

Six Major Roots of Alcoholics Anonymous

By

Dick B.

Address to “Archives 2000”

“Minneapolis 2000,”

The International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

June 29 – July 2, 2000

Transcribed Copy by: www.bridgegodfellowship.org

Huntsville, Alabama

Minor editing by Dick B.’s son, Ken

[(**Introduction by “Don”**):] Good morning, everybody, I am a grateful alcoholic from Greenville, S.C. My name is Don. I belong to the world famous Summit Group in Summit County. Ohio is where A.A. was born. There is a wonderful, rich history of A.A., and I started studying and learning about it, and made some of the pilgrimages a couple of years ago, and I found a web site that has much of this information, too. And I found a very prolific author who has captured the essence of the spiritual history of our fellowship and has committed so much of it to books, which I have in my collection and which I treasure. I am sure his journey is nowhere near done, but he carries the message in writing in a way that I have not found other people to do. It is with great honor and pleasure that I would like to introduce Dick B. (Applause . . .)]

[**Dick B.’s Address on the Six Major Roots of Alcoholics Anonymous**:] I’m Dick. I am a recovered alcoholic, from Maui, Hawaii. I have had the pleasure the last couple of days. As far as I know this is a first to actually have a historical display at a national convention. A good one, a big one, a tremendous resource here. This is the kind of thing I have dreamed about seeing for a long time, and it is here, and I am certainly grateful for the people who have worked so hard to put it together.

Last couple of days, I have had the pleasure of listening to a lot of young dudes who grew old in A.A., graciously old. Mel [B.] was here yesterday and had us all in laughter, and if I were ever going to live for 50 more years, I would like to be in the same position that he is. However, I am an old dude that got young in A.A. I did not get in until I was 60, and the best years of my life, truly, have been the last 14.

It was not that way at the beginning. I had a nine-month drunk and then a week's blackout. I came bounding into A.A., got a sponsor, got a Big Book, had grand mal seizures at my 9th meeting, went into a treatment program, from there to the VA nut house for a couple of months, and from there I went to Vacaville State Prison, which I like to think of as a health facility because they were treating Charlie Manson there at the time I was there. The long and the short of it is--I had to get well. Things were worse, as they often are in early sobriety, than they were at the end, although the last drinking was pretty ghastly.

A young man, now dead of alcoholism, said to me shortly before the convention in Seattle [the 1990 A.A. International Convention], "Dick, did you know that A.A. came from the Bible?" And having gone to meetings intensely for four (4) years, I said, "No," that I sure did not. He said, "Well, why don't you read *DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers*. And I did. And I was astonished. That got me to read Mel's *Pass It On* and A.A. Comes of Age; and I realized that we had a rich history that I just did not hear about at meetings. Didn't even know about the books. But what I found was missing were the details. Yes, we came from the Oxford Group. Yes, we got a lot of information from Sam Shoemaker. Yes, Anne Smith was "the mother of A.A." Yes, the Bible was the source of our basic ideas. Yes, Quiet Time was a must. Yes, they read a lot of books. And what were they? And what did they say? Because I had a feeling that A.A. was founded on a rock! And I believe that today. I will let you decide what the rock is, but the rock essentially is **truth**, and it works.

I don't hold with those people that say, "Well, I don't know how it works, it just works." It works because it is founded on a rock. Dr. Bob knew that, and Bill knew that. Dr. Bob said many times that our basic ideas came from the Bible. Bill and Bob both said that the underlying philosophy of A.A. was the Sermon on the Mount--and Emmet Fox did not write it!

So, what we are going to do today? 10 years ago, I wrote a lengthy book. I think I even showed it to Mel. I did not know what I was talking about, and Frank Mauser, our [General Services] archivist, told me that. He said, "Dick, you don't have to tell everything you know." Since I did not know much, I had to start over again and take it piece by piece.

A.A. has been correctly characterized as a spiritual program of recovery. Bill Wilson defined "spirituality" as a reliance on our Creator. Now where do you suppose he got that idea? The same place that Dr. Bob got it when he talked about that "your heavenly Father will never let you down."

So, the first thing we are going to talk about is that **A.A. basically has six (6) basic roots**. They have all been short circuited in detail, and it is not possible to cover those details today, but I will try to go as far as I can with each of the six roots of A.A. Just to give you a flavor of the rock that I think A.A. is founded upon.

[1] **The first root is the Bible**. That is the one we don't talk about. If you read our literature, you will see that there was talk by Dr. Bob that the principal ideas, the ones that were felt to be essential, came from 1 Corinthians 13--called the "love chapter,"--the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters 5 through 7, and the Book of James. Some early members wanted to call A.A.'s fellowship "the James Club." That is how popular it was. What did this mean in terms of where our ideas came from?

Let us think it about it in these terms. Dr. Bob studied the Bible, Anne Smith used to do a Quiet Time at the Smith home each morning where people came for what they called "spiritual pabulum." They read the Bible. They prayed. They had Quiet Time. They

<http://members.xoom.com/aastuff/index.html> eztone@hotmail.com

<http://members.www.dickb.com>

consulted devotionals, like *The Runner's Bible*, *The Upper Room*, *My Utmost for His Highest*. Old timers used to open meetings by reading from Scripture. It was exciting for me to go to Akron for the first time, and Dr. Bob's daughter said, "Would you like to go to the King's School Group? [A.A. Group Number One]" And I said I sure would. And the first thing I saw was Dr. Bob's Bible being brought from the back of the room to the front. And that Bible is signed by Bill Wilson, Dr. Bob, and Bill Dotson (AA # 3). It is symbolic of where we came from.

What is it about this Sermon on the Mount? Bill never told us. Bob never told us. But I submit to you if anyone has ever heard the expression "Thy will be done" someplace other than the Lord's Prayer (which is where it came from), I would be surprised. It appears in our Big Book. And at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about that he who wants to enter the kingdom of heaven must want to do the will of the Father which is in heaven. That is from the Sermon on the Mount. Also, the idea of the Golden Rule. I saw a man just now crying several times during his talk. I believe that others did to him, as they would want done unto themselves. That is at the heart of an A.A. idea. And then, "Thy will be done," which is quoted in our Big Book, and it comes from the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:10. Then the Lord's Prayer itself. It is getting out of vogue in some places, but the early meetings always closed with the Lord's Prayer.

1 Corinthians 13. A lot of our basic principles are spelled out in terms of patience, kindness, tolerance, love. Dr. Bob once said that some gal was in detox, and they called and said, "What do we do with her?" And he said, "Have her read Henry Drummond's *The Greatest Thing in the World* for 30 or 90 days (I think it was 30), and she will be a changed person. Why? Because that is what we have to do in A.A. If we, . . . I think Mel said it well the other day. The people that I see going out are the ones that go back to where they came from, and the old stuff begins to look good again, and we haven't changed, and if we don't change, there is not much to be said for just not taking a drink. It isn't long before we will want to take one.

Well, other ideas came from the Sermon on the Mount. Obeying the 10 commandments. In our early literature, you will find them quoted. The first one has to do with only one God. Agreeing with your adversary quickly, making amends, loving your neighbor, that is quoted in the Big Book. Being anonymous. That is somewhat speculative, yet Jesus talked about doing your alms-giving in secret, doing your praying in secret, doing your fasting in secret. Why? Because he said your heavenly Father knows what you have need of. So, what are you out there trumpeting for? So, this whole idea is that we do things because they are the right thing to do rather than wanting somebody to see us. Seeking God first--Matthew 6:33. Nobody knows that "first things first" came from Matthew 6:33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, serving God. Living one day at a time--What? Yes, read Anne Smith's journal, and you will see that concept of living one day at a time came from Matthew 6:34. Taking your own inventory--what? The Sermon on the Mount. Uh huh! Look for the log in your own eye before you look for the speck in your neighbor's eye, and get rid of the one in your own eye. That is what we do in the fourth and fifth steps, and maybe some of the later ones as well.

In 1 Corinthians, as I said, those ideas of patience, humility, unselfishness, truthfulness, those are the heart of our program, and they came, those principles, primarily from **I Corinthians 13**.

And then the good ole' Book of James. It is loaded with A.A. material. Some of them quoted and some not. One of my strong points, of course, is patience; and that comes from James [laughter]. And there is a dilly on seeking guidance from God: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally. Resisting temptation. I usually pass right over that one [laughter]. Relying upon the Father of lights. That expression is found in the Book of James, and it is found in your Big Book. Being slow to anger. There is a toughy. Being a doer of the word, not a hearer only. This is an action program, it is not one where you say, "Yeah, I know that," and then you don't do anything.

Observing the "royal law;" loving your neighbor as yourself. It is all through the New Testament; but in the Book of James, it is called the "royal law." It is quoted in our Big Book. As I said, obeying the 10 commandments. And some people like to think that "faith without works is dead" was Anne Smith's favorite verse. Not from what I can tell. Her favorite verse was "God is love," from 1 John [4:8, 16], but when she used to read to Bill and Bob during that summer [of 1935], it is said that she concluded by saying that "Faith without works is dead." Because these were two gentlemen that were gathered with her, not merely to study the Bible, but to find out how to help others, how to love others, and how to serve God.

There is one that I wish was as well known as it was in the old days. Anne said in her journal, "learn to tame your tongue." I wish I could. Dr. Bob always talked about taming your tongue. It is in his last address, his farewell address. There is a whole chapter in the book of James about that, chapter 3. Avoiding envy and strife, and being peacemakers, submitting ourselves to God, humbling ourselves before God, the concepts of humility—you will find them in our Third and Seventh Step prayers. In the Third, of course also, the Sermon on the Mount, the idea of "Thy will be done."

Drawing near to God, knowing the He will draw near to you. It is almost an exact quote in the Big Book as in the book of James. Eliminating grudges. Praying for one another. Ever thought about praying for someone in A.A. I have been to a number of meetings where that is done, and it is cool. People need help. You see it; and you pray for them. Confessing your faults one to another. The Fifth Step is a complete adoption of that in James 5:16.

And then there is the neat verse that says the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Remember when Bill says in the Big Book that "we should not be shy in the matter of prayer and meditation." Where did the idea come from. It works. It works.

I am going to move on to the next part because I want to be sure to at least touch on it. But just don't forget that we have extolled the Oxford Group so that we could condemn it, and we have forgotten the Bible which is where Sam Shoemaker, and the Oxford Group, and Anne Smith, and Dr. Bob, and to some extent Bill Wilson, got their ideas. **So, the Bible comes number one as the source of the basic ideas of our program**

[2 - Quiet Time] A second thing that has passed from existence. And it is in *Pass It On*, where Bill says, "I always sort of thought we lost something when we lost meditation."

Do you know that our trustee, Frank Amos, said that meditation was a *must* in early A.A. What did meditation mean?

It was called “Quiet Time.” It meant **studying the Bible first**, to get in tune with God’s general will. It meant **praying**. It meant quiet time, **listening for God’s voice**. And then it meant **sometimes consulting things like** *The Upper Room*, *The Runner’s Bible*, and *My Utmost for His Highest* for inspiration as to what would be discussed at the meetings. There weren’t any drunk-a-logs. No drunk-a-logs.

What was going on is, some people were being taught by some very able teachers back there in Akron; and, in New York, by a very able teacher--Sam Shoemaker and his circle of friends. So prayers were regular fare in early A.A., as was listening to God. And it has gotten a bad rap, again by laying it on the Oxford Group. But Quiet Time was something that, whenever Anne was stressed out, she would go upstairs to have what she called “quiet time.” Why? To get peace. To get peace. To get out of the ring-a-ding that goes on. And you will see that at the end of your Eleventh Step.

The **helpful books**, what were they? We will get into that shortly. They did not try to invent their own program. A.A. is not a self- made religion. A.A. was something that came from this rock that I am talking about. They used *The Upper Room*, *My Utmost for His Highest*, *The Runner’s Bible*, Fosdick’s *The Meaning of Prayer*, Drummond’s *The Greatest thing in the World*, to help them.

I am happy to say that now the archives back there that they have worked so hard to assemble, Ray G., in particular, that I know, and his wife, Ginny. You can see those books. It is my dream and hope that you can do more than see them before very long. That you can open them up. And it will knock you dead when you see how much of our program has come from those books. And it begins to make certain expressions in A.A. meaningful.

Quiet Time, in other words, doesn’t get its full due, unless you believe as I do, that those early people consulted God for guidance as to what to do in the program. With the speakers. I firmly believe that the residue of it in our [Twelve] Traditions is the ultimate authority as a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. That is an attempt to describe the old steering committee meetings that were held at the beginning.

Monday night they prayed. Later on, just before the meeting, they would pray and ask God to guide them as to what could be helpful. Also, Bill reportedly consulted God when he was writing the Big Book and particularly the 12 Steps.

So there was a reliance upon God and His guidance at the beginning of this program. Not only taking ideas from the Bible, His Word, but also seeking what the Oxford groupers called His “particular will” through prayer and listening. So the Quiet Time! **Bible, number one, Quiet Time, number two**. Why number two? Because it was a must. No drunk-a-logs. . . . Just consulting God.

[3 - Rev. Sam Shoemaker] The next source is an interesting one. Mel said it very well in *Pass It On*. Bill always tried to get away from the Oxford Group, and he stated one of the several reasons by laying it on Sam Shoemaker.

When I came to the Seattle convention 10 years ago I went there to be informed. I wanted to know what A.A. had gotten from the Bible. Zilch. Nothing. I wanted to know what it got from the Oxford Group. Zilch. Nothing. There was a panel, and one old dude was sitting up there with a book called *What Is the Oxford Group?* Which was not written by an Oxford grouper! But it contains a lot of information on that, and that was it. So, I

talked to this guy, and I said, "Can I get one of those books?" And he said, "Yes," and he sent it to me.

And I said, "Who is this guy Sam Shoemaker?" And he said, "Well, talk to Frank." Frank was our [GSO] archivist at the time. And I said, "Frank what do you have on Sam Shoemaker?" And he said, "Nothing." This is our archivist in New York. So, he sent me a list of some of Sam's books, and then he said to me "Dick, you have a book in you." Well, now you tell that to an alcoholic, and before you know it you have got sixteen books. Eventually they had something to say, I hope.

Sam Shoemaker! His writings are beautiful. Sam wrote over 30 books. He wrote many, many sermons. Many, many articles. He addressed two Alcoholics Anonymous conventions. Would that we have that kind of person addressing us today. Where are they? Why have we excluded these people? Sam and Father Dowling addressed A.A.'s convention in St. Louis; and Sam and a Catholic monsignor addressed our convention in Long Beach. Why? Because we felt they had something to say about our roots.

They taught us. So Sam, to be sure, was a very strong factor in this sense. In New York, this has been disputed. But I have been to the Episcopal Church Archives. And I have been to Sam's churches. And I have been everywhere I know how to go to find what Sam did do. And he was closeted with Bill Wilson for two or three years in New York in a book-lined study that I have been in. And they discussed the principles of this program, to the point where Bill asked Sam to write the 12 steps, and Sam said "No, they should be written by an alcoholic." And they were!

Bill submitted the original manuscript of the Big Book to Sam for review. Sam was not the only one, but Sam knew Bill from the beginning. I unearthed a little letter that is in Ray's archives back there now, in which Sam wrote Bill, in January of 1935. Now, I wouldn't trust any new convert like Sam did. He said, "Bill, I think you could help Fred Breithut, the little chemistry professor, with his drinking problem." Imagine. A great preacher asking Bill Wilson at less than sixty (60) days of sobriety to help this dude.

And lo and behold, they all went in, and there was a baptismal ceremony in which Ebby was baptized. Bill was present, and then this guy was baptized, and Bill was the godfather. I misstated. Bill was not present as far as I know at Ebby's baptism. But it all happened in Sam's church.

There was a very close relationship between Sam and Bill from the beginning, and what astonished me is that there were probably **200 expressions in the Big Book** (and I wish I had time to read some of them to you because you would recognize them in a moment); and they come from Sam Shoemaker's talking, the kind of language he used. It is phenomenal. I would not say that Bill plagiarized. I think he was just like you and I are when we go to meetings, and over and over again we hear "How it works." "Rarely have we seen a person fail."

I had some dude over in Hawaii that had six months, and he had been in the program for 10 years, and that guy recited the whole part of "How it works." For 10 years, he had been listening to it. I happen to think Bill Wilson was a pretty smart guy, and he went to those meetings daily, back in New York, talked to Sam, listened to his circle of friends, Rowland Hazard, Shep Cornell, all those people. And Bill was absorbing it. It is said that Bill was not a reader. I don't know. But I do know that **he sure used a lot of words that you can find in Sam Shoemaker's books.**

What did Sam give to us? The specifics that I mentioned. I can only tell you to look at the record and see if you do not agree that Sam gave us those expressions. But he gave us
<http://members.xoom.com/aastuff/index.html> eztone@hotmail.com
<http://members.www.dickb.com>

some general ideas. His very first book said, "You need to find God. You need a vital religious experience. You need Jesus Christ." Well, leave Jesus Christ out. A.A. has decided to do that for some reason or another, but the first two are immediately recognizable.

"You need to find God." Lots of times when I am talking to groups, I say, "There is One who has all power. That One is Who? (Audience answers 'God.')

May you find Him when? (Audience answers 'Now.')

We know. You know we KNOW. And where did we get that from? Sam Shoemaker wrote a book on *How to Find God*. Then another article in 1935, "A Way to Find God."

And he came up with the expression, "the turning point." The turning point. I used to hear that, and I wondered, "What does that mean?" It means when you decide to give in, to surrender, to turn your life over to God's care. It is from Sam Shoemaker, who got it from William James.

Willingness. I won't go into John 7:17, but that was Sam Shoemaker's favorite verse. You will see willingness throughout the Big Book, and you will see it in the writings of the Oxford Groupers and in Sam's writing. The decision. The decision. When I first came in, my sponsor kept saying the Third Step is a "decision" --not action. You have to make a decision. So I passed that on. Well, it came from Sam.

God is God and self is not God. One of the interesting things in Akron was that, when the

Oxford groupers came there in 1933, you were seeing this stuff in headlines. I went there and spent quite a bit of time digging out the old newspapers. I turned some over to Ray, and I am sure now there are a lot of them around. But it was all about "Bible Study Group is here, self-centeredness is the problem." There wasn't any A.A. yet. This is what they were talking about.

Then there are the mysterious 5 C's. Everybody has an idea what we got from the Oxford Group. Well, the 5 C's were: confidence, confession, conviction, conversion, and continuance. Take a look at the Tenth Step language. "Continued to do this," "Continued to do that." It was not enough to surrender and recognize your faults and confess them and to ask God to help you get rid of them. You had to continue. And this idea of continuance was talked about by Sam and by the Oxford Group.

Reading the Bible. Sam used to say read the Bible and all else will fall into place. Listening to God. One of the things I like to do with God is to say, "Hear, Lord, thy servant speaketh." And Sam used to say, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth," which is from 1 Samuel. We ask God.

Bill Wilson said that one of the first things he learned from Sam was how to pray. And I must say that my prayer life is entirely different today than it was before. When I was headed for Vacaville State Prison, you can guess exactly what I was telling God. They did let me drive up in my own car. I think that was a first. But lawyers get to do stuff like that. But I had some very strong ideas about what should happen with me, and the judge had slightly different ideas.

I don't know where God was at the beginning of the thing, but I can tell you He was in Vacaville State Prison. That was the coolest experience. Man! I sponsored people. We had A.A. meetings, Bible fellowships. It was cool. The psychiatrist did not want to let me out of there. He said, "I think you have found a niche here." [Laughter.] I said, "No, no, no. I want to go. I want to go." And even the way I got out is a story in itself.

Restitution from Sam. Reading the Bible. Seeking God first. Remember the expression

in the Big Book, "God either is or he isn't"? That is from *Confident Faith*. Where do we find *Confident Faith*? In Dr. Bob's library, and tucked away in the back of Anne Smith's journal, at the archives of Stepping Stones. Who knows where they are now, but that is where I found it.

Then Sam came before us at St. Louis, and he defined this mysterious thing called a spiritual awakening. You know where we got those expressions "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening?" They were common fare in the Oxford Group. Sam wrote a book called *National Awakening*. Frank Buchman [the Oxford Group founder] was always talking about we need a moral rearmament and a spiritual awakening, and there was common talk of a spiritual experience.

Contrary to what many think, Carl Jung was talking about conversion--not spiritual experience. He was talking about conversion. But by the time it reached the Oxford Group, via A.A., or vice versa, it became a spiritual experience; and then, since no one seemed to have hot flashes but Bill, we got a spiritual awakening.

So, Sam defined this, because this language was very familiar to him. He said a spiritual awakening involves four (4) things: conversion, prayer, fellowship, and witness. And guess who authored the expression, "You got to give it away to keep it?" Guess who authored "Pass it on?" I am not saying that those were the first people who uttered it. But, Frank Buchman, the founder of the Oxford Group, said, "You gotta pass it on." And, Shoemaker said in many ways, "You got to give it away to keep it," and that has survived. Well, that's Sam.

[4] And then there is the Oxford Group. Boy, do people like to lambaste that. If they only would walk into the archives room right here and pick up any of the Oxford Group books. Whether it is *Soul Surgery* (which has the five C's) or whether it is *For Sinners Only* (which discusses quiet time, the Four Absolutes), and several other key Oxford Group Books, which were earlier.

One is Eleanor Forde Newton's *The Guidance of God*. Each one of these little ideas, the guidance of God, the five C's, the Four Absolutes, the surrender, the turning point--we have "codified" the Oxford Group's life-changing program. So, if you want to understand expressions like "God as you understand Him," let us dwell on that for a moment.

There is a guy that claimed he authored that concept. You know, if I were in San Diego [end of side A of the audio cassette] . . . "Give as much of yourself as you understand to as much of God as you understand."

They did not invent light bulbs. Those came later Chairs at a beginner's meeting! A guy used to say, "My higher power is Ralph." You know I spent months trying to figure out that one. No, it was God as you understand Him. I might ask you, either now or after the meeting, to pull out a dollar bill or any denomination. "In God we trust," it says. I asked my little granddaughter what was on the back, and they did not have any problem with that. It was God as you understood Him. And, if you read your Big Book, you will see even in the Third Edition, that Bill says, in Town's Hospital, he surrendered to God as he "then" understood God. Where did he get this language? Sam Shoemaker was his tutor. That was primarily a Shoemaker idea.

There were some other ideas: Sin the disease, Jesus Christ the cure, the result a miracle. But I like the things that we recognize more easily. Surrender to God. How did you
<http://members.xoom.com/aastuff/index.html> eztone@hotmail.com
<http://members.www.dickb.com>

do that? “Thy will be done” was one way. Also, they had a prayer in the Oxford Group, and Sam’s church, and in Anne Smith’s journal. I call it the “manage me” prayer. “Oh God, manage me, because I cannot manage myself.” And, I don’t know about you, but, boy, when I was facing those seizures and that treatment program and two months in the nut house and the brief period of recuperation in Vacaville State Prison, I was unmanageable, and I needed God’s help.

And . . . finally, in 8 months, I sought! And things began to change.

Sin. There is a word that they deleted. We had that in the steps originally, and what was it called in the Oxford Group and by Sam Shoemaker? That which blocks you from God and another. So, if you look at your Big Book, you will see several references to the blocks, the obstacles. This was an Oxford Group idea.

What are these? Well, we do not have a very sound relationship with God if we are riddled with fear. If we are riddled with anger, selfishness, lies. And so those blocks became the things that in the 5 C’s were to be removed! Somebody instills his confidence in you, you confess to him your shortcomings, you become convinced that they have to change, you become converted so that the power of God will change them, and then you continue to work on that. It is so simple, and yet we don’t hear much.

At the last convention [in San Diego in 1995], I had lunch with Smitty [Dr. Bob’s son]. And I said, “You know, it is really cool the way you . . .” (Smitty is one of the most amusing speakers – he will be here this afternoon). And I said, “You talk a lot about the Four Absolutes. Why don’t you mention the five C’s.” He said, “Dick, what are they?” So we sat there, and he wrote them down on a napkin. Then he got up on the stage and said, “I was told to mention the five C’s, but I can’t remember them.” Well, of course he can’t, because we don’t hear about them. And yet they are at the heart of our program.

Restitution. An Oxford Group idea. It came from the Bible. Life changing The Oxford Groups were called “The Life Changers.” And that is the heart of what we are supposed to do. There is an old dude, a Bird Colonel, that used to hold forth in our meetings. He never had much to say. Because he was deaf, he couldn’t hear what was going on in the meetings. But every now and then, he would stand up and say, “CHANGE!” It would scare the heck out of you, you know. And he had a message. If you do not change, it is not just you are going to drink, it was you are going to be miserable. Because I was miserable. And I don’t know about you, but I didn’t want to be miserable anymore. And today I am happy, joyous, and free.

Where do you find the details about Sam if you want to do some reading about Sam? Early AAs were readers. The kids I am working with out in Maui can’t read, but early AAs could. They went to school. They learned how to read. There wasn’t TV. There weren’t CDs or “beans” or “bongs” or all the other stuff that are diversions. So people read. And when they read Shoemaker, they saw solid stuff that we see in our books: Soul Surgery, the five C’s, life changers, the story of the group, the guidance of God, where we got our ideas for the eleventh step, and *For Sinners Only*.

I used to think that [*For Sinners Only*] was a book written for me, then I found out, hey, this contained the stories of the Oxford Group’s Life Change Program and was recommended by Anne Smith. *The Quiet Time*, by Howard Rose, tells you exactly how early quiet time was conducted. And, *When Man Listens*. You read that book, and you are astonished when you see them talking in there about taking a business inventory. Wait a minute, I thought that was in the Big Book. Yeah, but it was in *When Man Listens* by Rev. Rose in the Oxford Group.

<http://members.xoom.com/aastuff/index.html> eztone@hotmail.com
<http://members.www.dickb.com>

Every single idea in our Steps contains an Oxford Group principle. I love the fact that, even though the details are not there, in *Pass It On*, it said that when the **Big Book** was written it was *heavy* with Oxford Group principles. I might have used the word laden. It was *loaded with Oxford Group principles*.

Now, was A.A. a part of the Oxford Group? You bet it was! We don't like to talk about that too much, but there is a little story. The Oxford Group in Akron was not like the Oxford Group in New York. I don't think this point is recognized the way it should be because people don't know where Dr. Bob came from. In St. Johnsbury [Vermont]. He said, "I was a member of Christian Endeavor, and I went to church four (4) nights a week." And yet the myth grew up that Dr. Bob never went to church. In fact he said it himself, but it is not the case.

I went back and researched this. Dr. Bob was very much involved in Christian Endeavor and in his church. Yes, it was under pressure from his mom, but it went on for a substantial period of time. Then he belonged to several different churches, and then, about the time he got into A.A., he and Anne were charter members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Akron. And so remained for several years. And just before he died, Dr. Bob became a communicant at the famous St. Paul's church where Dr. Tunks was the Rector. So this man had a long history.

And what I see in those early meetings. . . . There are people going to Moscow right now. They think they are countering the New Age people from A.A. that are going there and telling them their "Higher Power" can be a whale and all that sort of thing. These people have a different story. They conduct an Oxford Group meeting and tell people that that is what A.A. was like. It wasn't.

A.A. was called an "old fashioned prayer meeting." If you read *DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers*, you will see that the kinds of meetings that they held in Akron, more resembled the Christian Endeavor meetings that Dr. Bob went to than they did Oxford Group Meetings. Now, New York is a different story. Share your experience, strength, and hope. That is where we got the storytelling part. It was called "witnessing." People got up and told what God had done for them that they couldn't do for themselves. So there was a different flavor in New York than what there was in Akron.

As far as I can see, the Akron people--Henrietta [Seiberling], T. Henry and Clarace [Williams], and Anne Smith--they just wanted to help drunks. Their focus was not on the Oxford Group. It was on compassion and love for the drunk. And they were pretty doggoned successful.

[5 - Anne Ripley Smith, Dr. Bob's wife]. Next root. I am going to make it, by golly.

[Displaying the six books on A.A.'s roots]. Oh, no, I am not, because I am going to hold these books up. This is not a book sale, and mine are the only books that are not for sale here. If you want to know our Bible roots in detail, *The Good Book and The Big Book* is a study of that. If you want to know what we did in Quiet Time, *Good Morning!* is a study of that. I got that title because I went to Princeton and found Sam Shoemaker's alumni archives. His first sermon. It was just a five-minute sermon. And it said: "When my wife and I wake up in the morning, here is what we do." "We don't reach for a cigarette, we don't reach for coffee, we reach for our Bibles." "We read the Bible, we call our daughter in, we have some prayer, we seek God's guidance, and we have a good day, we have a <http://members.xoom.com/aastuff/index.html> eztone@hotmail.com <http://members.www.dickb.com>

good evening and if you do that you will have a good day all day long.” It was such a cool expression that--and I haven’t done a very good job of it--that I took that as our theme for Quiet Time study.

Then there is old Sam. This will keep you busy for a lifetime [holding up *New Light on Alcoholism: God, Sam Shoemaker, and A.A.*]. I don’t guarantee it will keep you sober but it will show you how much of our program came from Sam Shoemaker. *The Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous* was one of the first books I wrote. I submitted it to many, many Oxford Group people in Florida, in England, and in California, and elsewhere, to make sure that the 28 ideas that found their way into A.A. were correctly expressed from an Oxford Group standpoint and then how they appeared in our Steps. What does it matter? Well, it matters to me, because I hear so much baloney. Sam came before us in St. Louis, and he put it into his books: “What can kill us is **self-made religion, absurd names for God, and half-baked prayers.**”

It was a very moving speaker that preceded me. He talked about finding God in A.A., and he talked about learning how to pray. Those were not half-baked prayers. God likes to hear from His kids. But not these “Please keep me out of Vacaville” things. I deserved to be in Vacaville. I did not tell the judge that but that is what he found.

Now back to Anne Smith’s Journal. I don’t know why, but still it is not in these archives. It used to be sold in Dr. Bob’s Home, and that is a sore point with me but not any more. Anne Smith’s journal is something that I discovered quite by accident. It was a footnote in the book *Not God*. It was mentioned in *Sister Ignatia*. And I went to Sue Windows [Dr. Bob’s daughter], and I said, “What is this?” She said, “Well, my mom kept a notebook.” “How do we find that?” So, I went through channels. Mel [B.] used to say, “I don’t know how you get all this stuff, Dick.” And I said, “Well, it is because I am new and sick, and they take pity on me.” But, I went to Frank [Mauser, GSO Archivist] and submitted a request to the [GSO] trustees and asked to be given a copy of Anne Smith’s journal.

The first time I wrote it, everyone called it an Oxford Group book. It is not. And so my wife looked at--my ex-wife that I love so dearly--and she said there is not enough of Anne Smith in that book. She was right. So, I rewrote it. But the astonishing thing about Anne Smith’s journal--it began in 1933. From the minute they were connected with the Oxford Group gang (T. Henry, Clarace, and Henrietta, etc.). And she recorded that, and Dr. Bob’s daughter Sue typed up some of that. Some of it is almost undecipherable in Anne’s handwriting, but as I looked through it, man! I saw the Bible. I saw the Oxford Group. She recommends the books to read. She quotes the verses. This little lady was called the “Mother of A.A.,” and now I know why. Bill Wilson called her a “founder” of A.A., and now I know why.

She was not just a lady who got together the bread and milk that they used to have at the kitchen table back there around the coffee pot. She is the lady who was the counselor and the nurse. Many early AAs felt more comfortable talking to Anne than they did Bob. Bob was an austere person, rather dominating, no nonsense. And Anne was a compassionate lady. And, they felt more comfortable with her. She would have these morning Quiet Times--an hour and a half.

In them, she would share from her journal. It took me a long time to find that out. I found it out through a man named Johnny R. And the man who made that available is sitting right over there. Dennis. And this man, John R., not only wrote but said, “Anne
<http://members.xoom.com/aastuff/index.html> eztone@hotmail.com
<http://members.www.dickb.com>

would share with us from her journal.” What did she share? Oxford Group ideas, Bible ideas, the books that she suggested they read. This is our program. I don’t know whether Bill was listening to that in that summer of 1935 .

There ought to be a lot of work done on Anne, and it ought to be done in Akron, I might add. She is the lost lady. But if you want to understand our program, understand Anne Smith and realize that she wrote it down before there was a Big Book, before there were Steps, and when people were getting well at wonderfully high rates.

[6 - The Literature of Early A.A.] The last part of our roots is the books that people read. What did they read? A lot would think that it was just Oxford Group books. No.

Some of the most popular books were by people who were not in the Oxford Group. Henry Drummond’s *The Greatest Thing in the World* was one of the best sellers, and it still is. You can walk into many stores today and get it. It is a study of 1 Corinthians 13. Emmet Fox--I am not a fan of Emmett Fox, and he is not the only guy that talked about the Sermon on the Mount. Dr. Bob had all the books that talked about that. Oswald Chambers’ book on the Sermon on the Mount, Fosdick’s book, Glen Clark’s book, E. Stanley Jones’ book, but the popular one was Emmet Fox. Unfortunately, that is the only one that seems to have survived today. But, there were some dillies.

Allen’s *As a Man Thinketh*. A lot of what goes on up here that is wrong is up here, and it has to be changed. As a man thinketh, so is he. From the Bible! There were a great many other books, I will just mention quickly. There should be a guy raising his hand about now. Books on prayer by Glen Clark, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles Filmore, Fosdick, Emmet Fox, Gerald Heard, E. Stanley Jones.

You will see *Victorious Living* mentioned in the First Edition of the Big Book. They have taken out all this stuff. These guys were telling what they did. So, we think that we need new books. The Fourth Edition. Heaven knows how many more!

But, in those early stories you saw what they were reading. Books on guidance in the Oxford Group, *When Man Listens*, *The God Who Speaks*, *The Guidance of God*, books on Jesus Christ. They have got them back there. Anne Smith said you should read one each year. By Barton, Fosdick, Grover, . . . the classics. St. Augustine, That is tough sledding. Thomas á Kempis used to be a subject of meditation. And I believe Sister Ignatia handed that book out frequently.

Brother Lawrence’s *Practicing the Presence of God*, the life changing books, *For Sinners Only*, etc. The books on the Sermon on the Mount that I mentioned. And the books on--heaven forbid--how to study the Bible! They keep telling me, Dick don’t write anymore books, and my early demise may ensure that, but the next one, if it is, will be on the Good Book. How do you read the Bible?

You know it is so easy for somebody to say, “Well, I got to the ‘begats,’ and I gave up.” Well, there were a lot of very intelligent people that did not just say, “Study the Bible.” They would focus on the things that were helpful. Bob E. in Akron said that many times people would go into see Anne, and she would try to find a verse that would be helpful to them in a particular problem. And, if she couldn’t find it, she would read from 1 John 4:8: “God is love.”

There is the signal. 5 glorious more minutes.

So, we have ways to study the Bible that are almost “peculiar.” And I use that word advisedly for the AA. I don’t know about you, but I have done many, many, many 5th steps. My sponsor did not have me do a fear list. I don’t know how you could miss it in the Big Book, but my experience with AAs--and here is another heresy that you can stone me for after the meeting--but I don’t think resentment is the number one offender. I love resentments, and I still have them, and I know they are bad news. But I will tell you where I come from, and it is called fear.

And fear has a million forms--shame, guilt, terror, rejection, low self-esteem, abandonment. The stuff that is the fodder for our meetings today, unfortunately, except it’s psychological. There is an answer to fear, and shame, and guilt. I did not know that fear had ruled my life. I was afraid to stand up in front of the jury. And the one time I got in front of the jury, I won the case. My boss gave me a \$50.00 bonus--how about that? I was afraid to get up in front of the jury.

One of the fabulous things about A.A. is how many dudes (and dudesses) get up. And these people, some of them, can hardly speak English, but you cannot shut them up. They have gained self-esteem. They are able to stand up in front of a group and express themselves and move you. This is part of the fear game: Fear of gals. “I don’t want to ask her to dance.” There is a whole bunch of gals over there, guys over here and nobody’s getting to dance. That isn’t true anymore, not in A.A. anyway. But, fear, fear, fear.

All of these things! If we understand what our roots are, we can find out what we can be delivered from. Did they know that in early A.A.? You can bet your boots they did. A.A. was about getting back. I am happy to say that a lot of the guys I have sponsored have been around for 10 years. These guys are getting married. They are having babies. They have jobs. Some of them have gone back to church or a Bible fellowship.

This is the kind of thing, I believe. I don’t know anything about the words “emotional sobriety.” I don’t know what that means. But I do know about full recovery and what full recovery and deliverance means. It means that you are restored to a whole and useful life, something that is worthwhile, something in which God becomes a paramount part of that life and in which we have accurate and adequate information about God and what He can do for us. Right about now it is time to say, “Thank you very much, and God bless you all.”

(Applause)

(End of Speech.)