

Many don't realize that there is different fellowships of AA as well as the difference between the fellowship and the Fellowship of the Spirit.

AA as set forth by the pioneers at it's inception was two people who through their own trial and errors had failed to stay sober on their own.

Dr. Bob had a great knowledge of the word of God but knew nothing of the physical and mental states of the alcoholic other than, like all of us real alcoholics, his experience with trying to stay sober. He also knew nothing of the need for the strenuous work of helping others.

Bill on the other hand had the knowledge of the hopelessness but did not know anything about God. He had the basis for a beginning which was the Oxford group adage passed on to him by Ebby to pick your own conception of God, and that you could make a start from there. He also saw the need to help others. But failing to enlarge his spiritual life through coming to understand Gods will through his word, had Bill teetering on the brink of drinking and his sobriety was a joke. At the same time Dr. Bob could not stay sober.

Alcoholics Anonymous was formed on the biblical principals given to Bill by Ebby along with the biblical understanding given to Bob by years of scripture study, and recognizing the need to share what they had found together with others.

None of this means anything to the alcoholic without first coming to understand why they could not stay content while being sober,(mental obsession), and could not stop once the first few drinks brought them the peace of mind that they could not find sober,(physical allergy). Only then would they attack the principles or steps with the fervor needed to come into a relationship with Jesus and have the desire to share how they were cured of their illness with others.

The beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous but not the start of the Fellowship of the Spirit! The Fellowship of the Spirit has been around ever since God revealed Himself to mankind. AA came about as a way for the suffering drunk to enter into the Fellowship of the Spirit and come into a way of living that we were created for.

Whether or not this chance meeting by Bill and Bob was divine intervention we will never know. Some of us may get the chance to ask God one day.

After this meeting the AA formed in Akron stayed the same for a few years. Drunks surrendering themselves to Jesus and then leading others to Christ.

Bill went back to New York and, not having the success they had in Akron, softened the message. He later regretted the fact that he had done this. Out the window went Jesus and in came virtually anything you wanted to choose as your god. About the same time we have the traditions introduced. We can not evolve with out having something to govern us. I wonder at what point God became unable to govern us?

Then we have treatment centers and people who are not real alcoholics wanting to join in on the fellowship of other sober individuals. **NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT.** The only thing you

need to have to join the fellowship is a desire to not drink. At least that was the requirement given to us when we became an institution.

In our desire throughout the years to see AA grow and not fade away, what we really have done is get farther away from what it was founded on. Our human frailties had once again added imperfection to something that we tried to fix when it was not broken. I doubt that any of us have taken part in an AA meeting as it was designed to be. Back to basics tried to bring it back but failed! Primary purpose groups have brought it back to the early New York scene, but like New York, have fallen woefully short. Scripture reading and prayer as well as quiet time and the sharing of guidance received. Introducing the new person to Jesus on their knees and taking part in their surrender to God.

All of us as we become too involved in our own selfishness see the perfect way and perfect order that things must fall or it is not AA as we think it should be! But the fact is that since right before the big book was written AA as it was intended to be ceased to exist. The simple message and cure for all our problems whether they be overeating or depression, drug abuse or sex addiction. Or for the alcoholic the inability to stop drinking which often brought about all the other problems and more. The pioneers often said to keep it simple.:

*...a simple religious idea and a practical program of action.* **Basic text pg 9**

Surrender our selfishness to God through the program of AA, biblical principles which were put into the form of steps to make it easy to understand.

The original steps:

1. 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 and direction 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 willing that God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly, on our knees, asked Him to remove our shortcomings - holding nothing back.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make complete amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever 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 contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of this course of action, we tried to carry this message to others, especially alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## Forward 1st Edition

*This is the Foreword as it appeared in the first printing of the first edition in 1939.*

*We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book. For them, we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary.*

This is what AA is all about a book showing others precisely how they recovered. The facts of what the pioneers did precisely has not changed. **But the fellowship has!**

*We shall be interested to hear from those who are getting results from this book, particularly from those who have commenced work with other alcoholics. We should like to be helpful to such cases. Forward 1st edition*

Would like to be helpful to such cases where they are getting the same results that the pioneers got. AA and the history of where our basic text comes from is not hard to find. The results that the pioneers got is drastically different than the results found around the rooms of AA today. The pioneers came into a relationship with their Creator Jesus Christ! In most AA meetings today we are told to pick a god to serve and meet our needs, not the God we were created to serve.

## Forward 2nd Edition

Figures given in this foreword describe the Fellowship as it was in 1955.

*Sixteen years have elapsed between our first printing of this book and the presentation of 1955 of our second edition Forward 2nd edition*

This is important because it shows how much the message has changed over the years. In just 16 years between the original forward to the forward to the second addition **the rate of those who had recovered was cut in half.**

*These made their impressions everywhere. Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But great numbers of these-about two out of three-began to return as time passed. Forward 2nd edition*

Of alcoholics who really tried in 1939 rarely did they see a person fail who had thoroughly followed their path.

Without even realizing it the revamped edition of the basic text is showing how AA has changed in just 16 years. By the time we get to the 3rd and 4th edition forwards they don't even talk about becoming recovered, they talk about numbers of members in the fellowship:

## **Forward 3rd Edition**

*By March 1976, when this edition went to the printer, the total worldwide membership of Alcoholics Anonymous was conservatively estimated at more than 1,000,000, with almost 28,000 groups meeting in over 90 countries.* **Forward to the third edition**

And the **change in customs and practices within the fellowship:**

## **Forward 4th Edition**

*While our literature has preserved the AA message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the fellowship.* **Forward to the fourth edition**

Sadly enough while the big book has preserved the AA message, the very message that was presented in the first 164 pages, (the program of alcoholics anonymous), has evolved along with the change in customs and practices.

Many who follow the suggestions in the basic text can be brought to a state of peace and contentment **but** that joy will be increased if we continue to grow in knowledge and understanding by seeking Gods will as the first 100 men and women did. **Unfortunately the alcoholic on his or her last leg needs to have the original message presented to them in it's pure form just as the pioneers did, to join the Fellowship of the Spirit.**

The numbers of the evolution of AA sadly illustrate this point and it is all right here in the forwards to each new edition. As the fellowship of alcoholics anonymous changed, (although the text of the program remains virtually uncut), the message of the program has been softened to reflect the current membership.

How far we have fallen from where we were meant to be.