

AA Harrisburg

MONTHLY FOCUS JUNE: TRADITION 6 DETAIL

“An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”

THE moment we saw that we had an answer for alcoholism, it was reasonable (or so it seemed at the time) for us to feel that we might have the answer to a lot of other things. The A.A. groups, many thought, could go into business, might finance any enterprise whatever in the total field of alcoholism. In fact, we felt duty-bound to throw the whole weight of the A.A. name behind any meritorious cause.

Here are some of the things we dreamed. Hospitals didn't like alcoholics, so we thought we'd build a hospital chain of our own. People needed to be told what alcoholism was, so we'd educate the public, even rewrite school and medical textbooks. We'd gather up derelicts from skid rows, sort out those who could get well, and make it possible for the rest to earn their livelihood in a kind of quarantined confinement. Maybe these places would make large sums of money to carry on our other good works. We seriously thought of rewriting the laws of the land, and having it declared that alcoholics are sick people. No more would they be jailed; judges would parole them in our custody. We'd spill A.A. into the dark regions of dope addiction and criminality. We'd form groups of depressive and paranoid folks; the deeper the neurosis, the better we'd like it. It stood to reason that if alcoholism could be licked, so could any problem.

It occurred to us that we could take what we had into the factories and cause laborers and capitalists to love each other. Our uncompromising honesty might soon clean up politics. With one arm around the shoulder of religion and the other around the shoulder of medicine, we'd resolve their differences. Having learned to live so happily, we'd show everybody else how. Why, we thought, our Society of Alcoholics Anonymous might prove to be the spearhead of a new spiritual advance! We might transform the world. Yes, we of A.A. did dream those dreams. How natural that was, since most alcoholics are bankrupt idealists. Nearly every one of us had wished to do great good, perform great deeds, and embody great ideals. We are all perfectionists who, failing perfection, have gone to the other extreme and settled for the bottle and the blackout. Providence, through A.A., had brought us within reach of our highest expectations. So why shouldn't we share our way of life with everyone?

Whereupon we tried A.A. hospitals—they all bogged down because you cannot put an A.A. group into

business; too many busybody cooks spoil the broth. A.A. groups had their fling at education, and when they began to publicly whoop up the merits of this or that brand, people became confused. Did A.A. fix drunks or was it an educational project? Was A.A. spiritual or was it medical? Was it a reform movement? In consternation, we saw ourselves getting married to all kinds of enterprises, some good and some not so good. Watching alcoholics committed willynilly to prisons or asylums, we began to cry, "There oughtta be a law!" A.A.'s commenced to thump tables in legislative committee rooms and agitated for legal reform. That made good newspaper copy, but little else. We saw we'd soon be mired in politics. Even inside A.A. we found it imperative to remove the A.A. name from clubs and Twelfth Step houses.

(Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc.. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pp. 155-157). AA World Services, Inc.)

Daily Reflections JUNE 30

SACRIFICE = UNITY = SURVIVAL

The unity, the effectiveness, and even the survival of A.A. will always depend upon our continued willingness to give up some of our personal ambitions and desires for the common safety and welfare. Just as sacrifice means survival for the individual alcoholic, so does sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for A.A.'s entire Fellowship. AS BILL SEES IT, p. 220 I have learned that I must sacrifice some of my personality traits for the good of A.A. and, as a result, I have been rewarded with many gifts. False pride can be inflated through prestige but, by living Tradition Six, I receive the gift of humility instead. Cooperation without affiliation is often deceiving. If I remain unrelated to outside interests, I am free to keep A.A. autonomous. Then the Fellowship will be here, healthy and strong for generations to come. *(Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc.. Daily Reflections: A Book of Reflections by A.A. Members for A.A. Members . A.A. World Services, Inc.. Kindle Edition.)*

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