



NATURE COAST JOURNAL

JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2020



Nature Coast Intergroup Presents



2020 Chili Cookoff

Calvary Chapel
960 S U.S. HWY 41
Inverness, FL 34450

Saturday February 8th, 2020
2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

**\$4.00 Suggested donation
at the door**

includes chili, hot dogs, chips, soda, coffee

Speaker meeting - Fellowship - 50/50 raffle

Desserts welcome

**Please enter a chili for the competition!
Come & warm up the winter!**

A Fragment of History

By Bill W.

Re-Printed from AA Grapevine, July 1953

AA's are always asking: "Where did the Twelve Steps come from?" In the last analysis, perhaps nobody knows. Yet some of the events which led to their formulation are as clear to me as though they took place yesterday.

So far as people were concerned, the main channels of inspiration for our Steps were three in number -- the Oxford Groups, Dr. William D. Silkworth of Townes Hospital and the famed psychologist, William James, called by some the father of modern psychology. The story of how these streams of influence were brought together and how they led to the writing of our Twelve Steps is exciting and in spots downright incredible.

Many of us will remember the Oxford Groups as a modern evangelical movement which flourished in the 1920's and early 30's, led by a one-time Lutheran minister, Dr. Frank Buchman. The Oxford Groups of that day threw heavy emphasis on personal work, one member with another. AA's Twelfth Step had its origin in that vital practice. The moral backbone of the "O.G." was absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love. They also practiced a type of confession, which they called "sharing"; the making of amends for harms done they called "restitution." They believed deeply in their "quiet time," (*continued on page 3*)

January 12th & February 2nd

Nature Coast Intergroup meets at 4:30pm

Followed by District Business Meeting at 5:45pm

Intergroup & District 28 meet at Shepherd of

the Hills Episcopal Church,

2540 W. Norvell Bryant

Highway (CR 486), Lecanto

HOTLINE 352-621-0599

The Big Book Of AA ~ "Acceptance"

"And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation -- some fact of my life -- unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment." Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes."

EACYPAA XVIII

PITTSBURGH PA MARCH 26-29 2020

WESTIN CONVENTION CENTER

EACYPAA2020.ORG



Our Pick Struck

GOLD

Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."

*for more on tradition 1 see page 6

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

CONTRIBUTIONS

District 28

P.O. Box 640914
Beverly Hills, FL 34464

Nature Coast Intergroup

P.O. Box 2634
Crystal River, FL 34423

North Florida Area Conference

(Please write District 28 and your group number on the check)

Make checks payable to NFAC and send to:

P.O. Box 10094
Jacksonville FL 32247

General Service Office

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

(continued from front page)... a meditation practiced by groups and individuals alike, in which the guidance of God was sought for every detail of living, great or small.

These basic ideas were not new; they could have been found elsewhere. But the saving thing for us first alcoholics who contacted the Oxford Groupers was that they laid great stress on these particular principles. And fortunate for us was the fact that the Groupers took special pains not to interfere with one's personal religious views. Their society, like ours later on, saw the need to be strictly non-denominational.

In the late summer of 1934, my well-loved alcoholic friend and schoolmate "Ebby" had fallen in with these good folks and had promptly sobered up. Being an alcoholic, and rather on the obstinate side, he hadn't been able to "buy" all the Oxford Group ideas and attitudes. Nevertheless, he was moved by their deep sincerity and felt mighty grateful for the fact that their ministrations had, for the time being, lifted his obsession to drink.

When he arrived in New York in the late fall of 1934, Ebby thought at once of me. On a bleak November day he rang up. Soon he was looking at me across our kitchen table at 182 Clinton Street, Brooklyn, New York. As I remember that conversation, he constantly used phrases like these: "I found I couldn't run my own life;" "I had to get honest with myself and somebody else;" "I had to make restitution for the damage I had done;" "I had to pray to God for guidance and strength, even though I wasn't sure there was any God;" "And after I'd tried hard to do these things I found that my craving for alcohol left." Then over and over Ebby would say something like this: "Bill, it isn't a bit like being on the water wagon. You don't fight the desire to drink - you get released from it. I never had such a feeling before."

Such was the sum of what Ebby had extracted from his Oxford Group friends and had transmitted to me that day. While these simple ideas were not new, they certainly hit me like tons of brick. Today we understand just why that was...one alcoholic was talking to another as no one else can.

Two or three weeks later, December 11th to be exact, I staggered into the Charles B. Townes Hospital, that famous drying-out emporium on Central Park West, New York City. I'd been there before, so I knew and already loved the doctor in charge -- Dr. Silkworth. It was he who was soon to contribute a very great idea without which AA could never have succeeded. For years he had been proclaiming alcoholism an illness, an obsession of the mind coupled with an allergy of the body. By now I knew this meant me. I also understood what a fatal combination these twin ogres could be. Of course, I'd once hoped to be among the small percentage of victims who now and then escape their vengeance. But this outside hope was now gone. I was about to hit bottom. That verdict of science -- the obsession that condemned me to drink and the allergy that condemned me to die -- was about to do the trick. That's where the medical science, personified by this benign little doctor, began to fit it in. Held in the hands of one alcoholic talking to the next, this double-edged truth was a sledgehammer which could shatter the tough alcoholic's ego at depth and lay him wide open to the grace of God.

In my case it was of course Dr. Silkworth who swung the sledge while my friend Ebby carried to me the spiritual principles and the grace which brought on my sudden spiritual awakening at the hospital three days later. I immediately knew that I was a free man. And with this astonishing experience came a feeling of wonderful certainty that great numbers of alcoholics might one day enjoy the priceless gift which had been bestowed upon me.

Third Influence

At this point a third stream of influence entered my life through the pages of William James' book, "Varieties of Religious Experience." Somebody had brought it to my hospital room. Following my sudden experience, Dr. Silkworth had taken great pains to convince me that I had not hallucinated. But William James did even more. Not only, he said, could spiritual experiences make people saner, they could transform men and women so that they could do, feel and believe what had hitherto been impossible to them. It mattered little whether these awakenings were sudden or gradual, their variety could be almost infinite. But the biggest payoff of that noted book was this: in most of the cases described, those who had been transformed were hopeless people. In some controlling area of their lives they had met absolute defeat. Well, that was me all right. In complete defeat, with no hope or faith whatever, I had made an appeal to a higher Power. I had taken Step One of today's AA program -- "admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable." I'd also take Step Three - "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood him." Thus was I set free. It was just as simple, yet just as mysterious, as that.

These realizations were so exciting that I instantly joined up with the Oxford Groups. But to their consternation I insisted on devoting myself exclusively to drunks. This was disturbing to the O.G.'s on two counts. Firstly, they wanted to help save the whole world. Secondly, their luck with drunks had been poor. Just as I joined they had been working over a batch of alcoholics who had proved disappointing indeed. One of them, it was rumored, had flippantly cast his shoe through a valuable stained glass window of an Episcopal church across the alley from O.G. headquarters. Neither did they take kindly to my repeated declaration that it shouldn't take long to sober up all the drunks in the world. They rightly declared that my conceit was still immense. (continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

Something Missing

After some six months of violent exertion with scores of alcoholics which I found at a nearby mission and Townes Hospital, it began to look like the Groupers were right. I hadn't sobered up anybody. In Brooklyn we always had a houseful of drinkers living with us, sometimes as many as five. My valiant wife, Lois, once arrived home from work to find three of them fairly tight. They were whaling each other with two-by-fours. Though events like these slowed me down somewhat, the persistent conviction that a way to sobriety could be found never seemed to leave me. There was, though, one bright spot. My sponsor, Ebby, still clung precariously to his new-found sobriety.

What was the reason for all these fiascoes? If Ebby and I could achieve sobriety, why couldn't all the rest find it too? Some of those we'd worked on certainly wanted to get well. We speculated day and night why nothing much had happened to them. Maybe they couldn't stand the spiritual pace of the Oxford Group's four absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. In fact some of the alcoholics declared that this was the trouble. The aggressive pressure upon them to get good overnight would make them fly high as geese for a few weeks and then flop dismally. They complained, too, about another form of coercion - something the Oxford Groupers called "guidance for others." A "team" composed of non-alcoholic Groupers would sit down with an alcoholic and after a "quiet time" would come up with precise instructions as to how the alcoholic should run his own life. As grateful as we were to our O.G. friends, this was sometimes tough to take. It obviously had something to do with the wholesale skidding that went on.

But this wasn't the entire reason for failure. After months I saw the trouble was mainly in me. I had become very aggressive, very cocksure. I talked a lot about my sudden spiritual experience, as though it was something very special. I had been playing the double role of teacher and preacher. In my exhortations I'd forgotten all about the medical side of our malady, and that need for deflation at depth so emphasized by William James had been neglected. We weren't using that medical sledgehammer that Dr. Silkworth had so providentially given us.

Finally, one day, Dr. Silkworth took me back down to my right size. Said he, "Bill, why don't you quit talking so much about that bright light experience of yours, it sounds too crazy. Though I'm convince that nothing but better morals will make alcoholics really well, I do think you have got the cart before the horse. The point is that alcoholics won't buy all this moral exhortation until they convince themselves that they must. If I were you I'd go after them on the medical basis first. While it is never done any good for me to tell them how fatal their malady is, it might be a very different story if you, a formerly hopeless alcoholic, gave them the bad news. Bemuse of this identification you naturally have with alcoholics, you might be able to penetrate where I can't. Give them the medical business first, and give it to them hard. This might soften them up so they will accept the principles that will really get them well."

Then Came Akron

Shortly after this history-making conversation, I found myself in Akron, Ohio, on a business venture which promptly collapsed. Alone in the town, I was scared to death of getting drunk. I was no longer a teacher or a preacher, I was an alcoholic who knew that he needed another alcoholic as much as that one could possibly need me. Driven by that urge, I was soon face to face with Dr. Bob. It was at once evident that Dr. Bob knew more of the spiritual things than I did. He also had been in touch with the Oxford Groupers at Akron. But somehow he simply couldn't get sober. Following Dr. Silkworth's advice, I used the medical sledgehammer. I told him what alcoholism was and just how fatal it could be. Apparently this did something to Dr. Bob. On June 10, 1935, he sobered up, never to drink again. When, in 1939, Dr. Bob's story first appeared in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, he put one paragraph of it in italics. Speaking of me, he said: *"Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience."*

The Missing Link

Dr. Silkworth had indeed supplied us the missing link without which the chain of principles now forged into our Twelve Steps could never have been complete. Then and there, the spark that was to become Alcoholics Anonymous had been struck.

During the next three years after Dr. Bob's recovery our growing groups at Akron, New York and Cleveland evolved the so-called word-of-mouth program of our pioneering time. As we commenced to form a society separate from the Oxford Group, we began to state our principles something like this:

1. *We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol*
2. *We got honest with ourselves*

(continued on page 7)

CITRUS COUNTY SHARES. . .

Living the Triangle!

Around here and in most places AA thrives, members of AA receive coins or chips to mark milestones in recovery. The coins have a sobriety circle and triangle symbol on them as a symbol used by AA. The triangle represents the three-part answer (legacies): unity, recovery and service - to a three-part disease - physical, mental and spiritual. The circle represents wholeness or oneness.

The Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous are Recovery, Unity, and Service. These legacies have been passed down to us from the co-founders and all the AA members preceding us.

Recovery is contained in the Big Book and Twelve Steps. The Twelve Steps of AA guide our actions in recovery as individuals. Unity is contained in the Twelve Traditions. The Twelve Traditions of AA guide our actions as a group. Service is contained in every act which helps A.A. function or which carries the A.A. message to those who need it. The Twelve Concepts for World Service guide our actions as an assembly in service.

During Dr. Bob's brief remarks at the First International A.A. Convention in Cleveland, Ohio (July 1950), he summarized the following: "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 all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service." We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So, let's bear those two things in mind."

Service is vital to my recovery! In 2008 I got sober in District 28. My first sponsor, God bless his soul, Don C. taught me the importance of "Living the Triangle!" He reminded me that the triangle is like a three-legged stool. The stool cannot stand if one leg is missing. Sobriety for me will not stand if a legacy is missing. He and my subsequent sponsors and service sponsor mentored me in all levels of service work including coffee making, greeting, sponsorship, 12 step calls, answering the hot line, chairing meetings, planning workshops, service as an Intergroup Representative, service as a General Service Representative, D.C.M. and Intergroup Chair. Today, service work continues to be a foundation of my sobriety!

Are you LIVING THE TRIANGLE? Recovery, Unity and Service. . .are all necessary ingredients! For those that have served and/or currently serving with Nature Coast Intergroup, District 28, or your own home group. **THANK YOU!** For those that have not, please give living the triangle a chance. AA needs your participation at all levels of service.

-Steve N

2019 Gratitude Dinner Report

Many thanks to all those who attended and thanks to the many who shared their time volunteering in all phases of the tremendous event. The food was delicious, especially the dessert tables. From my perspective, the event came off without a hitch. Big thanks to Ingrid and Bob for hosting a lovely Night in St. Benedicts Fellowship Hall. Kudos to Dean and Gina for their great Archive and Literature presentations.

It is my privilege and honor to announce the 2020 chili cookoff on February 8th, at the Calgary Chapel in Inverness.

It was another grand year of events in 2019. Thank you all for allowing me to be of service and thank God for the strength to do so.

-Michael D., Alcoholic

Tradition One

Re-printed from AA Grapevine, December 1947

Our whole AA program is securely founded on the principle of humility -- that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are -- "a small part of a great whole". Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why AA Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in AA the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has not "musts." Few AA groups impose penalties on anyone for nonconformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or noncompliance with any principle of AA is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some of us argue, "if AA has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we AAs cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So, it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without AA there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm AA. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

-submitted by Dean B.

WE NEED YOUR STORIES!

Tell us about "what it was like, what happened and what it is like now."

In upcoming issues, Nature Coast Journal will publish your brief stories about:

Laughter and Fun in Sobriety, Balance in and out of AA, The Steps,

Living Your Dreams In Sobriety, AA Humor/ Jokes

Send us stories on any topic sobriety

related!

e-mail: news@ncintergroup.com

(continued from page 4)

3. We got honest with another person, in confidence
4. We made amends for harms done others
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could

Though these principles were advocated according to the whim or liking of each of us, and though in Akron and Cleveland they still stuck by the O.G. absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, this was the gist of our message to incoming alcoholics up to 1939, when our present Twelve Steps were put to paper.

I well remember the evening on which the Twelve Steps was written. I was lying in bed quite dejected and suffering from one of my imaginary ulcer attacks. Four chapters of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, had been roughed out and read in meetings at Akron and New York. We quickly found that everybody wanted to be an author. The hassles as to what should go into our new book were terrific. For example, some wanted a purely psychological book which would draw in alcoholics without scaring them. We could tell them about the "God business" afterwards. A few, led by our wonderful southern friend, Fitz M., wanted a fairly religious book infused with some of the dogma we had picked up from the churches and missions which had tried to help us. The louder the arguments, the more I felt in the middle. It appeared that I wasn't going to be the author at all. I was only going to be an umpire who would decide the contents of the book. This didn't mean, though, that there

wasn't terrific enthusiasm for the undertaking. Every one of us was wildly excited at the possibility of getting our message before all those countless alcoholics who still didn't know.

Having arrived at Chapter Five, it seemed high time to state what our program really was. I remember running over in my mind the word-of-mouth phrases then in current use. Jotting these down, they added up to the six named above. Then came the idea that our program ought to be more accurately and clearly stated. Distant readers would have to have a precise set of principles. Knowing the alcoholic's ability to rationalize, something airtight would have to be written. We couldn't let the reader wiggle out anywhere. Besides, a more complete statement would help in the chapters to come where we would need to show exactly how the recovery program ought to be worked.

12 Steps in 30 Minutes

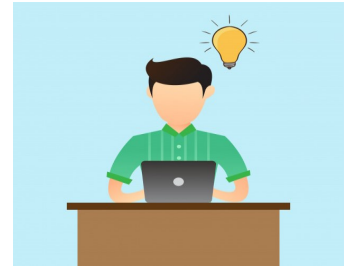
At length I began to write on a cheap yellow tablet. I split the word-of-mouth program up into smaller pieces, meanwhile enlarging its scope considerably. Uninspired as I felt, I was surprised that in a short time, perhaps half an hour, I had set down certain principles which, on being counted, turned out to be twelve in number. And for some unaccountable reason, I had moved the idea of God into the Second Step, right up front. Besides, I had named God very liberally throughout the other steps. In one of the steps I had even suggested that the newcomer get down on his knees.

When this document was shown to our New York meeting the protests were many and loud. Our agnostic friends didn't go at all for the idea of kneeling. Others said we were talking altogether too much about God. And anyhow, why should there be twelve steps when we had done fine on six? Let's keep it simple, they said.

This sort of heated discussion went on for days and nights. But out of it all there came a ten-strike for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our agnostic contingent, spearheaded by Hank P. and Jim B., finally convinced us that we must make it easier for people like themselves by using such terms as "a Higher Power" or "God as we understand Him!" Those expressions, as we so well know today, have proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic. They have enabled thousands of us to make a beginning where none could have been made had we left the steps just as I originally wrote them. Happily for us there were no other changes in the original draft and the number of steps stood at twelve. Little did we then guess that our Twelve Steps would soon be widely approved by clergymen of all denominations and even by our latter-day friends, the psychiatrists.

This little fragment of history ought to convince the most skeptical that nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. It just grew...by the grace of God.

-Submitted by Dean B.



**FOR THE LATEST MEETING
TIMES,
LOCATIONS, NEWS, AND
RESOURCES
VISIT
NCINTERGROUP.COM**

Upcoming Anniversaries
January & February 2020

CRYSTAL RIVER GROUP
JANUARY

George G	55
Jim H	40
Karol H	35
Gary R	32
Jeff K	29
Lorie W	29
Stacy M	29
Joe B	28
Michid R	22
Bob G	21
Lisa B	20
Kim L	19
Bill B	18
Monk R	10
Caril B	9
Bill B	9
Jen S	6
Rusty B	6
Janet F	6
Barbara K	6
Kathy N	5
Jill A	5
Cecelia	4
Elyse	2
Joe P	2
FEBRUARY	
Janice G	19
Jackie R	11
Debbie Lee	6
JD	1

HOLDER WAY OF LIFE

JANUARY

Dave D.	34
Bob M.	27

FEBRUARY

Bev C.	38
--------	----

WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIP GROUP

JANUARY

Gayle	37
Tommie P.	33
Arlene	30
Trish	27
Judy	18
Lynn	6
Nancy	1

FEBRUARY

Marcie	29
--------	----

SOBER SAND GNATS

JANUARY

Jim H.	40
Wally S.	14

FEBRUARY

John B.	23
John W.	11
Tim H.	3

REAL HAPPY HOUR

JANUARY

CarolAnn	41
Allan G.	33
Steve K.	11

FEBRUARY

Kenya	2
Ray	1

