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as
(Continued on Column 2 above)

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the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The blessing of A.A. is that it helps people who are unable to help themselves. It is a tragedy that so many must suffer so long before they desire to really stop drinking.

* * *

(Then, under a dash, was the following, which is also of great interest to all A.A. members:)

HOW TO PRAY - - TEN SIMPLE RULES.

I

Pray where you are. God is present everywhere and ready to listen.

II

Pray when possible in a quiet spot where you can be alone. It is well to fix your mind deliberately on God, apart from confusing distractions.

III

Pray to God simply and naturally, as to a friend. Tell him what is on your mind. Get help from the prayers of others.

IV

Pray remembering the good things God has done for you. Reckon up your blessings from time to time and give thanks for them.

V

Pray for God's forgiveness for the unworthy things that you may have done. He is near to a humble and contrite heart.

VI

Pray for the things that you need, especially those that will make your life finer and more Christlike.

VII

Pray for others, remembering the situations they confront and the help they need.

VIII

Pray for the world in its need, asking God to bring better things and offering your help to Him.

IX

Pray above everything else that God's will
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stayed open until all had departed on Sunday. If there is any doubt that coffee is the A. A. tippie: 124 gallons were consumed in that time.

The three chairmen performed their appointed tasks in a masterly manner. Zulime B., coffee; Minnie C., luncheon; and Kate R., registration. All had many able assistants and the tasks all moved smoothly and efficiently to their completion.

Each chairman wishes especially to thank each one who so willingly and ably assisted them.

Special mention is due Ira P. of Corpus Christi, who lent his aid so willingly and efficiently wherever he could be of help.

- ORLO Q.

A FURTHER WORD OF APPRECIATION
TO A.A.'S AND NON-A.A.'S

We are not unmindful of your contribution to the most interesting, informative and inspirational of Texas State Conventions of Alcoholics Anonymous, recently held in San Antonio. This timely and sincere convention didn't just happen; it was the result of efficient planning, the aid and counsel of yourself and others, the acceptance of your share of the responsibility not to fail those who need us.

Our Central Committee for AA in this metropolitan area, as well as the Convention Committee, expresses our gratitude to you and others for your splendid cooperation.

The Ft. Worth groups will be host for the 1954 Convention.

Dr. Joseph J. "M" Otto L. (Doc) "B"
Convention Chairman Convention Secretary

HOW TO PRAY -- TEN SIMPLE RULES
(Concluded from Page Two)

may be done in you and in the world. His purposes are deeper and wiser than anything we can imagine.

X

Pray, and then start answering your prayer.

* * *

THE NON-A.A. MEETING & LUNCHEON

The ladies luncheon sponsored by the local Non-A.A.'s proved to be one of the outstanding events of the convention. From the moment one entered the lovely roof garden with its cooling shades of green highlighted by the brilliant hues of the lovely floral arrangements, to the last spoken word every minute was a feast indeed. Much credit is here due Minnie C., who graciously assumed responsibility for the general arrangements.

Some 30 minutes between the luncheon and the program was utilized in an Open Forum discussion. Speakers from other groups gave impromptu informative and inspirational talks on ways to help new members of Non-A.A. and their groups.

Eloise C. of Austin presided with her usual inimitable charm. The fresh approach and versatility of the four speakers to the many phases of the part of the Non-A.A. in the overall program was refreshing to the older members and informative to the newer ones. Hal H. of San Angelo spoke of her appreciation to A.A. for giving her a more normal home and two lovely children. From her introductory remark that she had promised her husband that she would not spend her time talking about the children and would keep the promise, but that she did have some pictures and would be glad to meet with any other doting mama immediately following the meeting, her charm and humor held her audience while she led us into the more serious aspects of her talk.

Gene P. of Corpus Christi ably discussed the relatively untouched topic, "What of A.A. Children?" I am sure that all mothers present were encouraged by her sound reasoning and conclusions.

Dr. Ross Owens of S. A. reviewed his typical interview with wives of alcoholics. His simple explicit suggestions for aids to a beginning A.A., from prescribed diet to the psychological approach, as illustrated by "keeping the Vitamin pills where he can get 'em but don't tell him to take them," were appreciated by all.

Peggy M. of Dallas closed the meeting by giving the most repeated questions asked
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BIRTHDAYS FOR JULY - 1953

- 1 Year: Robert T., "Bob" A., Lillian C., Foster "Tim" M.
- 2 Years: Audrey B., G. W., "Cliff" M.
- 3 Years: Robert K., "Bob" C., C. L. "Cliff" H.
- 4 Years: Sy S.
- 5 Years: Joe C., Katherine O., "Bill" O.
- 6 Years: Charlie U.
- 7 Years: Art B., Claude R.
- 10 Years: Capt. Joe C. A.

(THE NON-A.A. LUNCHEON
- Concluded from Page Three)

her by Non-A.A.'s and her answers to them. Her sound reasoning and suggestions coupled with her superior ability as a public speaker will long be remembered by all who heard her.

So, on behalf of the San Antonio A.A.'s, we want to thank "Doc" for bringing this unusual talent to us and say to all our friends who gave so generously of their time and talents, simply:

Many thanks until we meet again --
And God be with you.

- E. B.

THREE COSTLY EVILS - -

AND A FREE SOLUTION !

1. Drunkenness costs this country close to a billion dollars a year.
2. One out of every ten persons in the United States needs mental treatment of some kind.
3. And 22,000 Americans kill themselves every year.

These three epidemics - INTOXICATION, MENTAL ILLNESS, AND SUICIDE - indicate that personal mental crises are characteristic of our generation.

C. G. Jung, one of the three most distinguished of all psychiatrists, living or dead, gives us this revealing glimpse into his world-famous clinic: "Among all my patients in the second half of life, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook."

To many who have abandoned spiritual concepts, this must be throwing a new light on it. Walter Lippman once said that Americans were suffering from "rootlessness." This idea illustrates what happens when a man severs all connection with his Creator. At once he is adrift on a shoreless ocean. There is nowhere to go, nothing to do but drift. A man without God has deprived himself of any hope of a landfall. He expects never to see land. All his sufferings seem in vain; all things that can be hoped for appear empty.

Scientists have come to realize not only that the health of the soul seriously affects the health of the mind, but that the whole man is in danger when deprived of spiritual food. Just as people are physically weak when famine stalks the land, so they are mentally abnormal when spiritual starvation withers the soul.

People who see this truth are not puzzled by the problems of alcoholism, insanity or suicide. They see at once that help will come to them not from the doctor but from God. The only intelligent course is to search for God.

And the first thing to do is pray.

- "Recovery"

REAL ADVENTURES AND TRIUMPHS OF THE SOUL

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Often people say, "I would like to do some good in the world, but with so many petty responsibilities, my nose is always to the grindstone. I am sunk in my own petty affairs, and there is no chance for my life to mean anything."

This is a common and dangerous error. In helpfulness to others, every man can find on his own doorstep adventures for the soul — our greatest source of peace and lifelong satisfaction. To experience this happiness, one does not have to neglect duties or do spectacular things.

This career is for the spirit, and there is no pay except for the privilege of doing it. In such a program you will encounter noble opportunities to help your fellow man. Here, all your reserve power can be put to work, for what the world lacks most today is men who occupy themselves with the needs of others. In this unselfish labor, blessing falls on both the helper and the helped.

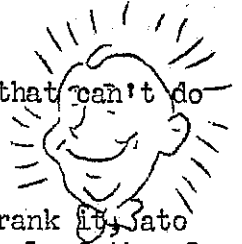
Without spiritual adventures, the man or woman of today walks in darkness. In the pressures of modern society we tend to lose our individuality. Our craving for creation and self-expression is stifled; true civilization is, to that extent, retarded.

What is the remedy? No matter how busy one is, he can still assert his personality by seizing every opportunity for spiritual activity. How? By helpfulness to others. The A A program teaches that. By means of personal action, on however small a scale, one can assert himself spiritually. He will not have to look far for opportunities; they are at his doorstep every day.

The moment we understand and feel sorry for the next man and forgive him, we wash ourselves, and it is a cleaner world. But why must I forgive my fellow man? Because if I do not forgive everyone, I shall be untrue to myself. I shall then be acting as if I were innocent of the same offenses — and I am not. (Continued on Column 2) →

SMILE WITH US

(This is the kind of corn that can't do us any harm)



*

A man ordered a martini, drank it, ate the olive, chewed up the bowl of the glass and threw the stem over his shoulder.

"I guess you think I'm crazy, don't you?" he said to the bartender, who stood staring at him.

"I sure do," replied the bartender, "The stems are the best part."

*

A go-getter is a man who finds a worm in his apple this morning and has fish for dinner tonight.

*

Today is the tomorrow you were worrying about yesterday.

*

"Dick, when you were in Rome, did you do as the Romans do?"

"Gosh, no! I had my wife with me."

*

All too often a clear conscience is the result of a bad memory.

*

Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday.

*

The owner of a saloon was awakened at 9 a.m. by the ringing of his telephone. "Thish ish Mullins, yer bosht cushtomer," said a voice. "What time are you going to open yer place today?" "You know the law says 11 a.m. You can't get in until then," he replied. "Thash jush it," said Mullins, "I am in. I want out."

I must forgive lies directed against me because so many times my own conduct has been blemished with lies. I must forgive the lovelessness, the hatred, the slander, the fraud, and the arrogance which I encounter; since I, myself, have so often lacked love, have hated, slandered, lied, defrauded, and have been arrogant. And I must forgive without noise or fuss. In general, I do not always succeed in forgiving fully; I do not progress so far as to always be just. But he who tries to live by this principle, simple and yet difficult as it may be, will know the real adventures and triumphs of the soul.

- Reprint from "The Key"

