

27881218

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 00772 8557

LIBRARY
Michigan State
University

This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

AA, Spiritual Issues, and
the Treatment of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholics

presented by

Steven L. Berg

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English

Dr. Mary L. Schneider
Major professor

Date 12 May 1989

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

| DATE DUE | DATE DUE | DATE DUE |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| JUN 1 1999 | _____ | _____ |
| DEC 06 2000 913000 | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

MSU Is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\circ\date.due.pm3-p.1

AA, SPIRITUAL ISSUES, AND
THE TREATMENT OF LESBIAN AND GAY ALCOHOLICS

By

Steven L. Berg

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1989

567847X

ABSTRACT

AA, SPIRITUAL ISSUES, AND
THE TREATMENT OF LESBIAN AND GAY ALCOHOLICS

By

Steven L. Berg

Although Alcoholics Anonymous claims it is spiritual and not-religious, this distinction is blurred because it is a spiritual program based on religious tenets. Lesbians and gay men who have been the victims of church sanctioned hate and persecution are likely to reject the program because of its religious elements.

This dissertation first points out the religious elements which are found in AA. It then reviews letters, essays, and articles which have appeared in the lesbian/gay press that demonstrate the four objections which many lesbians and gay men have against the Christian tradition: patriarchy, misuse of scripture, anti-pleasure/anti-love positions, and the conspiracy of silence.

The dissertation then traces the American trends toward perfectionism and individualism from the eighteenth-century to the publication of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. It argues that because AA was able to incorporate individualism into what was essentially a perfectionist movement in the Christian tradition, the organization is able to work as a program of recovery for Christians and individuals from non-

Christian religious traditions, as well as people from no formal tradition.

Because it takes time for an individual to appreciate the fundamental truth behind AA's claim that it is spiritual and not religious, seven strategies are proposed which can be used to help lesbians and gay men to successfully integrate AA into their lives.

COPYRIGHT

Steven L. Berg

1989

Rachel Liberacki
and to the memory of
Lillian Spinning
Helen Glasner

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research is a community activity. While one person might be the principle investigator and author, good results come about only as the result of the support he or she receives from others.

I am especially grateful to my graduate committee. Mary Schneider (Dissertation Director), Jim McClintock (Committee Chair), Milt Powell, and Victor Howard gave valuable advice which helped mold my disjointed thoughts into this finished product. Cathy Davidson helped me overcome the misguided notion that research on lesbians and gay men was somehow inferior to "important" subjects. Although Stephen Botein died just before I began writing this dissertation, he molded my early work as an historian and his contributions were missed.

The National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals provided me with a community of scholars who shared my interests. Jack Ryan, LeClair Bissell, and Valerie Przywara took a special interest in me and opened many doors. I also owe a debt to Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally as well as to Tom Smith, whose writings inspired me, and to Cade Ware, whose courage in 1974 began to clear the

path along which I have walked. AIDS took Tom's and Cade's physical lives, but their spirits live in this dissertation.

Anne Tracy, Jeanette Fiore, Beth Woodard, and Michael Bennet used their skills as librarians and information specialists to help me gain access to the resources I needed. Steven McCausey helped me appreciate both the value of theoretical research as well as its limitations.

George Landon has listened and advised. David Smith has listened and proof read. And those who call themselves "The Back Porch Group" have listened and loved.

Family has also been important. I am indebted to my parents, Lorain and Judy Berg, my brothers, Mike and Christopher, my sister-in-law, Janice, and my grandmother, to whom this dissertation is dedicated. And to the rest of my family, particularly Andrew Stuart, Tim Jed, Harvey Ballard, Barbara Harte, and Mary Hartshorn.

Finally, there is Carl M. Carlson III who, on a daily basis, helped me get through the final stages of completing this manuscript. Marty shared his experience that a trip to the cafe cures any ills, his strength as an editor, and his hope as a trusted friend and confidant.

The interpretations of Alcoholics
Anonymous' twelve steps and twelve
traditions are those of the author and
do not necessarily reflect the opinions
of AA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter I: Introduction..... | 1 |
| Spirituality in Alcoholics Anonymous..... | 3 |
| The Issue of Sexual Orientation..... | 10 |
| Previous Research in the Field..... | 18 |
| Chapter II: Religious Elements in Alcoholics Anonymous..... | 38 |
| Chapter III: Roots of Lesbian/Gay Distrust of Christianity..... | 76 |
| The Issue of Patriarchy..... | 78 |
| The Use and Misuse of Scripture..... | 82 |
| The Anti-Pleasure/Anti-Love Position..... | 87 |
| The Conspiracy of Silence..... | 91 |
| Chapter IV: The Trend Toward Perfectionism..... | 98 |
| Chapter V: The Trend Toward Individualism..... | 132 |
| Chapter VI: Treatment Strategies for Working With Lesbian/Gay Alcoholics..... | 155 |
| Cultural Bias and AA Literature..... | 159 |
| Religious Dogmatism is Not Conference Approved..... | 161 |
| AA's Third Tradition..... | 164 |
| Special Interest Meetings..... | 169 |
| Living Sober..... | 172 |
| Involvement with Religious Caucuses..... | 174 |
| Lesbian/Gay Sensitive Literature..... | 177 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Summary..... | 179 |
| Chapter VII: Epilogue..... | 180 |
| Appendices | |
| The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous..... | 189 |
| The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous..... | 190 |
| Bibliography..... | 191 |

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

For most recovered alcoholics, the process of developing new patterns of behavior involves working the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.¹ However, because an ethnocentric bias exists within conference approved AA literature and in the program's moral tradition, many individuals quickly develop the mistaken belief that the program will not work for them. This problem can be especially acute for lesbians and gay men, individuals whose discrimination has historically been supported by Christian denominations.

In this dissertation I initially point out the religious elements which are found in the AA program, elements which can cause new people to believe that AA is a religious program. I then review letters, essays, and articles that appeared in the lesbian/gay press that

¹Alcoholics get into AA in a variety of fashions. While most enter the program on their own volition, others are referred by the courts or through non-AA treatment programs. As part of treatment, newly sober individuals are frequently encouraged to, or, more often, required to attend AA meetings as part of their service plan both during and after treatment. In addition, many alcoholism counselors in private practice make regular attendance at AA meetings a condition of seeing a patient. A list of the steps is found in Appendix A and is a list of AA's twelve traditions is found in Appendix B. Throughout this dissertation, the comments I make about the steps and traditions are my own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of AA.

demonstrate the objections which many lesbians and gay men have against the Christian tradition.

To better understand the spiritual and religious nature of AA, I use a hermeneutical approach to set the literature into a cultural and historical context. In doing so, I intend to set this work within the broad body of study commonly referred to as American Studies. I do so because the elements which are intertwined include traits often singled out as expressive of a distinct American ethos: individualism, perfectionism, the rather nebulous "God" often imagined in American Civil religion particularly when coupled together in one group or movement. I am not the first to recognize AA's distinctly American traits.

Specifically, I trace the American trends toward perfectionism and individualism from the eighteenth-century to the publication of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. Such an approach is important because the exclusion from AA which many people feel is not so much the result of bias inherent in the AA program as it is a result of the bias found in the culture from which developed AA. An added importance to this approach to the literature is that it demonstrates that AA's success is due, in part, to the fact that it was able to successfully integrate a respect for individualism into what was initially a perfectionist movement.

Finally, because it takes time for an individual to appreciate the fundamental truth behind AA's claim that it

is spiritual and not religious, I propose seven guidelines which can be used with lesbians and gay men whose background makes it difficult for them to follow a program that they believe to be religious.

Spirituality in Alcoholics Anonymous

Because AA is designed to help the alcoholic achieve sobriety, it is not surprising that the first step of the AA program is that "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable" and that the only requirement for AA membership, as defined in the third tradition, is a desire to stop drinking. What does surprise many people is that the second step of recovery is that "[We] came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity" and that AA's second tradition is that "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."² But given AA's history, the fact that it is a spiritually based recovery program is not surprising.

Much debate has involved AA's claim that it is a spiritual program and not a religious one. For this purposes of this study, I will use the definition of spirituality developed by Joann Wolski Conn:

²Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York: AA World Services, 1958) 21, 139, 25, 132.

Spirituality as life-experience as a field of study is no longer identified with asceticism and mysticism, or with the practice of virtue and methods of prayer. From the perspective of the actualization of the human capacity to be spiritual, to be self-transcending--that is, relational and freely committed spiritually encompasses all of life. In general, religious spirituality is a matter of the experience and/or study of the actualization of human self-transcendence by the Holy, by Ultimate Concern--that is, by what is acknowledged as "religious."³

I believe that this definition captures the spirit to what Alcoholics Anonymous refers when it describes its twelve step recovery program as spiritual.

AA was founded in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, two men who were members of the Oxford Group, a Christian perfectionist movement in early twentieth century America. The Oxford Group, which ought not be confused with England's Oxford movement, was formed to convert people to "primitive Christianity." Thus, it is only natural that the spiritual flavor of AA's twelve step recovery program is predominately Christian and the values described in AA literature reflect middle-class, white, male, heterosexual norms. But, to them, and the first 100 members of Alcoholics Anonymous, there was no spiritual part of the

³Joann Wolski Conn, "Women's Spirituality: Restriction and Reconstruction," Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development ed Joann Wolski Conn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986) 9.

program. AA was first, and foremost, a spiritual program.

As they wrote:

The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us [such as giving us the ability not to drink] that we would never do ourselves.⁴

The importance of spirituality for AA recovery pre-dates the founding of the program.⁵ Even before Bill W. had his conversion experience in the Townsend hospital, he had been visited by Ebby T., an alcoholic who had stopped drinking because of a spiritual re-birth. Although Ebby T. would not maintain his sobriety, his conversation with Bill W. made a lifetime impact on AA's co-founder.⁶

⁴Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered From Alcoholism (1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976) 25.

⁵AAs use 10 June 1935 as the founding date because that is the first day of Dr. Bob's sobriety.

⁶The story of Bill Wilson's conversion and early recovery, as well as his relationship with Ebby T. have been recorded in many places. The most accessible record is found in Alcoholics Anonymous, 1-15. Although Ebby's name is not mentioned in this version, it can be found in Pass It On: Bill Wilson and the AA Message (New York: AA World Services, 1984). Another book length biography is Robert Thompson, Bill W. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

The testimonials at the back of Alcoholics Anonymous and other AA literature are replete with testimonials which record spiritual awakenings, spirituality in AA's twelve steps and twelve traditions, and spiritual interpretations of daily events in the lives of AA-alcoholics.⁷ The single best source of such stories is "The Grapevine," AA's monthly journal whose official title is Box 1980. Published since 1944, "The Grapevine" is a reader-written journal in which AA members are able to share their experience, strength, and hope with each other. The testimonials, or stories, recorded in the journal give "slice of life" accounts of events and personal reactions to various steps, traditions, and philosophies within the AA program. Most of the articles deal with some aspect of spiritual well-being.

Besides the testimonials found in Box 1980 spirituality is the focus of Came to Believe, a series of brief testimonials by AA-alcoholics which specifically focus on spiritual aspects of the program. The implied purpose of these stories seems to be the desire to give a model which others can use to construct the spiritually-centered world view required for successful AA recovery. Although Came to Believe is the only book published by AA which focuses

⁷"AA-alcoholic" is the term coined by David R. Rudy, Becoming Alcoholic: Alcoholics Anonymous and the Reality of Alcoholism (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986) to distinguish those individuals who have recovered from alcoholism using the AA program.

exclusively on the spiritual aspects of AA recovery, it is not universally used by AA-alcoholics. For example, at meetings in Wheeling, WV, the book is prominently displayed on the chairperson's table. In Lansing, MI, the prominence of the book varies from meeting to meeting. And in certain AA meetings in Florida, the Bible is the prominent spiritual text.⁸ Although Came to Believe is the only book devoted exclusively to spirituality, the definitive understanding of spirituality is found in Alcoholics Anonymous.

In spite of the fact that care was taken not to prescribe a specific type of spirituality for AA members, the first printing of Alcoholics Anonymous gave the impression that "in order to recover they [AA-alcoholics] must acquire an immediate and overwhelming 'God-consciousness' followed by a vast change in feeling and outlook." As a result, the second edition of the book included an appendix devoted to the spiritual experience of AA-alcoholics; an appendix devoted to the varieties of spiritual growth. Here, care is taken to explain that most AA members experience a gradual spiritual awakening that develops "slowly over a period of time" and that "often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long

⁸Came to Believe (New York: AA World Services, 1973). The visibility of the book at meetings is based on reports from AA-alcoholics. Even though the Bible is used in such a way as reported here, such use violates AA tradition.

before he is himself."⁹ Although the written and oral traditions of AA emphasize that it is a spiritual program and not a religious one, religion and spirituality were blended in this Appendix when the personality changes experienced by AA-alcoholics were identified as "religious experiences."¹⁰ And religion and spiritual elements remain blended in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Newly sober alcoholics first encounter religious elements in the "God" steps and traditions and when they see that the "Lord's Prayer" is used to close most AA meetings. However, when one realizes that the immediate root of AA is the Oxford group the strong religious element within the AA program is understandable. But, within five years of AA's founding, the newer members "were largely ignorant of the similarity which their cherished program bore to primitive Christianity."¹¹

The second area in which religious elements are found in AA is in the ritual which has been established around meetings; ritual that can be interpreted with the context of American Civil Religion. The cultural and religious

⁹All quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous 569.

¹⁰Alcoholics Anonymous 569. The text reads, "Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must have been in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals."

¹¹Ernest Kurtz, Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979) 47.

elements which Michael Novak identifies in a baseball or football game and which W. Lloyd Warner found in Memorial Day celebrations are part of AA meetings, a concept which will be further developed in chapter 2.¹² And much of the comfort which AA-alcoholics derive from attending meetings is a manifestation of the religious elements within the meetings themselves.¹³

Unquestionably, AA is the most successful program for treating alcoholics which is currently available. However, because the spiritual norms in AA reflect middle-class, white, male, heterosexual norms, ethnic, racial, religious, and class minorities are especially prone to feeling excluded from AA.¹⁴ For example, although the steps of AA assume a positive, helpful God, "God as we understood him" for many lesbians and gay men is frequently a God who condemns them to hell because of their orientation; an

¹²Michael Novak, The Joy of Sports: End Zones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit (New York: Basic Books, 1976). W. Lloyd Warner, "An American Sacred Ceremony," American Civil Religion eds. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper and Row) 89-111.

¹³Several articles have been written where the author claims that to him/her the AA meeting takes the place of attending church or that AA is their religion. One such case is Philip Donnelly, "The Experience of Spiritual Recovery," NCCA Blue Book 26 (1974) 180-192.

¹⁴All minorities can be expected to experience discomfort when first confronted with the AA program. It is, however, outside the scope of this study to address minority issues in general.

orientation which is "God-given." This petty tyrant, or God as he is understood is somehow to restore them to sanity. Lesbians and gay men who have this negative understanding of God know that the likelihood for such help is less than minimal. So, when confronted with the third step, "[We] made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him," they are given an unworkable task.¹⁵

The Issue of Sexual Orientation

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed "homosexual" from its Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders. The resolution which was adopted by the Board of Trustees and which was upheld by a vote of the APA membership reads:

Whereas homosexuality per se implies no impairment of judgment, ability, reliability or general vocational capacities, therefore, be it resolved that the APA deplors all public discrimination against homosexuals in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, and licensing and...that the APA supports and urges the repeal of all legislation making criminal offenses of sexual acts

¹⁵The cultural context which causes many lesbians and gay men to develop such an attitude to God are explored in chapter 3. The experience of those lesbians and gay men who have no difficulty grasping that the idea of God is developed by each individual according to his/her understanding is, however, outside the scope of this study.



performed by consenting adults in private.¹⁶

This resolution was especially significant because the strongest argument against civil and social rights for lesbians and gay men was that their sexual "preference" was a sign of mental illness. Although the American Psychiatric Association only passed this resolution in 1973, Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychiatry, had advocated that homosexuality was not an illness as early as 1903, when he wrote in Die Zeit: "Wouldn't that [arguing that homosexuality is an illness] oblige us to characterize as sick many great thinkers and scholars of all times, whose variant orientation we know for a fact and whom we admire precisely because of their mental health?"¹⁷

Freud anticipated the cocontemporary understanding that individuals can only choose how they will act on their orientation. Lesbians and gay men do not deviate from "normal" sexual behavior although their sexual activity is "non-normative." The distinction between normal and normative activity is very important because "normal" is a

¹⁶Quoted in Donald Coleman and others, "Ethics and Morality Workgroup Final Report," A Report on Sexual Orientation and Affectional Preference compiled by the House of Representatives Civil Rights Committee's Family and Sexuality Task Force (Detroit: Michigan Organization for Human Rights, 1982) 2.

¹⁷Sigmund Freud, Die Zeit (Vienna, 1903) 5. Quote translated by Herman Schornstein.

value judgment whereas "normative" is descriptive. Opposite-sex sexual activity is normative because most people practice it. Same-sex sexual activity is non-normative because a minority of people engage in it. Yet, same-sex activity is normal behavior for those people.

Language is very powerful. So if AA sponsors or therapists begin on the assumption that other-sex activity is "normal," they send a message to lesbian and gay alcoholics that same sex activity is abnormal, sick, or sinful. Lesbian and gay alcoholics will, by extension, receive the message that they, too, are abnormal, sick, or sinful because they desire same-sex sexual partners.

But what is sexuality? Unfortunately, the issue of sexual orientation is little understood in American society. Too often people assume that sexuality is a dichotomy, that a man or woman is either heterosexual or homosexual. Or, in a more advanced understanding, it might be assumed that bisexuals also exist.

In their classical study Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, established that sexuality is neither a dichotomy nor a trichotomy. Rather, sexuality is a continuum which could best be understood using a seven point scale (0-6) to

understand and define sexual orientation.¹⁸ When Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard published Sexual Behavior in the Human Female they found that the same type of scale existed. However, the incidence of homosexuality in women was somewhat, but not significantly, lower than in men.¹⁹ The following chart shows what percentage of the adult population falls where on the Kinsey scale. Due to rounding off, these figures total 101%.

50% have a Kinsey 0 rating: exclusively
other-sex oriented in behavior
and psychological response

12% have a Kinsey 1 rating: incidental
same-sex behavior

12% have a Kinsey 2 rating: more than
incidental same-sex behavior

9% have a Kinsey 3 rating: about equal
amounts of same and other-sex
behavior

6% have a Kinsey 4 rating: more than
incidental other-sex behavior

5% have a Kinsey 5 rating: incidental
other-sex behavior

¹⁸Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardel B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948) 638-642.

¹⁹Alfred C. Kinsey and others, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (1953; Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1966) 446-501.



4% have a Kinsey 6 rating: exclusively same-sex oriented in behavior and psychological response²⁰

Because the Kinsey scale measures both overt behavior as well as fantasy, it is important to understand that individuals can shift position on the scale. Regardless of their current position on the scale, the individual's basic orientation cannot change. Activity can change but orientation cannot.

Based on these figures, it could be argued that 15% of the population is homosexual. But to apply the term "homosexual" to anyone is purely an arbitrary way to label individuals who do not choose to identify themselves as Kinsey 0s. As Kinsey, et al wrote:

The persons who are identified as "homosexuals" in much of the legal and social practice have rated anything between 1 and 6 on the above scale. On the other hand, there are some persons who would not rate an individual as "really homosexual" if he were anything less than a 5 or 6. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized again that there are persons who rate 2's or 3's who, in terms of the number of contacts they have made, may have had more homosexual experience than many persons who rate 6, and the clinician, the social worker, court officials, and society in general are not infrequently concerned with persons who rate no more than 2's or 3's. Many who rate only 1 or 2 are much disturbed over their homosexual

²⁰Adapted from" Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally, Dual Identities: Counseling Chemically Dependent Gay Men and Lesbians (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1987) 23.

experience, and they are frequently among those who go to clinicians for help.²¹

For the purposes of this study, only those individuals who rate as a Kinsey five or six, or 9% of the adult population, will be included in the homosexual category. The reason for this choice is based on the assumption that it is those individuals who are most likely to overtly identify with the lesbian and gay communities, attend lesbian and gay events, and publish in the lesbian and gay press. (The term "gay," except when it appears in a direct quote, will refer only to male homosexuals. A "lesbian" is female homosexual.)

Treatment professionals and others working with alcoholics must understand that the 9% figure only refers to those people whom we define as having a homosexual orientation; the incidence of homosexual activity/fantasy is encountered by 50% of all people and 37% of the male population has an overt same-sex sexual experience resulting in orgasm at some point(s) during their adult lives.

One of the criticisms which has been written about Alcoholics Anonymous is that talk of sexual issues is

²¹Kinsey, Human Male 651, 655.

discouraged at AA meetings.²² Because same-sex activity and fantasy carries with it such a negative social stigma, it is even less likely that these issues will be adequately dealt with in meetings. And unless the recovering alcoholic is comfortable with his/her sexuality, it is unlikely that a contented sobriety will be realized.²³ This is especially true for the 50% of the population who have same-sex activity as part of their background.

Although lesbian and gay alcoholics will not have issues dealing with sexual activity adequately dealt with during meetings, such is also the case for non-lesbian and non-gay alcoholics. However, a sensitive sponsor or therapist can help recovering lesbian and gay alcoholics deal with such issues while they write their fourth step, a step which is the time when alcoholics make a searching and fearless moral inventory of themselves. Both Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, in fact, place special emphasis on sexual issues.²⁴

²²William E. Biddle, "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Gay Alcoholic," Gay and Sober eds. Thomas O. Ziebold and John E. Mongeon (1982; New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985) 84.

²³Ivan Schroeder, "The Relationship Between Coming Out of the Closet and Recovery from Alcoholism," Masters Thesis, California Family Study Center, 1988.

²⁴See particularly Alcoholics Anonymous 68-70 and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 50-51.

Because of the negative social pressure which lesbians and gay men face in society about their orientations, it might be very useful for the sponsor or therapist to point out that early AA-alcoholics wrote that:

We remember always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed....God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge.²⁵

As with other outside issues and controversies, AA takes no position on arguments concerning the morality and/or cause of sexual orientation. As a program, it does "not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct."²⁶ Selfishness, dishonesty, and inconsideration are the issues to which AA concerns itself. Whether or not the relationship in which these issues emerged was with a same-sex or other-sex partner is not what is important.

Previous Research in the Field

It has been estimated that 24-40% of lesbians and gay men are alcohol or other drug dependent. An additional 30% have problems with drugs or alcohol that have not yet

²⁵Alcoholics Anonymous 69-70.

²⁶Alcoholics Anonymous 69.

reached the point of addiction.²⁷ Given these statistics, it is surprising that so few studies have been devoted to chemical addiction in the lesbian and gay communities. Currently, only five books have been given to this subject: the Whitman Walker Clinic's The Way Back, Jean Swallow's Out From Under: Sober Dykes and Our Friends, Tom Ziebold and John Mongeon's Gay and Sober, Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally's Dual Identities: Counseling Chemically Dependent Gay Men and Lesbians, and Steven L. Berg, Dana Finnegan, and Emily McNally's NALGAP Annotated Bibliography: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Lesbians/Gay Men. The Way Back and Out from Under include personal testimonials of lesbians and gay men who have stopped drinking.²⁸ The Way Back was designed as a supplement to the stories that appear in the back of Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's principle text, and includes five lesbian and five gay male first person stories which focus on how bad life was for the practicing alcoholic. Each story ends with some remarks about how the individual eventually stopped drinking because she/he participated in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Although these stories would be useful to show lesbian and gay alcoholics that

²⁷Linda Swartz, Alcoholism in the Lesbian/Gay Community: Coming to Terms with an Epidemic (Phoenix: Do It Now Foundation, 1980).

²⁸The Way Back: The Stories of Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics (1981; Washington, DC: Whitman Walker Clinic, 1982). Jean Swallow, Out From Under: Sober Dykes and Our Friends (San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983).

homosexuals can recover through AA, they do not show how recovery actually took place.

Like The Way Back, Jean Swallow's Out From Under contains personal stories of recovery. The major difference between the two books is that the women who share their testimonials, stories, poems, and essays in Out From Under have found sobriety through a variety of personal recovery programs. Some of the women recovered through AA,²⁹ others found support with other non-AA recovering women³⁰ while others stopped drinking through pure determination³¹ or for political reasons.³² One woman found her recovery by channeling her self-destructive drinking energies into "pumping iron."³³

One of the criticisms which can be leveled against Out From Under is that it has an anti-AA bias. But by understanding that the authors of the book often feel dually excluded from Alcoholics Anonymous because of their sex as

²⁹Meg Christian, "Turning It Over," Out From Under ed. Jean Swallow (San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983) 50-51.

³⁰Alice Aldrich, "Sobering Thoughts," Out From Under ed. Jean Swallow (San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983) 152-160.

³¹Jean Swallow, "What Is Calistoga?" Out From Under (San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983) 117-121.

³²Catherine Risingflame Moirai, "Four Poems in Search of a Sober Reader," Out From Under ed. Jean Swallow (San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983) 117-121.

³³Kitty Tsui, "In Training," Out From Under ed. Jean Swallow (San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983) 34-43.

well as their sexuality, such a bias is not surprising.³⁴

In addition, because Jean Swallow did not obtain her sobriety through AA, she is not as vested in advancing that particular program as would be an AA alcoholic.³⁵ Because Swallow has been able to demonstrate the variety of ways in which individuals can work toward recovery, this "bias" is actually one of the contributions which Swallow makes to the field.

Another difference between Out From Under and The Way Back is that the stories which Swallow includes in her book

³⁴Although the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking, rhetoric does not always match reality. John Langone and Delores de Nabrege Langone, Women Who Drink (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1980) make the point that AA generally does not meet the needs of the lesbian alcoholic because homosexuality is often difficult for AA members to face. Sharon Stonekey, "Reminders," Out From Under ed. Jean Swallow (San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983) 46-49 gives a good overview of the adverse effect of homophobia on a lesbian who felt excluded from AA. In an interview with this author, a lesbian alcoholic reported that a common cliché used by men in some of the AA meetings which she attended was that "If it was between taking a drink and raping a woman, I'd rape the woman." As a result, she initially "learned" that AA was not a safe place for women, much less lesbians. Discrimination against lesbians in particular and homosexuals in general is also recorded in AA literature. See J.N., "I Want to Belong," Box 1980 (October, 1977) 9-11 and W.B. "The Support We All Need," Box 1980 (January, 1980) 15-17. The case of a lesbian being voted out of an AA meeting because she was a lesbian is found in "Inclusive, Never Exclusive?" Box 1980 38.12 (1980) 41.

³⁵Jean Swallow discussed her early sobriety in a lecture given at a Lesbian Health and Addiction Conference, Ann Arbor, MI 4 April 1986. Also, see her essay, "What is Calistoga?" Out From Under (San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983) 52-64.

cover not only what it was like for the active alcoholics and other substance abusers, but also how and why the women became sober and how they maintain their sobriety. Although there is no systematic program of recovery provided, the text does present a variety of skills which a lesbian (or gay man) can use to maintain sobriety.

Gay and Sober was originally published as a special issue of The Journal of Homosexuality.³⁶ Edited by Thomas O. Ziebold and John E. Mongeon, the publication, which covers theoretical, practical, and exhortatory issues, was the first effort to bring together professional literature about lesbian and gay alcoholics and lesbians and gay men in treatment. The text is especially important because the issue of co-addiction as it relates to the family structure of homosexual relationships is addressed.³⁷ Unfortunately, as Ziebold explains in his introduction, because no papers were submitted that deal solely with the concerns of lesbian alcoholics, their specific needs are not addressed.

For the purposes of this study, William E. Biddle's "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Gay Alcoholic" is especially

³⁶Journal of Homosexuality 7.4 (1982). Thomas O. Ziebold and John E. Mongeon, eds. Gay and Sober: Directions for Counseling and Therapy (1982; New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985).

³⁷Scott Whitney, "The Ties That Bind: Strategies for Counseling the Gay Male Co-Alcoholic" Gay and Sober eds. Thomas O. Ziebold and John Mongeon (1982; New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985) 37-41.

important because he proposes "that there are a number of characteristics of AA, as it is represented in meetings, which discourage participation by gay people."³⁸ Of the four issues which he addresses, one relates to spirituality and another concerns the orthodoxy of AA. Citing Bell and Weinberg's assessment that "homosexual adults tend to be more alienated from formal religion than are heterosexuals,"³⁹ Biddle claims that the "greater power" references in such AA literature as Alcoholics Anonymous is a "more or less orthodox religious concept."⁴⁰

Biddle is also critical of the fact that AA-alcoholics do not provide newcomers with the two citations where Bill W., AA's co-founder, recognizes that spirituality can refer to individual growth and change. Unfortunately, his interpretations of the passages are not true to the text.⁴¹ Biddle is equally critical of AA's "often cult-like orthodoxy," or dogmatism, which he claims manifests itself

³⁸Biddle 81.

³⁹A.P. Bell and M.S. Weinberg, Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978) 153.

⁴⁰Biddle 85

⁴¹Biddle does not cite the specific passages which he claims fit his thesis. He only cites the following page numbers: Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957) and Alcoholics Anonymous 570. It is not clear to me exactly to what he refers.

in the oral tradition of AA.⁴² However, his thesis is greatly overstated because much of the orthodoxy to which he objects comes from AA of Akron, a sub-group of AA whose literature is not "conference approved."

The process by which a book or pamphlet obtains the "conference approved" label which is similar to the imprimatur on a Roman Catholic publication is long and elaborate. The thesis that AA cannot be held accountable for the writings of AA of Akron because it doesn't hold those beliefs is developed in chapter 6. But what is significant for lesbian and gay alcoholics is that AA orthodoxy is very strong on the belief that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking and that the program is individually tailored to the needs of each individual recovering alcoholic.

Biddle is also critical of what he calls "the routine disclaimers" that the twelve steps are but suggestions.⁴³ But those disclaimers are not unimportant; they are the key by which AA grows and flourishes. Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, the conference approved history of AA, details

⁴²Biddle 86. For a more developed discussion of AA as a cult, see Arthur H. Cain, "Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?" The Cured Alcoholic (New York: John Day Company, 1964) 61-74. William Madsen, "Alcoholics Anonymous as a Crisis Cult," Alcohol Health and Research World (Spring, 1974) 27-30 analyzes AA in terms of crisis cults. However, his use of "cult" is analytical and not pejorative.

⁴³Biddle 86.

the significance of the fact that "AA's Twelve Steps were to be suggestions only."⁴⁴ In criticizing AA's oral traditions, many of which do not reflect the AA program as developed in the literature, Biddle rightly points out that it is this oral tradition which newcomers generally first encounter when they enter the program. However, Biddle neither develops the examples needed to support his thesis nor does he discuss the basis for the alienation. As a result, "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Gay Alcoholic" does not provide the reader with the understanding necessary to help newly sober individuals work through the alienation which they might experience.

The NALGAP Annotated Bibliography: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Lesbians/Gay Men is the first attempt to compile everything that has been published and written concerning chemical addiction in the lesbian and gay communities.⁴⁵ If a book, article, brochure, pamphlet, conference paper, dissertation, thesis, or manuscript mentions lesbians or gay men and some type of chemical addiction, it was included in the bibliography. Each entry is annotated without bias or commentary. The book has been described as "An excellent resource for lesbians and gay men

⁴⁴Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age 167.

⁴⁵Steven L. Berg, Dana Finnegan, and Emily McNally, The NALGAP Annotated Bibliography: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Lesbians/Gay Men (Fort Wayne: National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals, 1987).

in recovery as well as professionals working with gay populations."⁴⁶ The archives collected during the research for this book are available at Rutgers University's Center of Alcohol Studies.⁴⁷

Two other books are also worth mentioning: John Lauritsen and Hank Wilson's Death Rush: Poppers and AIDS and Robert Bauman's The Gentleman from Maryland: The Conscience of a Gay Conservative.⁴⁸ In Death Rush, Lauritsen and Wilson argue against the use of poppers, a nitrite inhalant, and provide an annotated bibliography of research that documents its dangers. Because of the popularity of poppers, and the presence of AIDS in the gay community, the book provides important information for those individuals working with gay men who are alcoholic or chemically dependent. However, recovery from addiction is not the focus of the text.

Robert Bauman is a former Congressman from Maryland who stood at the forefront of the conservative right until he was arrested for sexual activity with a male teenage

⁴⁶Review of The NALGAP Annotated Bibliography, Feminist Bookstore News 10.4 (1987) 73.

⁴⁷The NALGAP Collection: Literature on Alcoholism and Homosexuality is housed at the Center of Alcohol Studies Library, Smithers Hall, Busch Campus, Piscataway, NJ 08854. Phone 201/932-4442.

⁴⁸Hank Lauritsen and Hank Wilson, Death Rush: Poppers and AIDS (New York: Pagan Press, 1986). Robert Bauman, The Gentleman from Maryland: The Conscience of a Gay Conservative (New York: Arbor House, 1986).

hustler. After his arrest, Bauman not only confronted his sexual orientation but also his alcoholism. In The Gentleman from Maryland, Bauman gives more than enough information for a reader to easily identify his recovery program; a program that included "meetings of groups dealing with alcoholism" in which Buck D. was his first sponsor.⁴⁹

Bauman's story had the potential for helping gay, and possibly lesbian, alcoholics come to accept not only their addiction but also their sexuality. Unfortunately, due to his discomfort with his homosexuality, Bauman explicitly states he would change his sexual orientation if that were within his power. Because Bauman has been unable to accept either his past or his orientation, his experiences have lead neither to a strength nor a hope which he can share with others.⁵⁰

Alcoholism in the lesbian and gay communities has also been the subject of four novels. Lee Sargent's Twilight Passion published as a trash novel in 1969, is actually a sensitive treatment of an alcoholic lesbian's attempt at recovery. More recently, Jean Swallow's Leave a Light on for Me focused on the life of a recovered lesbian alcoholic.

⁴⁹Bauman 221.

⁵⁰An expanded critique of Bauman's book is found in Steve B., "Review of The Gentleman from Maryland," Newsletters Anonymous 4 (1987) 7. Darrell Yates Rist, "Bauman: The Man Behind the Sex Scandal" Advocate (4 March 1987) 37-39+ expresses some admiration for Bauman, but the review cannot be considered favorable.

Unfortunately, stylistic problems with the book make it difficult to read, and the addiction theme gets lost in the confusion of too many other competing themes. Marion Michener's Three Glasses of Wine, like Sargent's earlier work, concerns a woman trying to recover from her addiction. But unlike the earlier novel, Michener's protagonist is able to maintain her sobriety. Vincent Virga's A Comfortable Corner is the only novel that addresses alcoholism in the gay community. However, his focus is on co-addiction.⁵¹

Although there is a dearth of books on the subject of alcoholism in the lesbian and gay communities many articles have appeared on the subject. To make sense of the literature it is best to first consider what has appeared in professional literature and then those articles which have appeared in the popular lesbian/gay press. Until around 1958, the overriding assumption in the professional literature was that latent homosexuality was the cause of alcoholism.⁵² This idea was based on the neo-Freudian

⁵¹Jean Swallow, Leave a Light on For Me (Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1986). Lee Sargent, Twilight Passion (San Diego: Phoenix, 1969). Mariane Michener, Three Glasses of Wine Have Been Removed From This Story (Seattle: Silver Lake Press, 1988). Vincent Virga, A Comfortable Corner (New York: Avon, 1982).

⁵²One of the first authors to question this theory was Edward M. Scott, "Psychosexuality of the Alcoholic" Psychological Reports 4.4 (1958) 599-602. Scott writes that "Clinical studies of 300 consecutive case records of alcoholics suggest that the dominant psychosexual factor is that of immaturity. This suggestion stems from the high divorce rate, which is interpreted, on the quotations from patient records, not as an indication of latent

assumption that homosexuality and alcoholism were both oral fixations. Ernest Jones' comment in his 1920 article on "Recent Advances in Psycho-Analysis" was typical: "I may remind you of the essential part that repressed homosexuality has been found to play in the causation of chronic alcoholism, of drug habits, and of paranoia..."⁵³ This point of view was further advanced in Flint Holland's 1952 novel Secret in a Bottle.⁵⁴

Even after Kinsey and others published Sexual Behavior in the Human Male which showed the commonness of same-sex sexual activity, homosexuality was typically assumed to be a mental illness. Such assumptions are, unfortunately, not all historical. Writers such as Gary G. Forrest continue to write that homosexuality is a dysfunction which can be cured.⁵⁵ By citing the much earlier work of O. Fenichel and Karl Menniger, in 1984, Forrest concluded that the "identity and sexually determined paranoid trends of the alcoholic can be related to bisexual and homosexual conflicts," and that

homosexuality, but rather as an inability to assume responsibility for one's state in life."

⁵³Ernest Jones, "Recent Advances in Psycho-Analysis," International Journal of Psychoanalysis 1 (1920) 169.

⁵⁴Flint Holland, Secret in a Bottle: The Cause and Cure of Alcoholism (New York: Pageant, 1952).

⁵⁵Gary B. Forrest, Alcoholism and Human Sexuality (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1983).

few alcoholics are "explicitly homosexual."⁵⁶ But, in his 1982 Alcoholism, Narcissism, and Psychopathology homosexuality as a factor in the development of alcoholism is mentioned throughout the text.⁵⁷

Stephen Israelstam and Sylvia Lambert, in a 1983 article which appeared in The International Journal of Addictions provide a historical analysis of literature which supports and refutes the theory that a causal relationship exists between homosexuality and alcoholism. Their essay is the definitive work for such a historical analysis.⁵⁸

A new emphasis developed in the field of chemical addiction after Lilene Fifield's On My Way Nowhere: Alienated, Isolated, and Drunk--An Analysis of Gay Alcohol Abuse and an Evaluation of Alcoholism Rehabilitation Services for the Los Angeles Gay Community became available in 1975. This statistical study serves as the basis for claims that 30% of lesbians and gay men are alcohol or other

⁵⁶O. Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: W.W. Norton, 1945). Karl A. Menninger, Man Against Himself (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1938). Quotations from Gary G. Forrest, Intensive Psychotherapy of Alcoholism (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1984) 17.

⁵⁷Gary G. Forrest, Alcoholism, Narcissism, and Psychopathology (Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications, 1982).

⁵⁸Stephen Israelstam and Sylvia Lambert, "Homosexuality as a Cause of Alcoholism: A Historical Review," The International Journal of Addictions 18 (1983) 1085-1107.

drug dependent.⁵⁹ Since Fifield's study was published, the field has shifted away from discussions of what causes alcoholism in the lesbian and gay communities to discussions of how to provide effective treatment for lesbian and gay alcoholics. C. Vourakis's "Homosexuals in Substance Abuse Treatment" which examines alcohol and drug abuse in lesbians and gay men in the context of society's attitudes toward homosexuals as well as the treatment needs of lesbian and gay clients is an ideal example of the literature which is now being produced.⁶⁰

Other recent trends in the field are found in Peter Nardi's work in defining the lesbian/gay family structure and Edward S. Morales' discussion of ethnic minorities within the lesbian and gay communities.⁶¹ In the last few

⁵⁹Lilene Fifield, On My Way Nowhere: Alienated, Isolated, and Drunk--An Analysis of Gay Alcohol Abuse and an Evaluation of Alcoholism Rehabilitation Services for the Los Angeles Gay Community, (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center, 1975). Similar figures are reported in Marcel T. Saghir, Eli Robins, Bonnie Walbran, and Kathye A. Gentry, "Homosexuality, IV: Psychiatric Disorders and Disability in the Female Homosexual" American Journal of Psychiatry 127 (1970) 147-154 and Collins E. Lewis, Marcel T. Saghir, and Eli Robins, "Drinking Patterns in Homosexual and Heterosexual Women," Journal of Clinical Psychiatry 43 (1982) 277-279.

⁶⁰C. Vourakis, "Homosexuals in Substance Abuse Treatment," Substance Abuse: Pharmacologic, Developmental, and Clinical Perspectives eds. G. Bennett, C. Vourakis, and D.S. Woolf (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1983).

⁶¹Peter M. Nardi, "Alcohol Treatment and the Non-Traditional Family Structure of Gays and Lesbians," Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education 27.2 (1982) 83-89. Edward S. Morales, "Third World Gays and Lesbians: A Process of Multiple Identities," American Psychological Association,

years, emphasis has also been placed on the role of drugs and alcohol as a co-factor in AIDS. Thomas M. Smith's AIDS and Alcoholism: Denial Strikes Again, in which he demonstrates that the alcohol/AIDS factor is greater than the simple understanding that intoxication can lead to unsafe sex, is typical of this literature as is the more general "I.V. Drug Abuse and AIDS" by Ron Covey. Larry Siegel's AIDS and Substance Abuse is the best collection of essays currently available on this topic. The articles which appear in Siegel's book not only cover a wide range of issues, but each includes an excellent bibliography. Currently, most of the AIDS education brochures list alcoholism and drug addiction in the "unsafe" category along with such acts as anal intercourse without a condom.⁶²

Besides the professional literature, the majority of articles which have been published appear in the lesbian/gay press. Those tend to be either general discussions of addiction or personal testimonials. With the publication of the NALGAP Annotated Bibliography, this body of literature is extremely accessible.⁶³

Anaheim, 27 August 1983.

⁶²Thomas M. Smith, AIDS and Alcoholism: Denial Strikes Again (San Francisco: San Francisco Department of Public Health, 1985). Ron Covey, "IV Drug Abuse and AIDS: What Counselors Need to Know," Professional Counselor 1.3 (1986) 37-39+. Larry Siegel, AIDS and Substance Abuse (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1988).

⁶³Berg, NALGAP Annotated Bibliography.

When Randy Shilts' "Alcoholism: A Look in Depth at How a National Menace is Affecting the Gay Community" appeared in the Advocate in 1974, it was the first major treatment of the subject to appear in the lesbian/gay press.⁶⁴ In his article, Shilts discussed the social aspects of lesbian and gay bars, life for the lesbian/gay alcoholic, co-alcoholism, treatment, and recovery. Similar articles have also appeared in Mandate, Christopher Street, and the Lesbian Connection. A special issue of RFD was devoted to alcoholism and other drug addiction.⁶⁵

Testimonials generally caution others about the dangers of alcohol or other drug abuse and frequently exhort people to get help for their addictions. F.M.'s "A Dykes' Drunkalogue" which appeared in Bay Windows is typical in that she first tells the story of her addiction and then explains how she recovered.⁶⁶ Catherine's "An Address to Alcoholic Lesbians by a Drunken Dyke" is a more overt plea

⁶⁴Randy Shilts, "Alcoholism: A Look in Depth at How a National Menace is Affecting the Gay Community," Advocate (25 February 1974) 16-19+.

⁶⁵"Alcoholism," Mandate: The International Magazine of Entertainment and Eros 6.69 (1981) 30-32+. Thomas O. Ziebold, "Alcoholism and Recovery: Gays Helping Gays," Christopher Street 3.6 (1979) 36-44. Kristi, "Lesbians and Alcoholism," Lesbian Connection 1.5 (1975) 5-6. RFD 28 (1981). This issue of RFD was titled "Reality Finally Dawns."

⁶⁶F.M., "A Dykes Drunkalogue," Bay Windows (25-30 May 1985) 12.

to her readers to stop drinking.⁶⁷ Like many other writers, Catherine addresses the political implications of drunkenness which recognizes that--as the title of another article explicitly states--"Drunks Make Poor Revolutionaries."⁶⁸

The largest volume of testimonials which appears outside the lesbian/gay press are those stories which are found in Box 1980, the monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous which is better known as "The Grapevine." In these stories, the AA-alcoholic tends to focus on some aspect of the AA program. Sometimes the author's homosexuality is incidental. At other times, such as when L.B. writes about the lesbian/gay hospitality suite at the 1981 Illinois State AA Conference, it is central to the story.⁶⁹

The final body of literature available on the subject of lesbian and gay alcoholics is found in unpublished papers. In 1979, when Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally founded the National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals, they began to collect conference

⁶⁷Catherine, "An Address to Alcoholic Lesbians by a Drunken Dyke," Lesbian Connection 1.5 (1975) 18-20.

⁶⁸Steven L. Berg, "Drunks Make Poor Revolutionaries: Alcoholism in the lesbian and Gay Community," The Agenda (1986) 10. A version of this article was reprinted in NALGAP News 7.1 (1986) 9-10.

⁶⁹L.B., "In Diversity is Strength," Box 1980 (April 1982) 18-19.

papers and other unpublished materials. As a result of their efforts, these papers were made available for distribution through the NALGAP office. In 1987, Rutgers University added the NALGAP archives to their permanent collection.

Because AA is both a spiritual program and the largest organization of recovering alcoholics in the world, it would seem that much of the small press literature would deal with spiritual issues. However, such is not the case. Robert Kus and I are the only two people consistently writing on the topic. Kus' research has focused on how gay men relate to their higher power and how they experience their higher powers' relationships to them. Unfortunately, "Gay American Men and Alcoholics Anonymous" is the only article which Kus has published concerning this aspect of his research.⁷⁰

⁷⁰Robert J. Kus, "Alcoholics Anonymous and American Gay Men" Integrated Identity for Gay Men and Lesbians ed. Eli Coleman (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1988) 253-276. Kus' papers concerning gay men, sobriety, and spirituality include: "Gay Alcoholism and Non-Acceptance of Gay Self: The Critical Link," Nursing Research--Hawaii '85, Honolulu, 1985. "Gays and Their Higher Power: An Ethnography of Gay Sobriety," National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals, Chicago, 1985. "The Alcoholics Anonymous Sponsor and Gay American Men," 32nd International Institute on the Prevention and Treatment of Alcoholism, Budapest, 1986. "The Higher Power and Gay American Men: A Study in Sobriety," Special Program in Honor of Dr. Gordon Browder, Missoula, April 1986. Spiritual issues are mentioned in, but are not the focus of his "Gay Consultations in Non-Gay Treatment Settings," Professional Counselor (July/August 1987) 46-55.

"Homemaking in an Unwelcoming Environment," in which I tell how lesbian and gay Christian organizations have been welcoming lesbian and gay alcoholics, and "Responding to Alcoholism," which gives suggestions as to how groups such as Dignity⁷¹ can be more helpful in addressing the needs of alcoholics are typical of my small press publications which are addressed to the non-professional reader.⁷² These essays are more intended to give exposure to the problem of alcoholism in the lesbian and gay communities than they are to provide a systematic treatment program. However, such a program is being developed in this dissertation, "AA, Spiritual Issues, and the Treatment of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholics."

Three other articles which address spirituality are worth noting. K.L.'s "Here I Am," which appeared in the January 1980 issue of "The Grapevine" directly addresses the issue of her higher power whom she chooses to call Herhim.⁷³ But, the focus of this short article is not on lesbian spirituality in AA, but on how non-homosexuals in AA can help lesbian and gay alcoholics. Ann Campbell's

⁷¹Dignity is an international organization of lesbian and gay Catholics and their friends.

⁷²Alex Liberacki [Steven L. Berg], "Homosexuality in an Unwelcoming Environment," More Light Update (March 1985) 6-7. Steven L. Berg, "Responding to Alcoholism" Dignity, Inc. Newsletter 18.8 (1986) 6.

⁷³K.L. "Here I Am" Box 1980 (January 1980) 6.

testimonial, "God's Love is Priceless" tells the story of her life as a nun, leaving the convent, accepting her lesbianism, and eventually joining AA to get help for her alcoholism.⁷⁴ But like the testimonials which appear in The Way Back, the focus is on what it was like as an alcoholic and not how the steps of AA were used to assist recovery.

"Dignity and Recovery: A Gay Catholic's Story" published by Dignity/Region 5's Substance Abuse Task Force is the story of a gay alcoholic and his recovery through AA.⁷⁵ The author, identified only as "a member of Dignity/Region 5," mentions how his involvement with Dignity helped his recovery. He concludes by offering suggestions as to how Dignity and other organizations can address the needs of alcoholics. However, these needs are not limited to spiritual issues.

Although it has been an assumption in the alcoholism field that little has been written on lesbian and gay alcoholics, the bibliographic research supported by the National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals proves otherwise. It is not that issues such as spirituality in recovery are not being discussed. It is

⁷⁴Anne Campbell [pseud], "God's Love is Priceless," Lesbian Nuns eds. Rosemary Curb and Nancy Manahan (New York: Warner Books, 1986) 213-219.

⁷⁵Dignity and Recovery: A Gay Catholic's Story (East Lansing, MI: Dignity/Region 5 Substance Abuse Task Force, 1985).

that these issues are being addressed outside the academic/professional mainstream. Fortunately, because the NALGAP collection is now available at Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, the fugitive literature of the field has finally surfaced and the collection is being used to spur other studies.

CHAPTER 2

RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

One of the truisms found in AA's literature as well as its oral tradition is that AA is a spiritual program and not a religious one. Although AA is essentially correct in its claim, there is no clear, intellectual basis for it.

Alcoholics Anonymous is not religious in that it does not explicitly promote a particular brand of organized, or denominational, religion. God is defined by the individual's own, unique understanding. In fact, virtually any understanding of God is acceptable so long as the individual believes that she or he is not God and that God is some type of higher power.¹ Judith Sproxton is but one of many who found that "AA members keep the notion of God deliberately vague."² Yet, the religious elements of AA can not be separated from the spirituality of the program. Even the "Big Book," in a discussion on the spiritual nature of the program, confuses the issue when it equates the

¹This argument is developed in Ernest Kurtz, Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous (Center City, MN Hazelden, 1979).

²Judith Sproxton, "Alcoholics Anonymous," The Tablet (2 August 1980) 746.

personality changes which alcoholics undergo after entering AA with religious experiences.³

The discussion of spirituality is problematic in that there is no clear definition as to what constitutes a spiritual program or even what is a spiritual experience. The general belief seems to be that AA is spiritual because it is not a religion. And debates about AA's religious nature do not generally address the specifics of spirituality.

In order to help correct the difficulties which this lack of clarity brings, a bibliographic project on Spiritual Issues in Recovery has begun at Guest House, an in-patient treatment center for alcoholic priests, deacons, brothers, and seminarians. As part of this project a data base is being constructed for publications that deal with spirituality and recovery in the most general understandings of the term. These materials are then being placed in sub-categories. It is one of the aims of the project to determine whether or not there is consensus as to what are the key elements of spirituality as it relates to recovery.⁴

³Alcoholics Anonymous (1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976) 569. The text reads: "Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals."

⁴For more information on this project, write to Research and Education, Guest House, 1840 W. Scripps Road, Lake Orion, MI 48035.

The fact that AA is able to maintain that it is essentially a spiritual program and not a religious one because it is vague on the concept of God has not stopped writers from identifying the religious nature of the program nor has it halted criticism of AA's religious nature. Robert Freed Bales in his 1945 analysis of the program argued that, in and of itself, the belief in a higher power "gives the group a basically religious character."⁵ This basically religious character was also seen by O. Herbert Mowrer. In 1964, Mowrer was so impressed with the ecumenical character of AA that he argued that AA was the third reformation. Christianity had been the first major reformation and the Protestant reformation of the sixteenth century had been the second. Even though he was willing to repeat AA's claim that it is not a religion, he was not willing to overlook the religious nature of the program.⁶

In her 1975 essay on "AA and Religion," Margaret Bean is critical of AA's claim that it is not a religion. After isolating various aspects of what makes a religion and how these elements are used in AA, Bean concludes that "it appears a little puzzling when AA states specifically that it is not a religion." She continues:

⁵Robert Freed Bales, "Social Therapy for a Social Disorder: Compulsive Drinking," Journal of Drug Issues 1.3 (1945) 19.

⁶O. Herbert Mowrer, "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Third Reformation," Religion in Life 34 (1964) 383-397.

Apparently what is meant here is that AA does not undertake to determine a member's relationship with God or the structures whereby he achieves this relationship. It is a secular cult that borrows strength from religious experience and may use existing religious structures.⁷

Although Bean is only critical of AA's denial that it is a religion, she is not critical of AA's use of religion. Her goal is not to provide a critique of how AA works but to help "enrich our understanding of how and why AA functions as it does, what it offers, and how it solves some problems and gives rise to others."⁸ But others have been critical of what they see as an emerging cult or an essentially religious program.

In 1963, Arthur Cain identified what he saw as a growing trend of intolerance which AA has toward psychiatry, its hostility to criticism, and its growing authoritarianism when he argued that the program was "becoming one of America's most fanatical religious cults."⁹ He continued to believe that alcoholics should try AA first, but that they should also realize that there are also recovered alcoholics outside the program.

⁷Margaret Bean, "AA and Religion," Psychiatric Annals 5.3 (1975) 52.

⁸Bean 52.

⁹Arthur H. Cain, "Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?" Harpers Magazine 226.1353 (1963) 48.

A more recent and more critical reaction to AA's religiosity is found in the formation of Secular Organizations for Sobriety. SOS was formed in November, 1986 and, as Jim Christopher wrote in the premiere issue of the newsletter:

Secular Organizations for Sobriety are a grassroots movement, offering an alternative to "spiritual" recovery from the physiological disease of alcoholism. Dogma-free SOS meetings are forming across the land to meet the needs of those who may be uncomfortable with, and perhaps alienated by, the religiosity of the typical Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group.¹⁰

In the same issue, John Winner describes the basic religious indoctrination he experienced in a treatment facility which based its treatment on AA's twelve step program. Winner explains that "I had entered a fully accredited medical hospital for alcohol/drug detox and rehabilitation, but I might as well have entered a church."¹¹ He emphasizes how his lack of acceptance of a higher power was interpreted by family and treatment counselors as a sign of his lack of willingness to stop drinking.

Regardless of the extent of criticism against the religious nature of AA, to say that Alcoholics Anonymous has

¹⁰Jim Christopher, "Firewalking, Sobriety, and Magical Thinking," SOS 1.1 (1988) 1.

¹¹John Winner, "Treatment or Indoctrination?" SOS 1.1 (1988) 2.

religious elements is not to say that AA is a religion. Understanding AA in terms of its religious elements neither diminishes its effectiveness nor does it contradict the claim that AA is a spiritual program and not a religious one. However, such an understanding does assist in explaining the spiritual dimensions of the fellowship and the religious influences found in its twelve step recovery program.¹² Furthermore, to deny the religious element which the lesbian or gay client legitimately discovers, discredits not only the sponsor's or therapist's credibility but, more seriously, it discredits AA itself.

Civil Religion and Alcoholics Anonymous

In the Winter 1967 issue of Daedalus, Robert N. Bellah addressed the issue of American Civil Religion.

While some have argued that Christianity is the national faith and others that church and synagogue celebrate only the generalized religion of "the American Way of Life," few have realized that there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America.¹³

¹²The roots of the religious elements will be developed in chapters 4 and 5.

¹³The Daedalus article has been reprinted as Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," American Civil Religion, eds. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) 21.

Bellah goes on to argue that this religious dimension "has its own seriousness and integrity and requires the same care in understanding that any other religion does."¹⁴

Although Bellah "first" brought the notion of civil religion to the forefront of scholarly thought, he credits Rousseau for having developed this phrase in The Social Contract.¹⁵ For Rousseau, the dogma of civil religion consisted of a belief in the existence of God, the life to come, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, and the exclusion of religious intolerance. All other religious concerns were outside the concerns of the state. Although they did not go as far as Rousseau, it is likely that he influenced the writers of the Constitution as they began the process of separating the affairs of the Church from the affairs of the state.

What Bellah and others have found is that this civil religion itself took on a strong religious significance. For example, as America grew, a set of sacred texts, sacred symbols, sacred vestments, sacred rituals, and sacred shrines developed as secular saints became canonized. To support their position, these scholars cite the awe in which the Constitution, the flag, judges' robes, graduation ceremonies, and historic landmarks are held. Furthermore,

¹⁴Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" 21.

¹⁵Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses (1762; London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1973).

they argue that the "worship" of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and John F. Kennedy has elevated them to the level of sainthood.¹⁶

Since Bellah identified the civil religion found in American culture, others have looked at the religious elements of various secular observances. One of the more useful studies of this nature is Michael Novak's The Joy of Sports: End Zones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit because in it he develops a systematic list of those concepts that are found in religion and how those concepts may be applied to seemingly non-religious events.

In the The Joy of Sports, Novak argues that sports are religious; not that they are a religion.

Sports are religious in the sense that they are organized institutions, disciplines, and liturgies; and also in the sense that they teach religious qualities of heart and soul. In particular, they recreate symbols of cosmic struggle, in which human survival and moral courage are not assured....If you give your heart to the ritual [of either sports or religion], its effects upon your inner life can be far-reaching. Of course, many merely go

¹⁶Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, American Civil Religion (New York: Harper and Row) provides an excellent collection of essays on this topic. Will Herberg's "American Civil Religion: What It Is and Whence It Comes" (76-88) and W. Lloyd Warner's "An American Civil Ceremony" (89-111) are particularly interesting.

through the motions. Yet even they, unaware, are surprised by grace.¹⁷

There is no Religion of Sports which has a Basketball Denomination, a Baseball Denomination, and a Football Denomination. "Sports are not Christianity, or Judaism, or Islam, or Buddhism, or any of the world religions...But sports are a form of religion."¹⁸ When Novak's principles are applied to Alcoholics Anonymous, it is clear that like sports, AA is religious. It is not a form of religion in the same way that Christianity, or Judaism, or Islam, or Buddhism, or any of the world religions are religious, but Alcoholics Anonymous is a form of religion.

To argue that AA, like sports, is religious, seems to contradict the basic principal that AA is a spiritual program and not a religious one. Yet no contradiction remains because AA understands "religious" to be denominational religion. To the AA way of thinking, the Oxford Group is, unquestionably, a religious movement because it promotes Protestant Christianity.¹⁹ Yet, again, to AA's way of thinking, sports could not be religious because, like Alcoholics Anonymous, sports in

¹⁷Michael Novak, The Joy of Sports: End Zones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit (New York: Basic Books, 1976) 21.

¹⁸Novak, 21.

¹⁹AA's development from the Oxford Group will be developed in chapter 5.

non-denominational. Those individuals who participate in the ritual of sports would have no difficulty identifying with the following passage from Alcoholics Anonymous:

We represent no particular faith or denomination. We are dealing only with general principles common to most denominations.²⁰

Before looking at the specific beliefs of Alcoholics Anonymous and how those beliefs are frequently associated with Western Christianity, it is first necessary to delineate the nine basic elements which Novak uses to identify religion.

1. A religion, first of all, is organized and structured.
2. Religions are built upon asceticism, a word that signifies the development of character through patterns of self-denial, repetition, and experiment.
3. Religions channel the feeling most humans have of danger, contingency, and chance.
4. Religions make explicit the almost nameless dreads of daily human life: aging, dying, failure under pressure, cowardice, betrayal, guilt.
5. Religions, however universal in imperative, do not treat rootedness, particularity, and local belonging as unworthy.
6. Religions consecrate certain days and hours.
7. To have a religion you have to have heroic forms to try to live up to.
8. To have a religion you need to have a pattern of symbols and myths that a person can grow old with, with a kind of resignation, wisdom, and illumination.

²⁰Alcoholics Anonymous 93-94.

9. To have a religion, you need to have a way to exhilarate the human body, and desire, and will, and the sense of beauty, and the sense of oneness with the universe and other humans.²¹

By investigating each of these elements, it is possible to better understand how Alcoholics Anonymous triggers such a strong religious reaction for so many people.

Characteristics included in the first element, that religion is organized and structured, involve ceremonies in which a few surrogates perform for all, in which certain vestments are employed and rituals are prescribed and in which actions are highly formalized. Moments of silence are often observed. Concentration is indispensable and correct forms of behavior are distinguished from illicit behaviors.

The ritual of AA centers around meetings of which there are four basic types: speaker's meetings, topic meetings, step meetings, and open discussion meetings. At a speaker's meeting, which is sometimes called a lead meeting, a recovered alcoholic tells his or her story of what it was like, what happened, and what it is like today. Although usually only one person speaks at the meeting, his or her talk is frequently followed by short comments from alcoholics sitting in the audience. Those people who wish to comment, after identifying themselves by first name,

²¹Novak 29-31.

compliment the speaker on the talk and then add a bit of their own experience.

At a topic meeting, either the chair of the meeting or someone else introduces a specific topic for individuals to discuss. Common topics are gratitude, benefits of sobriety, a specific character defect, or a problem about which a member wants to obtain advice. Step meetings are like topic meetings except that the topic is always one of the twelve steps. In an open discussion meeting, the members talk about whatever issues they want.

Even given the variety of different types of meetings, a formal ritual has been developed as to how meetings are conducted and how people act at the meetings. Each meeting is chaired by one individual who makes sure that it starts and ends on time. Except at a speaker's meeting, the chair is generally the first person to talk about the step or topic under discussion. At a speaker's meeting, the chair is responsible for introducing the speaker.

Meetings usually open with the chair introducing him/herself with the words "My name is [first name] and I'm an alcoholic." Each person who speaks at the meeting prefaces his/her comments with a similar introduction. Variations include: "My name is [first name] and I'm a recovering alcoholic; recovered alcoholic; grateful alcoholic; drug addict and alcoholic." Sometimes the alcoholic tag will come first in a form such as "I'm an

alcoholic and my name is [first name]." Identifying oneself as an alcoholic gives the person the right to talk at the meeting. After the member identifies him/herself, the other members generally all say "Hi, [first name]." While this is a common practice, as with most everything else in AA, it is not universal.

If the speaker does not identify him/herself, other members frequently interrupt with such comments as "Hello, [speaker's first name]" or "Who are you?" Such questions are not asked to gain the speaker's identity, which is generally known from other meetings; rather, the question is raised to re-enforce the ritual.

After identifying him/herself, the chair then has someone read the preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recovery from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. there are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

This simple statement summarizes the traditions and principle purpose of the AA program. After the preamble is read, the first two and one half pages of chapter five, "How It Works," from Alcoholics Anonymous is then read. This section includes the twelve steps of the program.

At topic, speaker, and open discussion meetings, members speak one at a time. Rarely does a member speak more than once in a meeting; although in some meetings the chair is permitted to comment after each person shares his/her comments. Meetings then close with the members standing, holding hands, and saying the "Lord's Prayer." In some instances, the "Serenity Prayer" replaces the "Lord's Prayer."

Because each AA group is autonomous, there are slight variations in the above ritual. However, within a given meeting, whatever ritual is established is followed each week. To change the ritual requires a "group conscience" where the people who attend the meeting decide as a group to make a change. An example of such a change would be if a group that has been saying the "Lord's Prayer" each week decides to close the meeting with the "Serenity Prayer." If such a proposal is made at a meeting, the members discuss it and then reach a consensus as to whether the change should be implemented or not. Rarely is a controversial change implemented; AA does not run by "majority rules." Instead,

consensus decision making is used as a model.²²

Although Novak explains that "ordinary humans, in the ordinary ups and downs of daily experience, cannot be expected to perform routinely at the highest levels of awareness,"²³ one significant way in which AA differs from formal religions is that power is not vested in any such individuals. In AA, it is the ordinary human who is lifted up. Although some meetings require a specific period of sobriety for someone to chair a meeting, there are no hard and fast rules. Leadership positions are rotated on a regular basis. Most frequently, the chair for a particular meeting is rotated each week or month.

Ascesis, the key to the second element, derives from the disciplines which Greek athletes performed in order to

²²Any Attempt to describe AA meetings is problematic. William Madsen, "AA: Birds of a Feather," The American Alcoholic (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1974) 154-197; David Rudy, Becoming Alcoholic: Alcoholics Anonymous and the Reality of Alcoholism (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986); and Oliver R. Whitley, "Life With Alcoholics Anonymous: The Methodist Class Meeting as a Paradigm," Journal of Studies on Alcohol 38.5 (1977) 831-848 give scholarly studies of AA meetings. First person accounts can be found in most issues of Box 1980 more commonly known as The Grapevine. Nan Robertson, Getting Better: Inside Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: William Morrow, 1988) demonstrates the variety of meeting formats. Other first person accounts of meetings can be found in such publications as Lillian Roth, I'll Cry Tomorrow (New York: Frederick Fell, 1954). Ernie K., Ninety Meetings, Ninety Days (Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1984) is a daily reflection on the subjects discussed at ninety AA meetings he attended over a ninety day period.

²³Novak 29.

reach peak performance. As with Greek athletes, self-denial, repetition, and experiment are all key elements in Alcoholics Anonymous. Self-denial is first and foremost centered around alcohol. The closest which AA comes to an absolute rule is the "requirement" not to drink. Because the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking, one can be a member while still drinking. However, until the alcohol is removed from the body, recovery is not possible. In addition to denying themselves alcohol, members of AA now have the understanding that any mood altering drug--unless taken under a doctor's supervision--must not be used.

At the end of their drinking careers, alcoholics are typically undisciplined. As a result, sponsors and other AA members work to help new members achieve some discipline in their lives. Repetition is stressed in such areas as arriving to work on time, attending committed AA meetings, and taking care of other routine responsibilities. It can also be seen in members who establish a prayer/meditation ritual at night or in the morning. Such repetition, it is found, leads to contentment and serenity because it gives order to a disordered life. In the process of obtaining a daily and weekly schedule, new people in the program experiment with different schedules until they find one that they are able to work. Maybe the types of prayers they say

or the specific meetings which they attend will be changed periodically. But, eventually, a routine is established.²⁴

The third element of religion revolves around fate because "Religions place us in the presence of powers greater than ourselves, and seek to reconcile us to them."²⁵

Members of AA are taught to become God-centered because they understand that sobriety only comes from a fit spiritual condition. Therefore, AA-alcoholics are taught to ask themselves on a daily basis one simple question: "How can I best serve Thee--Thy will (not mine) be done."²⁶ Coincidence seldom has a place in the AA-alcoholic's world view. Chance and fate are generally explained as God working in the life of the individual. The story recorded in Came to Believe by the man who met a minister on the beach is an example of this type of understanding.²⁷ The man was in despair and, by coincidence, he met a minister walking along the beach one rainy night. After a long conversation with the minister, the man felt better and was

²⁴Paul H., Things My Sponsor Taught Me (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1987) is an especially good summary of the types of issues which a sponsor discusses with his or her sponsee.

²⁵Novak 30.

²⁶Alcoholics Anonymous 85.

²⁷"A Rainy Night," Came to Believe (New York: AA World Services, 1973) 70-72.

able to maintain successful recovery. The meeting was attributed to fate, not chance.

The fourth element, that religions make explicit the almost nameless dread of daily human life, is a central concern of AA. The section of Alcoholics Anonymous which gives directions as to how to do a moral inventory places special emphasis on fear because "This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives."²⁸ And unless the fear of daily living is addressed and dealt with, recovery from alcoholism is almost impossible.

The fourth step of AA teaches that "[We] made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." As part of this inventory alcoholics consult their fears.

We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough.²⁹

After counseling newcomers that they must searchingly and fearlessly confront their fears, the authors of Alcoholics Anonymous suggest that there is a better way of life than the one they have been living. That way is dependence on God. By trusting in an infinite God, the AA alcoholic

²⁸Alcoholics Anonymous 67.

²⁹Alcoholics Anonymous 68.

learns that "Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity." Reliance on God is not a sign of weakness but an example of courage; a courage which gives strength. The AA-alcoholic must still confront such fears as aging, dying, failure under pressure, cowardice, betrayal, and guilt. But, by working the program outlined in the twelve steps, they are able to ask God to remove their fears and "At once, we commence to outgrow our fear."³⁰

Blessing the local turf to give a sense of rootedness is the fifth element of religion. Larger loyalties are built from the idea that "Charity begins at home." Thus, AA-alcoholics have developed an understanding that the third part of the twelfth step, "[We] practice these principles in all our affairs" begins at home.

Being a "shit volcano" is one of the more graphic analogies which has been used to describe the drunken lifestyle. The AA-alcoholic who uses this analogy to describe his life explains that those closest to him received the most shit. Therefore, when he began to make amends for his wrongs, he had to begin with his family and then move on to others.

³⁰Direct quotes taken from Alcoholics Anonymous 68.

The sixth element of religions is that they consecrate certain days and hours. "Sacred time is a block of time lifted out of everyday normal routines, a time that is different, in which different laws apply, a time within which one forgets ordinary time."³¹ In Alcoholics Anonymous, the sacred time is the meeting. Regardless of whatever else might be going on in ordinary time, AA-alcoholics know that at least while they are at a meeting they can be assured of two things. First, they will be surrounded by people who understand. Second, they will not drink.

Part of the serenity which sacred time brings is a celebration of recurrence. When entering sacred time, the individuals may lose themselves into the ritual of the moment which gives a degree of comfort. As Michael Barnes writes in The Presence of Mystery: "Ritual serves to make people feel they have techniques for taming wild powers of the universe. There are many experiences that produce chaotic emotions."³² Barnes cites the death of a child as one such calamity by which the ritual of the funeral service helps the parents and others make sense. Because they are able to trust the ritual of the AA meeting, alcoholics often

³¹Novak 30.

³²Michael H. Barnes, In the Presence of Mystery: An Introduction to the Story of Human Religiousness (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984) 202.

experience serenity simply by attending the meeting or, on occasion, by knowing that they will be able to enter the sacred space later in the day.

Many of the twelve steps have sacred time built into them. When AA-alcoholics take a formal third step, they set aside time to say some version of what is known as the "Third Step Prayer" with someone else. When the authors of Alcoholics Anonymous wrote that "We thought it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person", it is unlikely that they consciously thought about the benefits of sacred time.³³ Nonetheless, they understood that established "sacred time" would add to the impact of this step. Sacred time is also "forced" onto AA-alcoholics when they share their moral inventory in the fifth step, set time aside to review their progress in the sixth step, and pray the seventh step prayer. Many alcoholics working the twelve steps also set up specific sacred time when they write their fourth step inventory, take the periodic inventories required by the tenth step, and follow the eleventh step suggestion that they seek, through prayer and meditation, to improve their contact with God.

The seventh element of religion is that it provides heroic forms after which individuals can model their own lives. For the person suffering from alcoholism, heroism

³³Alcoholics Anonymous 63.

can be found in anyone who is able to recover from the disease; any sober alcoholic is a hero. Alcoholics Anonymous concludes with personal stories which tell "How Forty-Three Alcoholics Recovered From Their Malady." Since Alcoholics Anonymous was first published, the only section of the book that has been changed is the story section.

All changes made over the years in the Big Book (AA members' fond name for this volume) have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics. If you think you have a drinking problem, we hope that you may pause in reading one of the forty-four personal stories and think, "Yes, I've felt like that"; or, more important, "Yes, I believe this program can work for me, too."³⁴

Although none of the stories recorded in Alcoholics Anonymous is of a lesbian or gay man who is open about his or her sexuality, the Whitman-Walker Clinic has filled this void by collecting ten stories from lesbians and gay men who recovered through the AA program. These stories, discussed in chapter 1, were published as The Way Back. By providing newly sober lesbians and gay men with a copy of The Way Back and with a copy of Alcoholics Anonymous, they will obtain

³⁴Alcoholics Anonymous 211.

openly lesbian and gay role models and learn that their sexual orientation is not a bar to recovery.³⁵

Novak's eighth element is that to have a religion you need to have a pattern of symbols and myths with which a person can grow old. As with rituals, we can turn to Barnes' In the Presence of Mystery to obtain a workable understanding of these two terms.

In ordinary English, a symbol is something that stands for something else. Those who write about religion like to make distinctions between signs and symbols and other representations. We can overlook all those subtleties here. A symbol re-presents more than itself. It is a word, picture, gesture, action, object, drama, ritual that brings to people's consciousness something more than itself. Like rituals, symbols are meaning-carriers; they, too, make reality "real." They are not "merely" symbols in the place of the real thing; they are a kind of presence of the real thing.³⁶

The most noticeable symbols around AA focus on the re-birth of the alcoholic. In some areas poker chips are given to new members when they first decide that they have the desire to stop drinking. These people then receive chips when they have completed their first thirty days of uninterrupted sobriety. Chips are also given as a symbol of

³⁵The Way Back: The Stories of Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics (1981; Washington, DC: Whitman-Walker Clinic, 1982).

³⁶Barnes 209.

ninety days sobriety, six months sobriety, and a year's sobriety. Chips are then awarded for each additional year that the alcoholic stays sober. A variation on the poker chip is to give the alcoholic some type of coin or medallion.

Besides using chips, AA-alcoholics generally hold yearly "parties" to acknowledge their "sobriety day;" the day on which they had their last alcoholic drink or their first day of sobriety. These parties range from an informal dinner between the alcoholic and his/her sponsor or a few close friends to larger birthday parties. It is not uncommon for alcoholics to receive presents, cards, and congratulatory phone calls on their sobriety date. The significance of rebirth is underscored by the fact that if an AA-alcoholic mentions that it is his/her birthday that someone else will ask: "Natal or Sobriety?"

Chips are often used to symbolize the individual's sustained sobriety. The twice-a-year Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous Conference which is held each year in Oxley, Canada includes a ritual where everyone at the conference whose sobriety date was in the preceding six months receives a medallion at the Saturday night dinner; a dinner which is followed by a speaker's meeting, and dance. At the dance, everyone shares in the group birthday cake. For many, this ritual is one of the highlights of the conference because it gives a time to symbolize what AA is

all about, alcoholics staying sober a day at a time with the help of other alcoholics.

In some areas, a tradition has developed where a sponsor or some other AA friend will give his/her own chip to a newer person in the program. For example, a woman who has two years sobriety might give her one year coin to another woman. In such a transaction, not only is there the symbol of the younger woman's sobriety, but also of the tradition of one alcoholic passing her sobriety to another so that both can stay sober.

Even though chips become an important symbol of sobriety, it is clear that they possess no magical quality. Although alcoholics might rub their chips in times of stress, they understand that it is not the chips that keep them sober. One of the stories which has become a strong part of AA's oral tradition is about a man with many years sobriety who carried his chips on a string. As the story goes, this man would frequently hold up his long string of chips and say that "this is what keeps me sober." The man eventually gets drunk again because his chips could not keep him sober.

The story about the man and his chips is but one of many AA stories which have reached mythic proportions. Although the term "myth" conjures up stories of the gods and goddesses who lived in ancient Rome and Greece, a more

technical understanding of myths and the role they play in culture is given by Michael Barnes:

...myths arise from the human belief that reality is intelligible. Myths are invented or accepted by people because they do not just settle for experiencing things but want to discover the sense of things....All of them are the result of human intelligence beginning to make sense of things in the face of mystery, in however stumbling a way.³⁷

Myths help people make sense of the world in which they live. As Barnes explains:

Merely to assert that every event has an explanation, a story behind it, is to express an implicit trust that life makes sense, that the dimension of mysterious powers is not a dimension of raw chaos threatening life, but one of some coherence and intelligibility.³⁸

Alcoholics Anonymous was founded around the importance of story; one alcoholic telling his/her story to another. As a result, it is not surprising that stories have taken on mythic proportion in AA.

The alcoholic comes from a troubled, chaotic existence. Yet, removing alcohol from the alcoholic's world does not automatically give the person insight on how to lead a sober life. It is only by applying the twelve steps, attending

³⁷Barnes 35.

³⁸Barnes 35.

meetings, reading AA literature, and learning to talk with sponsors and others in the program that AA-alcoholics learn how to live sober lives. Stories have developed as a way to teach newly sober individuals important concepts as to how to order their lives. Because of the anonymity of the program, the stories used in the Big Book, other AA literature, and the AA oral tradition, it is not possible to identify specific stories with specific individuals. However, as the gods and goddesses ordered the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the escapades of Fred who could not believe himself an alcoholic, Jim who thought he could drink whiskey in his milk, the man with the string of chips, and others order the world of AA-alcoholics.³⁹

Besides the stories of AA-alcoholics which have taken on mythic proportions, other stories abound in the program. One such story can serve as a model.

Two monastics were walking along the road. After some time, they came to a place where a river crossed the road. A woman was standing next to the river unable to cross for fear of drowning. Although the monastics had taken vows never to come into physical contact with women, one monk had the woman sit on his shoulders so he could carry her across.

On the other side of the river, he set her down and the monastics continued on their way. As they walked, the second monastics became angrier and angrier about the actions of the first. Finally, after walking for ten miles,

³⁹Fred's story can be found in Alcoholics Anonymous, 39-43.

his resentment built to a point where he could take it no longer so he asked the first how he could have disregarded his vows and carry the woman across the river.

In answer, the first replied: "Who between us has carried her the farthest? I carried her across the river and you have carried her for ten miles?"

Through the story of the two monastics, the AA-alcoholic is able to gain a better concept on the principle that "Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else."⁴⁰

The final element needed for a religion is to have a way in which to exhilarate the human body, desire, will, sense of beauty, and sense of oneness. As Novak explains: "You need chants and songs, the rhythm of bodies in unison, the indescribable feeling of many who together 'will one thing' as if they were each members of a single body."⁴¹ By joining together on a weekly basis, the members of a particular meeting are able to re-affirm their commitment to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Instead of focusing on differences, AA-alcoholics stress that they are not unique. Individual stories might be different, but the feelings, emotions, and program of recovery are the same.

AA also promotes a feeling of togetherness by sponsoring picnics, dances, and other social events for its

⁴⁰Alcoholics Anonymous 64.

⁴¹Barnes 31.

members. Informal gatherings for coffee after meetings as well as the parties associated with AA-birthdays also provide time for togetherness.

The Religion of AA

"God as we understand Him" which appears in both the third and the eleventh step of Alcoholics Anonymous was not divinely inspired. It was the result of a compromise within a new, and as yet unnamed, group of alcoholics meeting in New York and Akron. In the first version of the twelve steps, the role of God had been strongly influenced by the Oxford movement, an influence which will be more fully developed in a following chapter. Bill Wilson had originally written in the second step that "[We] came to believe that God could restore us to sanity." Furthermore, the seventh step counseled that "[We] humbly on our knees asked Him to remove these shortcomings--holding nothing back." The form of praying on one's knees was equally important as the function of praying.

But when he [Bill Wilson] showed the manuscript to local members, there were heated discussion and many other suggestions. Jimmy B. opposed the strong references to God, in both the steps and the rest of the early chapters; Hank wanted to soft-pedal them; but Fritz insisted that the book should express Christian doctrines and use Biblical terms and

expressions....The result of this was the phrase "God as we understood Him."⁴²

In addition to adding "God as we understood Him" to the third and eleventh steps, "God" in step two was changed to "a power greater than ourselves" and the specific direction of praying on one's knees was removed from step seven. But even with these changes, because the normative religious experience in America is Christian, the normative religion within Alcoholics Anonymous is Christian, and AA tradition and literature promote a Christian understanding of the steps even as they proclaim that any conception of God is acceptable.

To argue that AA is a priori Christian would move against the explicit and implicit desires and self-understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous. The group within AA represented by Fritz who wanted strong Christian statements incorporated into the steps were not so much concerned with advancing Christianity as they were in advancing the type of spiritual program which helped them to recover. Individuals unaware of AA history can not realize that AA did not make its final break with the Oxford group until 1939, four years after AA had been founded and the same year that Alcoholics Anonymous was published. They do

⁴²Pass It On: The Story of Bill Wilson and How the AA Message Reached the World (New York: AA World Services, 1984) 199.

not realize that when Fritz, Jimmy, Bill, Dr. Bob, and others shared their experience, strength, and hope they were sharing an experience, strength and hope which was rooted in the primitive Christianity of the Oxford Group.

Yet, sobriety--and not religious conversion--is the principle purpose of the program. As stated in the fifth tradition: "Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." In the discussion of this step which appears in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Bill Wilson records the story of a member who went on a call to help another alcoholic, an Irishman whom we can assume was a devote Catholic. After explaining that he is getting nothing but a stronger sobriety for himself out of being there, the AA member mentions God and the Irishman responds: "I belong to a great church that means everything to me. You've got a nerve to come in here talking religion!" The AA member's memory of what followed is worth recording:

"Thank Heaven I came up with the right answer for that one. It was based foursquare on the single purpose of AA. 'You have faith,' I said. 'Perhaps far deeper faith than mine. No doubt you're better taught in religious matters than I. So I can't tell you anything about religion. I don't even want to try.... Finally, he saw that I wasn't attempting to change his religious views, that I wanted him to find the grace in his own

religion that would aid his
recovery....⁴³

Alcoholics Anonymous has taken great care so as not to establish itself as a religious sect, yet many alcoholics, when first confronted with the program, clearly see AA's Christian element as an impediment to their personal recovery.

The use of the Lord's Prayer to close AA meetings is the strongest signal to the newcomer that AA is a Christian program. It was, after all, Jesus Christ, speaking as the son of God, who gave it to his followers. The significance of this fact was missed by Bill Wilson and many other Christian AA-alcoholics. Non-Christians cannot miss the significance of feeling pressured to pray in a tradition in which they do not believe. Another Christian prayer, "The Prayer of St. Francis," is central to the explanation found in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of the eleventh step. In fact, this prayer, which originated in the Catholic tradition, is suggested as the model by which AA-alcoholics can pray and meditate.⁴⁴

AA apologists stress the universal nature of the Christian references. They argue that it is not Christianity, per se, that is being advanced, but the

⁴³Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 99.

⁴⁴Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 99.

universal themes found in such prayers. As one AA alcoholic explains:

So I became interested in Christian mysticism, which led me into the study of techniques of deep meditation and of comparative religions. I began to realize that the so-called mystics of whatever tradition--Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, or Muhahammadan--all ultimately talked the same language. In one way or another, they all describe the same blissful One behind the Many, who could be directly known in deep prayer and meditation.⁴⁵

Came to Believe...: The Spiritual Adventure of AA as Experienced by Individual Members is an AA approved collection of stories about the spiritual experiences of AA-alcoholics. Of the 76 stories in the book, in 14 of them, it is possible to identify a specific religious tradition. Of those 14, 13 of the references are to Christianity. The remaining one is to Islam. The AA alcoholic who reads this book is reminded that God so loved the world that he gave his son up to death, that it is important to follow the Biblical commandments, and the importance of the Sermon on the Mount. The story of the lame man walking is cited as is the song "In the Garden."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Came to Believe: The Spiritual Adventure of AA as Experienced by Individual Members (New York: AA World Services, 1973).

⁴⁶Came to Believe 35, 60, 63, 108, 46.

The book also includes "Faith in People," written by an AA alcoholic who does not have a personal God and two stories where God is equated with good.⁴⁷ For the lesbian or gay alcoholic who has a distrust of religion--especially Christianity--stories such as these need to be highlighted. Unfortunately, the idea that the "God as we understand him..." is somehow something other than a personal/religious God is generally viewed as a temporary measure. Atheists and other non-believers can be tolerated because they will eventually see the light and convert.

"An Atheist's Journey" is the only story in Came to Believe that is not told in the first person. As such, it begins to move into the realm of myth, a way in which others can be shown how the world should be ordered (as opposed to the personal stories that show how "I" modeled "my" world using the program). In this story, an AA-alcoholic from Sioux City Iowa tells about an alcoholic who was a professed atheist and was unwilling to change on that point. One of the four AAs who visited the atheist while the new man was still in the hospital stated that he and the other three men "were sober and had managed to stay that way." This fact, he suggested, "made them stronger than the patient."

⁴⁷"Faith in People," Came to Believe 83-85. The two stories where God is equated with good are "Inner Voice" 83 and "A Practical Philosophy" 114-116.

Because the patient couldn't argue that point, he made those men his higher power.

When the atheist left the hospital, he "threw himself into AA work with all the energy he could muster." He attended meetings and did twelfth step work. Then, one day, he made a twelve step call on a priest and eventually became the priest's sponsor. Later, he worked with a couple of ministers. "Twice more, he was privileged to sponsor men of God--by now his God, as well." When, after seven years of sobriety, the atheist died, he was "a man at peace with himself and his Higher Power." Like "good" atheists in the program, the twelve steps lead to his conversion.⁴⁸

Although the AA group is held up as an acceptable higher power, new members are frequently encouraged to view this as only a temporary arrangement. As Bill Wilson wrote in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, "For the time being, we who were atheist or agnostic discovered that our own group, or AA as a whole, would suffice as a higher power."⁴⁹ And about half of the discussion of the third tradition, "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking," is devoted to the story of Ed, a vocal atheist who boldly stated:

"I can't stand this God stuff! It's a lot of malarkey for weak folks. This

⁴⁸"An Atheist's Journey" Came to Believe 79-80.

⁴⁹Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 107.

group doesn't need it, and I won't have it! To hell with it!"

Even though he doesn't believe in God, Ed is permitted to stay in Alcoholics Anonymous because he said he was a member. Atheists as well as "beggars, tramps, asylum inmates, prisoners, queers, plain crackpots, and fallen women" were not excluded from the program.⁵⁰

But what is significant about Ed's story is that he does not remain an atheist. Confirming the view held by AA-alcoholics, Ed's lack of faith causes him to get drunk. But, eventually, he converts to Christianity.⁵¹ Conversion of atheists is also prominent in the chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous titled "We Agnostics." This chapter, written on the assumption that "deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God,"⁵² the chapter closes with the story of an agnostic who converts. Even Jimmy, the alcoholic who argued for inclusion of the phrase "God as We

⁵⁰Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 140.

⁵¹Ed's story can be found in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 144-145.

⁵²"We Agnostics," Alcoholics Anonymous 44-57. The quote is found on page 55.

Understand Him," has a spiritual awakening which is recorded in AA literature.⁵³

The fact that AA literature seems to promote Christianity as the spiritual norm is not surprising. Yet, in working with lesbian and gay alcoholics, it is important to help them understand that Christianity need not be the basis of their AA spirituality. Strategies which an AA sponsor or therapist may use are outlined in chapter 6. But, before such strategies can be effectively implemented, it is important to understand from where the strong bias against Christianity comes.

Non-lesbians and non-gay men might question the validity of Christianity as Bill Wilson did before his conversion:

To Christ I conceded the certainty of a great man, not too closely followed by those who claimed Him. His moral teaching--most excellent....[Yet] The wars which had been fought, the burnings and chicanery that religious dispute had facilitated, made me sick. I honestly doubted whether, on balance, the religions of mankind had done any good. Judging what I had seen in Europe [as a soldier in World War I] and since, the power of God in human affairs was

⁵³"The Vicious Cycle," Alcoholics Anonymous 238-250. This story was published anonymously, but textual evidence allows Jim B. to be identified as the author. See Stewart C., A Reference Guide to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (Seattle: Recovery Press, 1986) 138.

negligible, the brotherhood of man a grim jest.⁵⁴

Such theoretical reasons to question the validity of Christianity as practiced by the followers of Christ are not uncommon. But, many lesbians and gay men have learned the truth in the message which serves as the motto for Fag Rag: "Christianity is the Enemy." And this enemy is not simply a theoretical threat to them. It is the followers of Christ who are seen as villains attempting to deny lesbians and gay men their jobs, housing, children, families, and, frequently, their lives. The extent of this distrust is developed in the next chapter.

⁵⁴Alcoholics Anonymous 11.

CHAPTER 3

ROOTS OF LESBIAN/GAY DISTRUST OF CHRISTIANITY

Because of the strong spiritual nature of the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous, the forward to the second edition took pains not only to explain that there were varieties of spiritual development but that Catholics, Protestants, and Jews as well as Hindus, Moslems, and Buddhists have all been able to recover through the program. One story that circulates around AA is how an Hindu monk commented that if God were changed to good, there was nothing inconsistent between the AA program and his religion. Since 1955, when Appendix 2 was added to the Alcoholics Anonymous, AA has taken the position that "We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program."¹

Unfortunately, while such a position is theoretically accurate, it does not always address the emotional needs of gay and lesbian alcoholics, many of whom have had a history of negative experiences at the hands of church authorities. Currently, Christianity is strongly perceived to be the principle force against the civil rights of lesbians and gay

¹The forward to the second edition was reprinted in Alcoholics Anonymous (1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976) xv--xxi. The comments on religious affiliation are found on page xx. The direct quote is from 570.

men. Therefore, many in the lesbian and gay communities challenge the basic beliefs of Christianity.

John Kavanaugh is not alone when he reminds lesbians and gay men that they "tend to forget that the propaganda taught by the Church is still one of the strongest forces forming the various cultures." Therefore, he concludes, "Homosexuals who refuse to fight the church's use of morality based on hate which has been directed against the Gay kind of love are just as guilty of the resulting prejudice against Gays as the priests who preach such hate." As a lesbian, Kathie Bailey cannot understand why lesbians would celebrate "the birth of a man responsible for starting the bloodiest religion in the world, which has persecuted gay people more than any other, promoted racism, genocide, and slavery, and has women hatred as its backbone having murdered 9 million of us as witches?" Such a strong dislike of Christianity frequently causes all organized religions to become rejected and all spiritual programs to be suspect.²

Five issues that have caused gay and lesbian people to feel unwelcome by Christian organizations are mis-use and inconsistent use of scripture, anti-pleasure/anti-love rhetoric, patriarchy, the conspiracy of silence, and oppression and judgementalism. Because of the strong

²John Kavanaugh, "Jewish and Christian Morality: The Cement of Prejudice," Detroit Gay Liberator (November, 1970)
7. Kathie Bailey, "I Hate Christmas," Lesbian Connection 4.7 (1979) 11.

association between spirituality and the Christian tradition in Western society, it is important that those working in alcohol/drug education--especially those who use the twelve steps developed by Alcoholics Anonymous--understand the oppression which lesbians and gay men have historically suffered as a result of church-sanctioned hatred and the use of the Bible as a club to beat lesbians and gay men down, rather than as a spiritual guidebook for helping them, the downtrodden.

The Issue of Patriarchy

Because "God as we understand him" is so closely linked to the Christian tradition from which America was born, it is not surprising to find that God is a male patriarch.³ And reflecting the culture from which it was produced, Alcoholics Anonymous is a sexist document that only gives masculine models for a monotheistic deity. Pantheism is nowhere acknowledged and issues of matriarchy are totally

³An excellent resource on the development of patriarchy is Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). For a general discussion of issues concerning the patriarchal tradition of religion and how some women are responding to that tradition, see Hunter College Women's Studies Collective, Women's Realities, Women's Choices (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) especially pages 356-373. A more detailed critique of patriarchy and anti-feminism can be found in Mary Daly, The Church and the Second Sex (New York: Harper and Row, 1968). Some writers have overtly or inadvertently blamed Jews for the birth of patriarchy. For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Judith Plaskow, "Blaming Jews for the Birth of Patriarchy," Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology ed. Evelyn Torton Beck (Trumansburg, NY Crossing Press, 1982) 250-254.

ignored. Although individuals are encouraged to develop their own understanding of God, the language which is used to describe God--as far as AA literature is concerned--is always masculine. Again, closing meetings with the Lord's Prayer, a prayer to "Our Father who art in Heaven," emphasizes the cultural bias inherent in the normative understanding of God.

The issue of patriarchy is particularly sensitive to lesbians who have traditionally been excluded from full religious participation not so much because of their sexuality but because of their sex. The patriarchal nature of Western religious expression has caused some lesbians to adopt witchcraft, paganism, or goddess worship as their mode of spiritual expression. Unfortunately, the language used to describe the higher power in twelve step programs places the programs in opposition to such a spiritual understanding. The tolerance which AA is able to adopt toward those who have no religious beliefs is built on the assumption that the agnostic will eventually come to a belief in a higher power known as God. The assumption that all who stay sober will eventually understand that God is the higher power undercuts a theology based on nonpatriarchal religions.⁴

⁴Several good books exist on feminist spirituality. These include Ursula King, Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise (Houndmills, England: MacMillan Education Ltd., 1989) and Joann Wolsaki Conn, ed., Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development (New

Terry Troia comments that "The challenge of [developing] an all-inclusive language comes from realizing that certain descriptions of God, excluding other images and peoples' experience of God" is especially harmful.⁵ Because the language of a heterosexist patriarchy cannot adequately express the experiences of lesbians and gay men--especially those homosexuals who choose to live their spiritual lives outside the Western Christian tradition--, lesbians and gay men have been particularly sensitive to the issue of developing an all-inclusive language. For lesbians and gay alcoholics, such debate is not academic. It is crucial for a development of their own sense of self-worth and dignity. The need to translate text from heterosexual experience to a workable reality for lesbians and gay men can hinder spiritual growth and retard the process of working the steps of the program. Often, not only does the sexist language include a heterosexist bias, there might not be ways in

York: Paulist Press, 1986). A good book on general spirituality in the lesbian community is Sarah Lucia Hoagland, Lesbian Ethics: Toward New Value (Palo Alto, CA: Institute of Lesbian Studies, 1988). Books have also been written about the lesbian experience in the context of a specific religious tradition. For information on Jewish lesbians see Beck, Nice Jewish Girls. For Catholic lesbians, consult Barbara Zanotti, ed., A Faith of One's Own: Explorations by Catholic Lesbians (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1986.)

⁵Terry Troia, "What Does It Mean to be Inclusive?" Dignity/Baltimore News 9.3 (1982) 5.

which to translate concepts into the experiences of lesbians and gay men.

The difficulty with language can be seen in discussions of marital relations. David Goodstein writes in "Transforming Relationships:" "The word lover is hopelessly inadequate to express the depth of our feelings for those whom we make sexually and emotionally significant in our lives: furthermore, it has a quality of surreptitiousness about it." The anonymous female author of "Toward a New Vocabulary" recommends "Sigother," short for "significant other," because "it is not part of the heterosexual vocabulary, it promotes dialogue, and I think it describes better than any of the other terms just who we are." Margy, in "Choose Four: Lesbian/Feminist, Women, Dyke, Chick, Homosexual, Lesbian, Amazon, Girl" cautions that "I feel that rather than simply using these words out of habit, we should give consideration to the implications of each of these words and choose ones that actually reflect what we feel about ourselves and our lives as lesbians."⁶

As lesbians and gay men discuss the implications of language and struggle with language to define themselves, their relationships, and their spiritual lives, there is a

⁶David Goodstein, "Transforming Relationships," Advocate 256 (1978) 5. "Toward a New Vocabulary," Lesbian Connection 4.7 (1979) 3. Margy, "Choose Four: Lesbian/Feminist, Woman, Dyke, Chick, Homosexual, Lesbian, Amazon, Girl," Lesbian Connection 1.2 (1975) 11.

need to change the idea of "God as we understand Him" to "the God of our understanding" or even "the higher power of our understanding." Such moves away from the normative understanding of God help recovering lesbian and gay alcoholics.

By actively acknowledging that there is a difference between the rhetoric and reality of twelve step programs and by paying attention to use of language, it will be easier for all individuals to work the steps. For example, Paul R. Johnson confronts the issue of language in his Quotations from Chairman Falwell when he states: "Both Dr. Falwell and I are against unnatural and unhealthy sex. We disagree as to what constitutes unhealthy sex."⁷ By encouraging discussions of language within twelve step programs, both homosexuals and heterosexuals could come to a fuller understanding of how language restricts and proscribes behavior.

The Use and Misuse of Scripture

The issue of God as male patriarch is not the only problem resulting from AA's foundation on Christian principles. The use of scriptural references in AA literature to explain the moral way of life reminds lesbians and gay men of the proof-text approach to Biblical "scholarship" which prominent religious leaders have

⁷Paul R. Johnson, Quotations from Chairman Falwell (Los Angeles: Marco and Johnson, 1982).

consistently used to justify their attacks on the lesbian and gay communities. The issue of what the Bible says about homosexuality is important to lesbians and gay men because religious writers often misrepresent Biblical passages. As a result of such biased interpretation of scripture, the members of the lesbian and gay communities promote sound biblical scholarship. Rolf Tor Jarlsson's comment in "Sodomites and Gay People," helps explain why gay men and lesbians--even those who consider themselves to be outside the Christian community--place value on scripture study. As he writes: "legal and social condemnation of homosexuality in the United States is rooted in the prohibitions against sodomy in the Old Testament, [therefore] knowledge of the origin and the interpretation of these scriptural passages is a matter of importance to gay people." Although many attempts at understanding are simplistic, most exhibit more honesty than is found in studies that cite Jesus' personal condemnation of homosexuality and those that ignore contemporary Biblical scholarship.⁸

⁸Rolf Tor Jarlsson, "Sodomites and Gay People," Advocate 224 (1977) 37. Some standard books in this area include Tom Horner, Jonathan Loved David (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978); John J. McNeill, The Church and the Homosexual (1976; New York: Pocket Books, 1977); Richard Woods, Another Kind of Love: Homosexuality and Spirituality (1977; New York: Doubleday, 1978); and Ralph Blair, An Evangelical Look at Homosexuality (New York: privately printed, 1972).

Having lived as a persecuted people, lesbians and gay men have become very sensitive to the differences between rhetoric and reality. Such distrust arises from the Christian tradition of employing a proof-text approach to scripture where various verses are taken out of context to justify an individual's or group's own prejudices. A classic example is in the use of Leviticus to condemn same sex sexual activity under the rationalization that, because the Bible is the revealed word of God, such activity cannot be tolerated. However, condemnations of various activities such as eating pork, wearing clothes spun with different types of cloth, or shaving a man's beard are read in a cultural context and are ignored by the same people who take a literal translation to texts which condemn sexual minorities. In "Christian Debate," Gerald A. Larve investigates Biblical condemnation of other-sex as well as same-sex sexual activity before asking why consistency has been ignored in their enforcement. The lesbian and gay communities are still waiting for a response.⁹

It is not the role of Alcoholics Anonymous to become involved in such religious dialogues. However, the inferiority complexes which are found among heterosexual alcoholics are also found among lesbians and gay men. But for individuals who have grown up with a centuries old

⁹Gerald A. Larve, "Christian Debate," Advocate 170 (1975) 18.

tradition of discrimination based on social intolerance often condemn themselves for who they are as well as what they have done. In a sermon delivered on the feast of the Holy Innocents, the Reverend Dr. Anne C. Garrison explained how society encourages aspects of homosexual self oppression.

It [societal prejudice] maims its victims and then derides them for their dysfunction. It destroys self-respect and then looks with distaste on the resulting frivolous behavior. It identifies and isolates a set of people, goads them into reactive action and then says "LOOK AT THAT BUNCH OF SHAMELESS QUEERS OVER THERE FLAUNTING THEIR DIFFERENCES." In its own way, society slaughters the innocent every day, driving to suicide, alcoholic self-destruction or psychic catatonia those whom it no longer, in these enlightened times, burns at the stake."¹⁰

The relationship between the Christian God historically promoted by the followers of Jesus Christ and lesbians and gay men has traditionally been one of hatred and cruelty. Such cruelty is clearly seen in Arthur Robb's editorial "Gas Gays" in which he calls for the execution of all homosexuals and Chick Publications' The Gay Blade which makes its case by advancing unhealthy stereotypes. Shadow of Sodom, which almost avoids polemical language is an example of the slick

¹⁰Anne C. Garrison, "Homily for Integrity/Chicago on the Feast of the Holy Innocents," Integrity Forum 8.2 (1982) 21.

books published by some Christian presses. Its author, Paul D. Morris, did his research as he drove a taxicab at night. The result is a book that is typical of most "Christian" treatments of gay men: discrimination instead of understanding is advanced.¹¹

A case study of hostility can be identified in John McNeill's treatment by the Catholic church after he published The Church and the Homosexual. The anonymous article "Real Sin of Sodom was Inhospitability, Says Priest" and Keith Gordon's review, "An Issue Finds Its Voice" both focus on the positive nature of McNeill's work. However, after McNeill was publicly silenced, articles began to focus on the church's inhospitability. Dean Gengle's "Ban on Theologian Lifted--Almost" is typical. This controversy helped confirm the belief that the God worshiped by members of the Christian community is not interested in the welfare of lesbians and gay men.¹²

Such controversies have also caused a healthy distrust of anything that appears to have religious backing. Humberto Cardinal Medeiros' attempt at non-judgmental

¹¹Arthur Robb, "Gas Gays," The Torch: The Revolutionary Magazine of WHITE America 9.3 (1977) 4. The Gay Blade (Chino, CA: Chick Publications, nd). Paul D. Morris, Shadow of Sodom: Facing the Facts of Homosexuality (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1978).

¹²"Real Sin of Sodom was Inhospitability, Says Priest," Advocate 121 (1973): 19+. Keith Gordon, "An Issue Finds Its Voice," Advocate 201 (1976) 7-8. Dean Gengle, "Ban on Theologian Lifted--Almost," Advocate 180 (1975) 8.

dialogue in the Boston Archdiocese was ill-received because of this. Anti-homosexual positions taken by New York's Cardinal O'Connor, Washington, D.C.'s Cardinal Hickey, and Boston's Cardinal Law continue to close off dialogue while fanning the flames of ill will.¹³

The Anti-Pleasure/Anti-Love Position

For lesbians and gay men, the thought of turning "their will and their lives over to the care of God as they understand Him" is a frightening experience. Many have spent years trying to flee from the God that they understand; a God that created them in such a way that they are condemned to hell; an intolerant God whose message is carried to them by intolerant people; an intolerance that gives the appearance of springing from an anti-pleasure/anti-love position.

Lyn Pederson has identified the unfortunate problem that "modern churches have all but subordinated the Love ideal to procreation (a concern foreign to the early Church), but surely Love is something more than rutting."¹⁴ Lesbians and gay men realize that not all non-procreative sexual activity is banned by Christianity and although much gay male literature describes promiscuous activity, the difference between love and rutting is taken seriously by

¹³Humberto Cardinal Medeiros, Pastoral Care for the Homosexual (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1979).

¹⁴Lyn Pederson, "Editorial," ONE 14.11 (1966) 4-5.

the lesbian and gay communities. However, even though homosexuals realize the distinction between love and recreational sex, there remains the problem that society has chosen to define the experience of a lesbian or gay man simply in terms of sexual activity; an activity which is considered inappropriate because it is nonprocreative.

Most alcoholics--both heterosexual and homosexual--suffer from various types of unhealthy sexual activity which include physical abuse, promiscuity, adultery, and so forth. And twelve step programs rightly encourage people to identify what causes them to act in ways which damage themselves, their families, and their reputations. The directions for completing a fourth step--"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves"--places a special emphasis on inappropriate uses of sexuality.

As long as same-sex sexual activity is not a priori defined as inappropriate, such self analysis is consistent with the type of analysis which has taken place, and continues to take place, in the lesbian and gay press. Articles such as Kathe and Liz's "Loving Friends" discuss loving, committed, and non-sexuality active friendships. Although the gay male press has not historically been as concerned with such issues, the emergence of AIDS has resulted in more articles within the gay press on "safer sex" and friendship. But "safer sex" and healthy sexual

activity do not necessarily follow the heterosexual model. Hostility to pleasure and to sexual activity finds few adherents in the lesbian and gay communities. Instead, the lesbians and gay communities realize that sex is not "a necessary evil" for procreation, but a way in which to establish healthy bonds between individuals.¹⁵

Unfortunately, the emphasis on procreation and heterosexual models for defining healthy modes of sexual activity actually gives support to Charley Shively's position, advanced before the AIDS crisis, that it is only through indiscriminate promiscuity that the gay community can find self-advancement. Shively, one of the founders of Boston's Fag Rag Collective and an editor and frequent author for the Fag Rag, eloquently argues that the only way to defeat the system which places an emphasis on beauty, youth, and socio-economic status is indiscriminate promiscuity. He believes that the discriminatory social structure of America will only change when individuals are willing to place no constraints on the types of people with whom they are willing to have sex. This socio-political ideology has been romanticized by such authors as Arnie Kantrowitz whose "I Kink Therefore I Am" and "Where's the

¹⁵Kathe and Liz, "Loving Friends," Lesbian Connection 4.3 (1978) 2. Since AIDS has surfaced, gay male writing has shown more concern with relationship issues. A discussion of these changes can be found in Richard Hall, "Gay Fiction Comes Home," New York Times Book Review 19 June 1988: 1, 25-26.

Action" promote the stereotype that gay men are (or at least ought to be) indiscriminately sexually active. Similarly, gay male pornography makes the same claim.¹⁶

The anti-pleasure aspects of the Christian attitude toward sexual activity coupled with the mythology which has evolved around the homosexual community has helped promote the promiscuity which is condemned. Because of the serious lack of role models for lesbians and gay men, many individuals have learned how to be lesbians and gay men by listening to descriptions advanced by "religious" thinkers such as the Reverend Jerry Falwell. Because individuals frequently live up to the expectation that others have of them, lesbians and gay men learn--often before joining the lesbian and gay communities--that they are supposed to adopt sexual activity which is inherently unhealthy. And they

¹⁶Charley Shively, "Indiscriminate Promiscuity as an Act of Revolution," Gay Sunshine 22 (1974) 3-5. This general theme is found in most of Shively's essays which appeared in Fag Rag. His "Cocksucking as an Act of Revolution," Fag Rag 3 (1972) 9-8+. Arnie Kantrowitz, "I Kink Therefore I Am," Advocate 205 (1976) 27. Arnie Kantrowitz, "Where's the Action?" Advocate 180 (1975) 42. Concerning gay fiction, William Rogers' "Sincere, Discrete..." In Touch 33 (1978) 30-31, 75 about meeting men through personal advertisements also included Thom Willenbacher's "Drugs," In Touch 33 (1978) 32-33, 82, 84-85 which takes a casual view toward drug use. Also in this issue is Donald Warman, "Film: A Gay Odyssey" In Touch 33 (1978) 24-27, 68-70 in which the author describes the first day of shooting for El Paso Wrecking Corp., a porno video about two men's sexual experiences. The relationship between alcohol and other drug abuse and casual sex in gay fiction has been developed in Mark Dombrowski, "Between the Icecubes and the Bedsheets: Alcohol Use and Abuse in Gay Literature," NALGAP News 9.1 (1978) 1+.

begin to live up to the expectation which society has of them. The social condemnation which Anne C. Garrison has identified, and which was quoted above, helps explain this phenomenon. As lesbians and gay men continue to move toward self-validation, promiscuity begins to lose its role in the community. In the process, other types of relationships become acceptable. As the image and expectation of promiscuity fades, friendships become easier to maintain. And that is what the fourth step promises.

The Conspiracy of Silence

The seemingly traditional misuse and inconsistent use of scripture as means of social control and justification for the oppression of minority groups has promoted the conception of God as an anti-pleasure patriarch who condemns lesbians and gay men despite having created them with this orientation. Unfortunately, a conspiracy of silence prevents the issue of homosexuality from being discussed in religious circles. And in spite of the fact that the fourth step of AA places emphasis on sexual activity, specific discussions of sexuality and sexual activity are avoided around the AA tables.

Unfortunately, there is basis for the claim, expressed anonymously in "Conspiracy of Silence," that a conspiracy surrounds lesbian and gay issues in the Christian tradition. One result of the conspiracy has been identified by Brother William Roberts in "Anti-Gay Homosexuals in the Church" in

which he defines homosexual cannibalism as gay men at various levels of Church authority who either actively or passively assent to and participate in the dehumanization of their lesbian sisters and gay brothers. Homosexual cannibalism supports the discriminatory system which oppresses lesbians and gay men while it produces walls between people rather than bridges of understanding.¹⁷

As early as 1966, G.P.T. Pagent King called

"on all clergy who are sufficiently sympathetic to read the pages of ONE [an early homophile magazine], to get together to work out a positive pastoral approach to this whole problem. In the homosexual world are thousands who are hungering for spiritual comfort: we clergy desperately need clear guidance if we are not to send them away empty." ¹⁸

Twenty-two years later, Marty Hansen, writing in The Other Side explained eleven suggestions on how to relate--as a Christian--to a gay neighbor. They are to understand yourself, discard stereotypes, develop relational skills, listen, recognize emotional pain, avoid glib answers, build

¹⁷"Conspiracy of Silence," Integrity Gay Episcopal Forum 1.6 (1975) 8-9. William Roberts, "Anti-Gay Homosexuals in the Church," Gay Dreams (New York: Privately Printed, 1982) np.

¹⁸G.P.T. Pagent King, "The Church and the Homosexual," ONE 14.11 (1966) 10.

long-term commitments, practice hospitality, be available, and take personal risks.¹⁹

The conspiracy of silence which lesbians and gay men frequently find in the Western Christian tradition, is also found in AA. Besides a reference to "queers" in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Do You Think You're Different? includes the only two stories of a gay man and a lesbian who have recovered through the AA program. Pamphlets are available which discuss the needs of blacks, women, young people, and prisoners, but no such publication specifically concerns lesbians and gay men.²⁰ The fact that there is a virtual conspiracy of silence toward homosexuality in AA literature cannot be attributed to homophobia or an anti-homosexual position by the organization. Rather, there

¹⁹Marty Hansen, "Love a Gay," The Other Side (June 1978) 48-52. An excellent book length treatment of the subject is Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?: Another Christian Option (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978).

²⁰Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 140. Do You Think You're Different? (New York: AA World Services, 1976)--especially the stories "My Name is Padric" on pages 9-11 and "My Name is Mary" on pages 17-18. In a conversation with one of the delegates to AA's national conference, I was told that the draft for a pamphlet on lesbian and gay issues was defeated because of the poor quality of its text. However, this explanation does not appear in print. AA approved literature for special populations includes: It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell (New York: AA World Services, 1979); Too Young? (1977; New York: AA World Services, 1987), Young People and AA (New York: AA World Services, 1969), and AA for the Woman (1968; New York: AA World Services, 1986). Pamphlets are currently in press which concern blacks and Native Americans in AA.

seems to be the belief that sexuality is best addressed between individual and sponsor. If there is a fear on AA's part, it is in addressing the entire issue of sexuality and sexual activity. But because AAs tend to be silent about sexual issues, gay men and lesbians who attend AA--especially in an area where there is not a gay/lesbian meeting--might not appreciate that the AA program will work for them. Others who have heard fag jokes at AA meetings or know of people who have been excluded from meetings because of their sexuality have increased difficulty believing that AA's third tradition, that "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking," is an accurate reflection of AA policy.²¹

AA is a human program with its own shortcomings being lived by humans who can not always demonstrate the principles to which they subscribe. However, it is important to realize that the negative reaction many lesbians and gay men have to spiritual aspects of the twelve step program of recovery are not the problem of AA. Even though the rhetoric does not always match the reality, AA's contention that "We find that no one need have difficulty

²¹Approximately ten original manuscripts survive for stories that originally appeared in the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous. Typical of the Oxford Group practices which the writers had learned, material was included on sexual issues. However, these references were eliminated before the book was published. My source for this information is Bill Pittman, author of AA: The Way It Began (Seattle: Glen Abbey Books, 1988).

with the spirituality of the program" is essentially correct.

To many lesbians and gay men, the fact that they are children of God is not open to debate. The "Statement of Position and Purpose" for Dignity, Inc. includes the statement that "We believe that gay and lesbian Catholics are members of Christ's mystical body, numbered among the people of God."²² Lesbian and gay caucuses are also found in a variety of religions including Episcopalians, Lutherans, Mormons, Jews, Seventh Day Adventists, and so forth. Non-Christian religions have also been widely supported by members of the lesbian and gay communities.

Witchcraft and goddess worship are not uncommon among lesbians and belief in the Wicca forms the basis of strong spiritual programs. In "A Witches Curse," an anonymous woman expresses the positive value of witchcraft when she writes: "If there is magic among us, let us use it for our own good, not for our destruction and pain." And much good and much spiritual healing has been the product of witchcraft.²³

Satanism to some gay men is important because it is "the one religion which unhypocritically condones any sexual lifestyle which comes naturally to the individual, so long

²²Statement of Position and Purpose (Washington, DC: Dignity, Inc., 1981)

²³"A Witches Curse," Lesbian Connection 3.4 (1977) 11.

as the participants are willing adults." Other gay men have found salvation through non-western religious expression. Allen Jaye's "Cock Art," James Kepner's "World Religions and the Homophile," and various works of Christopher Isherwood, in particular My Guru and His Disciple, give valuable insight into Eastern religious practices as perceived and practiced in the gay community. Eastern Orthodox religion and indigenous American religion also have their adherents. One author has even attempted to combine Buddhism and Marxism into a treatment program for lesbians and gay men.²⁴

Lesbians and gay men who develop their spirituality "populate a strange land--a shadowy, mysterious world in which both the Anglo-Saxon majority and the rest of the gay world perhaps find difficult to understand."²⁵ Never-the-less, this strange world involves acceptance,

²⁴David Stone, "Satan's Dummy," Advocate 175 (1975) 50. Allen Jaye, "Cock Art: Where East Meets West," Blueboy (November 1981) 82-87. James Kepner, "World Religions and the Homophile," Homophile Studies 2.4 (1959) 124+. Christopher Isherwood, My Guru and His Disciple (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980) is taken from his journals and describes his studies in Vendanta with Swami Prabhavananda. Isherwood also helped Westerners better understand Eastern philosophy by editing Vendanta for Modern Man (1945; New York: New American, 1972); How to Know God: The Yoda Aphorism of Patanjali (1953; Hollywood, CA: Vendanta Press, 1981); and a biography on Ramakrishna and His Disciples (1959; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965) as well as a series of pamphlets. Ed Schreiber, "Cutting Through Denial: Or, Alcohol, Marx, and Buddha," RFD 13.4 (1987) 56-57.

²⁵Ray Van de Moortel, "Gay and Catholic," Bridges 9.6 (1981) 3.

love, and togetherness. Commitment and sharing are likewise stressed. As a result, lesbians and gay men are learning to overcome the reactive action, suicide, alcoholism, and psychic catatonia which have existed in their communities.

Lesbian and gay alcoholics frequently have a negative view of spirituality which is confused with the religious oppression of homosexuals in the Western Christian tradition. "God as we Understand Him" is typically a petty dictator who created them in such a way that they understand themselves to be condemned to hell not because of what they did but because of who they are. As such, the spiritual basis for recovery is suspect.

CHAPTER 4:

THE TREND TOWARD PERFECTIONISM

Russell B. Nye, in Society and Culture in America argues that the reform movements which grew in America during the nineteenth-century had their roots in eighteenth-century social thought. To Nye, nineteenth-century reformers inherited the Enlightenment's (1) "conviction that the world could be made better if only men would try," (2) "faith in the individual's ability to control himself and his society and to direct both to higher ends," (3) belief in social benevolence and social responsibility, and (4) understanding that America's national mission was "to serve the world as an example of what it could and ought to be."¹ Although members of AA are very clear that they "claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection"² it is none-the-less true that AA developed from the Oxford Group, a group influenced by the nineteenth-century trend toward perfection.

It is to the Oxford Group that Alcoholics Anonymous owes its greatest debt. Not only were many of the Oxford Group's beliefs adapted into AA's twelve steps, but for a period of time, those who were to become AA-alcoholics met

¹Russell Blain Nye, Society and Culture in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) 34-35.

²Alcoholics Anonymous (1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976) 60.

for a period of time as Oxford Group members. The Oxford Group was begun by Frank Buchman, a Lutheran minister who was active in both college and world-wide evangelism. Although its roots were Protestant-Christian evangelicalism, the group strove to be non-denominational when it came to religious beliefs. What was important was that individuals who joined the group had a conversion experience which allowed them to live a changed life. According to Buchman, there were five stages which would lead the individual to a changed life: confidence, confession, conviction, conversion, and continuance.³

"Confidence" referred to the process by which a member of the Oxford Group would establish a friendship with the prospective convert. And practically any person outside the group was a prospect for change. In "Confession" an individual would state his or her sins in public. Later, in its history, "confession" became "sharing for witness" whereby an individual would hope to influence converts by

³Walter Houston Clark, The Oxford Group: Its History and Significance (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951) is an excellent discussion of the group. The information concerning the Oxford Group which follows was taken from this source. For more information on the Oxford Group and its founder, see Peter Howard, Frank Buchman's Secret (Garden City, NY Doubleday, 1961) and V.C. Kitchen, I Was a Pagan (New York: Harper and Row, 1934). Although Howard's book does not mention alcoholism, it does explain Buckman's spiritual life. Kitchen, in his autobiography, tells how he recovered from alcoholism using the spiritual program found in the Oxford Group.

stating those evils, long since past, which were no longer part of life.

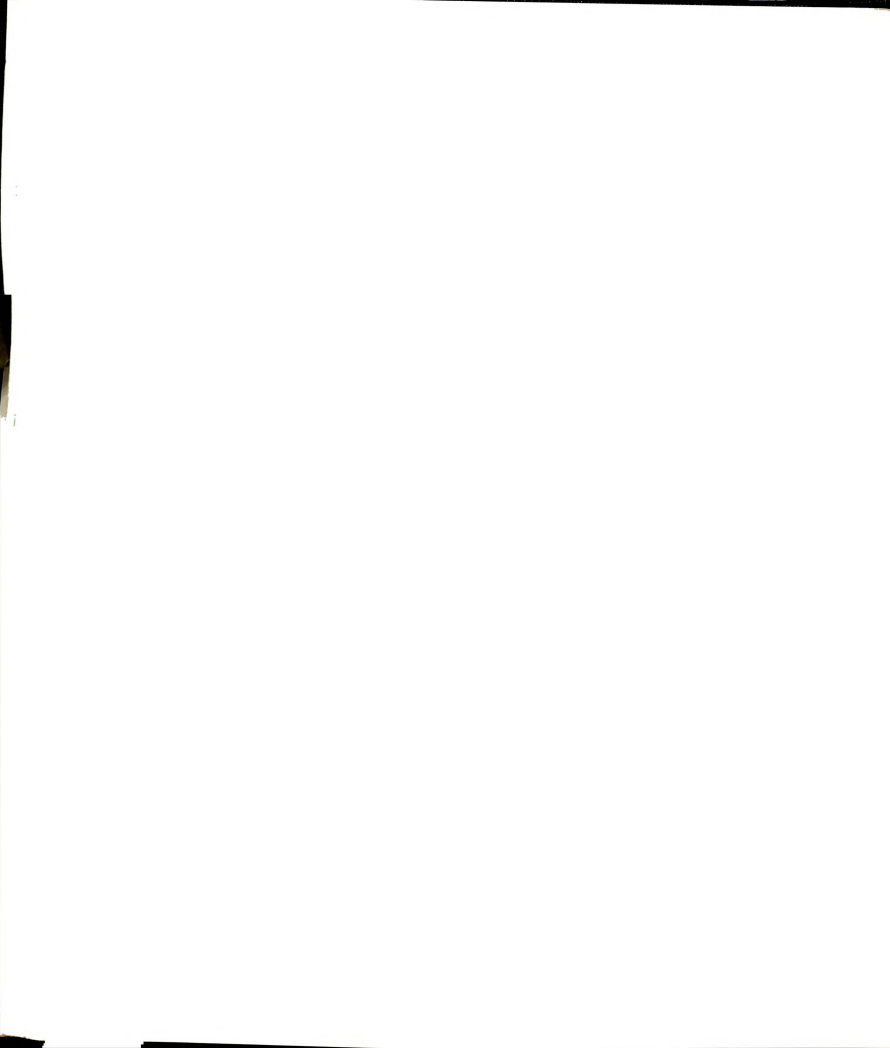
Public confession was used much more frequently in the early years of the movement than in the later ones for two reasons. First, as the meetings grew larger, such confessions became more difficult to manage. Second, due to the nature of some of the confessions, particularly when they dealt with sexual issues, the Oxford Group received severe criticism.

As new prospects became aware of their sins, they experienced "Conviction." After realizing the need for change, "conversion" was experienced when the change occurred. At conversion, the individual began to follow God's guidance. As individuals experienced more of God's guidance and began to change others, they were said to be participating in "Continuance."

Underlying these five stages of development are six central assumptions:

1. Men and women are sinners.
2. Individuals can be changed.
3. Confession is prerequisite to change.
4. The changed soul has direct access to God.
5. The Age of Miracles has returned.
6. Those who have been changed must change others.

In addition to these six general assumptions, four absolutes were explicitly stated by Buchman and other



members of the Oxford Group: absolute honesty, absolute unselfishness, absolute purity, and absolute love. In 1948, Dr. Bob, one of AA's co-founders, "recalled the absolutes as 'the only yardsticks' Alcoholics Anonymous had in the early days, before the Twelve Steps. He said he still felt they held good and could be extremely helpful when he wanted to do the right thing and the answer was not obvious."⁴ For Dr. Bob, perfection was the goal by which to measure actions and the closer he, as well as other Oxford Group members, came to perfection, the more confident he could be in his decision.

Alcoholics Anonymous was heavily influenced by the Oxford Group because Bill, Bob, and the other original members of the organization were initially members of the group. In fact, it was through his Oxford Group connections that Bill, while on a business trip, was able to meet Bob. And until 1939, the year in which Alcoholics Anonymous was published, the individuals who were to form AA continued to attend Oxford Group meetings. Although it is outside the scope of this study to give a history of AA's debt to the

⁴Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: A Biography, With Recollections of Early AA in the Midwest (New York: AA World Services, 1980) 54.

Oxford Group, such a study is found in Ernest Kurtz's Not God.⁵

Because the AA program grew out of the Oxford Group, it is not surprising that it has a similar set of beliefs. Although the program stays away from the idea of sin, the fact that alcoholics have a tendency to act on their character defects is prominent. AA believes that drinking alcoholics have difficulties because they work against their own deepest instinct for self-preservation.⁶ The sixth step, "[We] were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character," cautions that "What we must recognize now is that we exult in some of our defects. We really love."⁷ While the word "sin" is avoided, the culpability of the individual is stressed. As is written in a discussion

⁵Ernest Kurtz, Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979) is the standard source cited for this argument. However, the book has been expanded and republished as AA: The Story (New York: Harper and Row, 1988). AA's separation from the Oxford Group is recorded in Dr. Bob, 156-170 and Pass It On: The Story of Bill Wilson and How the AA Message Reached the World (New York: AA World Services, 1984) 160-178. The early AA-alcoholics in New York owe a particular debt to the Reverend Samuel Shoemaker. A chapter on Shoemaker's relationship with Bill Wilson and AA can be found in Irving Harris, The Breeze of the Spirit: Sam Shoemaker and the Story of Faith-at-Work (New York: Seabury, 1978). For a more detailed description of this relationship, see John F.G. Woolverton, "Evangelical Protestantism and Alcoholism, 1933-1962: Episcopalian Samuel Shoemaker, the Oxford Group, and Alcoholics Anonymous" Historical Magazine 52 (1983) 53-65.

⁶Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York: AA World Services, 1952) 64.

⁷Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 66.

of Step Ten, "[We] continued to take a moral inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it,"

It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us. If somebody hurts us and we are sore, we are in the wrong also.⁶

Even though AA-alcoholics are, in the terms adopted by the Oxford Group, brought to a point of conviction, redemption is also held out. Once alcoholics accept the belief that "We are powerless over alcohol and our lives have become unmanageable," a program of change is offered. By turning their wills and their lives over to the care of the God they understand, AA-alcoholics are then able to use God's guidance while taking a moral inventory. After "confessing" this inventory to God and to another individual, change occurs. Alcoholics Anonymous makes the following promises about this change.

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip

⁶Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 90.

away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.⁹

AA-alcoholics firmly believe that, when this change occurs, they become living miracles because their lives were changed with the help of a power greater than themselves.

The idea of "Guidance" has also been transferred from the Oxford Group to the AA program. Guidance is found in the belief that "God will give guidance to those who listen for it with the sincere intent to put it into practice."¹⁰ Typically, the Oxford Group member would receive guidance during a period of "Quiet Time" which was usually done each morning. However, because individuals could mistake their own intentions for God's will, they shared their hunches with other members of the group in a way not dissimilar to that which is used by a recovering AA-alcoholics who share their thoughts at AA meetings or during talks with their sponsors.

"Quiet time" did not originate with the Oxford Group. Instead, it is a product of the influence that Henry Wright, a leading college evangelist, had on Buchman. In addition

⁹Alcoholics Anonymous 83-84.

¹⁰Clark 29.

to this concept, Wright was also a firm believer that hunches came from God. D.C. Macintosh, in his Personal Religion provides the following story to illuminate this point.

Upon one...occasion he [Wright] accompanied a colleague to the railroad station, and obeyed an impulse to go with him to Hartford. On his return trip, after a short doze, he was awakened by an old pupil of his bending over him. The two rode to New Haven together, the student telling his story to the former teacher. Drink had driven him nearly mad and he needed help desperately. He had been shuttling backward and forward between Hartford and New Haven on the train in order to keep away from the place where he could buy liquor. After their arrival in New Haven Professor Wright wired to a friend in Hartford to meet the boy on his return. Through the steady pull of friendship the young man regained control of himself and developed into a life of sobriety and usefulness. Henry Wright never doubted that he had been led by God to board the train that morning.¹¹

Such coincidences attributed to God have become a cornerstone of Alcoholics Anonymous. Not only are these stories part of the AA oral tradition, they are also found in Box 1980 and in other AA literature. The following story, taken from Came to Believe is typical.

I was living in a room in a seaside resort, out of season, while I tried to straighten out my thinking....It was a

¹¹Quoted in Clark 127.

cold and rainy night in March, yet I started up the boardwalk for my nightly walk. I believed that the seeming directive had told me to walk into the ocean. There was a deserted pier about a mile down the boardwalk and I planned to walk out on this and step off....Only a block from the pier, I saw a man approaching from the opposite direction...When he came to me, he stopped and smiled, and I recognized him as a priest I knew from home...[After talking with the priest], The feeling that I had to destroy myself vanished....Quite some time passed. Once again, I was an active member in AA. One night, I attended a meeting--there was the same priest as guest speaker... [After the meeting], He explained [to me] that he had gone to the seaside resort to address a convention of educators. He was sick of sitting in the hotel room; so, rain or not, he went out for air. I believe now that the One taking care of me must have given him a little push.¹²

Besides "quiet time," "guidance," and "hunches," Macintosh identifies six additional areas in which Wright influenced Buchman; five of which can be seen in the AA program. First, Wright believed that God had a plan for everyone and that therefore the individual must surrender to God's will. This concept is explicitly stated in the third step, "[We] turned our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him," and needs no further

¹²Came to Believe: The Spiritual Adventure of AA as Experienced by Individual Members (New York: AA World Services, 1957) 74-75.

elaboration. The second point, that confession is essential, has been discussed above.

Wright's third area of influence is that, whenever possible, restitution for past wrongs is necessary. AA's ninth step, that "[We] Made direct amends to such people [whom we listed in the eighth step] whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others," is a descendent of this concept. As part of this step, AA-alcoholics make sure they go to the people they had harmed, tell them about AA and about how they are using the program to change their lives. Then, they admit the damage they have done and make their apologies. But, the step does not stop with confession for "We can pay, or promise to pay, whatever obligations, financial or otherwise, we owe."¹³

When AA-alcoholics make amends, they not only apologize for their past errors and make any financial remuneration necessary, they also amend, or change, their way of living. Moving toward a changed life is the fourth characteristic of the Oxford Group which Macintosh identifies as having been influenced by Wright. And it is an important component of the AA-alcoholic's contented sobriety. As one parable which circulates in AA's oral tradition states: "If you take alcohol away from a drunken horse thief, you still have a horse thief." To the AA way of thinking, becoming a

¹³Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 84.

non-drinking horse thief, or a non-drinking, non-recovered alcoholic, is not the goal of sobriety. A changed life comes from changed behavior.

Wright defined personal evangelism as "the act of influencing a single human will or the corporate will of a group to make that decision which leads to greater fullness of life through the process of friendship."¹⁴ Such fellowship, through friendship, is Wright's fifth area of influence. Buchman became a master of this technique. And contemporary AA-alcoholics learn to befriend new people by having greeters at meetings, assuring the new people that those who have been around AA understand what these new people are experiencing because they too have experienced the drunken life and the early stages of sobriety, and by getting sponsors for the new people. AA members also build friendships with new people and within the AA community by having informal gatherings such as going to coffee after a meeting or more formal gatherings such as AA picnics, dances, and retreats.

The final area in which Wright influenced Buchman was in the idea of the "Four Absolutes"--absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love--which men and women were to use as guideposts in their lives. It was the "Four Absolutes" by which guidance was

¹⁴Quoted in Clark 129.

judged and by which the members of the Oxford Group judged themselves.

AA specifically rejects the notion of being guided by absolutes. The problem is clearly stated in AA Comes of Age:

When first contacted, most alcoholics just wanted to find sobriety, nothing else. They clung on to their other defects, letting go only little by little. They simply did not want to get "too good too soon." The Oxford Groups' absolute concepts...were frequently too much for the drunks. These ideas had to be fed with teaspoons rather than buckets.¹⁵

Realizing that perfection is unattainable, the AA-Alcoholic instead works toward "spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection."¹⁶

It was the philosophy of Buchman that the Oxford Groups should work to convert "key men." These men, because of their position and influence would then serve as models for converting those who looked up to them. As a result of this process, conversions were public affairs. The alcoholic Oxford Group members, at the time of their conversions, were hardly part of the social elite--although they might once have been--in which Buchman was interested. Additionally,

¹⁵Alcoholics Comes of Age: A Brief History of AA (New York: AA World Services, 1957) 74-75.

¹⁶Alcoholics Anonymous 60.

due to the stigma attached to alcoholism, they had little interest in being anything but anonymous. Furthermore, the alcoholics were chiefly interested in working specifically with other alcoholics and not with potential non-alcoholic recruits. Because of these differences in philosophy, it is not surprising that eventually the alcoholics separated themselves from the Oxford Group and began a community of their own.¹⁷

In his study of the Oxford Group, Clark expresses surprise that the Oxford Group's literature contains little mention of Henry Wright. He finds this to be particularly interesting because Buchman frequently attended Wright's Yale lectures on Personal Evangelism and adopted Wright's The Will of God and a Man's Life Work for his own classes at Hartford Seminary. But, the influence is stated by Buchman in a 1918 letter which he wrote to Wright: "I have just written a friend again today that much of the best in my message is yours."¹⁸

Given that the Oxford Group does not generally mention its debt to Wright, it is not surprising that AA only traces its roots to the Oxford Group. But the ideas and concepts which would be molded into the twelve steps came from a strong tradition of nineteenth-century Christian evangelism.

¹⁷See Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age 74-75 for a brief discussion of some of these issues.

¹⁸Clark 129.

Barbara Leslie Epstein, in her study, The Politics of Domesticity, argues that "the outlook of temperance women was shaped by class as well as sexual antagonism."¹⁹ The sexual antagonism was a result of women beginning to understand that they were often repressed by irresponsible men who did not just wish to prevent intemperance. The temperance women were the heirs of their grandmothers who supported the religious revivals which Ann Douglas would argue caused a feminization of American culture. The women's culture, according to Douglas, embodied the virtues of Christian religion; virtues such as compassion, kindness, and emotion.²⁰

The class distinction of temperance is identified by Epstein as springing from the growing fear of immigrant, lower classes. Poor immigrants were, in the nineteenth century arriving in such great numbers that they posed a threat to the middle classes. Arguing that the problems of intemperance such as the husband spending his time away from home in a tavern and then coming home to beat his wife were mostly found among the lower classes, by fighting for temperance, middle class women were attempting to impose their values on others. It might also be noted, in support

¹⁹Barbara Lee Epstein, Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981) 90.

²⁰Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).

of this argument, that many of the immigrants were not only poor, but, more importantly, Catholic. And Catholics were discriminated against in a country that valued its Protestant heritage.

Epstein goes on to argue that "In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, physicians, and especially ministers, began to speak out against alcohol, partly because their views reflected the moralism of those who were taking it upon themselves to guide behavior of the emerging middle class."²¹ This notion of religious benevolence as social control was advanced by John R. Bobdo in his 1954 The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848 and in the same year by Charles C. Cole, Jr. in his The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1820-1860.²² To these men and their followers, voluntary societies organized for social improvement actually had as their basis a quest for social control. The ministers who led these organizations remembered the "good old days" when a theocracy ruled the colonies. Their goal was to regain the power and influence which they had lost.

²¹Epstein 91.

²²John R. Bobdo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954) and Charles C. Cole, Jr. The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1820-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

Lois W. Banner, in her 1973 article titled "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," effectively argues against such a position.²³ Banner's main point is that Bobdo, Cole, and others ignore the strong religious beliefs of the reformers. She also demonstrates that the reformers were not primarily Congregationalist ministers who had experienced a decline in their secular power. Instead it was the Presbyterians and the Methodists, who at the time had not reached their zenith, who advanced these movements. However, even though the Presbyterians and Methodists had not experienced the social prominence of the Congregationalists, this, in and of itself, does not mean that these groups did not wish to seek social control.

Regardless of the religious beliefs of the reformers, Joseph R. Gusfield in his analysis of the temperance movement focuses on the issue of class distinction and social control. As he writes in "Temperance, Status Control, and Mobility, 1826-1860:"

There are two phases to the development of the American Temperance movement in the period 1826-60. Although these phases overlap, each is connected with the status aspirations of a different social class. In the first phase,... described in this section, Temperance

²³Lois W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control," Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays, eds. John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1978) 218-235.

represents the reaction of the old Federalist aristocracy to loss of political, social, and religious dominance in American society. It is an effort to re-establish control over the increasingly powerful middle classes making up the American "common man." In the second phase Temperance represents the efforts of urban, native Americans to consolidate their middle-class respectability through a sharpened distinction between native, middle-class life styles and those of the immigrant and the marginal laborer or farmer.²⁴

Although class issues were important in the nineteenth-century temperance movement, Nye is essentially correct when he argues that reformers owed much to the Enlightenment tradition. But, if America was to live up to its mission to "serve the world as an example of what it could and ought to be," reform based on a perfectionist trend naturally lead to social control--even during the period of eighteenth-century Enlightenment.

In spite of the fact that popular social mythology teaches otherwise, during the colonial period, drinking itself was not considered a problem nor did society experience the anti-social behavior typically attributed to alcoholism. Although some Puritan ministers did sermonize against alcohol abuse, their general tone was that abuse was

²⁴Joseph R. Gusfield, "Temperance, Status Control, and Mobility, 1826-1860," Ante-Bellum Reform, ed. David Brian Davis (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) 121. See also Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963) for a more detailed discussion.

a mis-use of one of God's gifts. "To them, drinking in excess was a personal indiscretion, and alcohol itself was no more to blame for drunkenness than food was to blame for gluttony."²⁵ Few now know that one of the first problems faced by the Puritans who settled in what is now Boston was the shortage of beer that forced them to rely on water for drinking. But, drinking in colonial America was part of the social fabric. It was something that was done at home with meals and at community functions such as barn raisings, marriages, births, and ordinations.

Whereas moderate drinking was part of the social fabric, excessive drinking needed to be severely punished because it could destroy that fabric. Alcoholic behaviors such as public drunkenness were tolerated so long as the individual did not become dependent on society for personal support or support for the family. When alcoholism advanced to the stage where the individual became a social ward, the person was placed in the same class of criminal as were the poor and the insane. Those who were identified as drunks were considered to be "addicted" to the drunkenness and not to the drink. "In other words, whereas contemporary thought considers alcoholics to be devoid of willpower or hopelessly

²⁵P. Aaron and D. Musto, "Temperance and Prohibition in America: A Historical Overview," Alcohol and Public Policy: Beyond the Shadow of Prohibition, eds, M. Moore and D. Gerstein (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1981) 132.

addicted to drink, the traditional colonial view was that drinkers loved to drink and to get drunk because it was a self-indulgent pleasant experience."²⁶

Those who demonstrated alcoholic behaviors--both in public and at home--were subject to severe punishments. "In order to emphasize community control, magistrates could (and did) set examples with jailings, fines, the stocks, and the lash. Recidivism brought heavier fines and longer imprisonments--or brutal corporal punishment."²⁷

The harsh laws and public sermons from the seventeenth-century do not indicate that alcoholism was a problem, instead, they were designed to reinforce the social prohibition against drunkenness. It was not until the nineteenth-century, during a time when America was moving from its agrarian roots to a more metropolitan society, that alcohol itself was identified as a problem. Although it is not possible to reconstruct the specific events which lead to this changing attitude, part of the change was undoubtedly a result of a change in drinking patterns away from beer and cider to hard liquor. As American distillers began to experiment with locally grown crops, rye, corn

²⁶Genevieve M. Ames, "American Beliefs About Alcoholism: Historical Perspectives on the Medical-Moral Controversy," The American Experience With Alcohol: Contrasting Cultural Perspectives, eds. Linda A. Bennett and Genevieve M. Ames (New York: Plenum, 1985) 28.

²⁷Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin, Drinking in America: A History (New York: Free Press, 1982) 17.

liquor and other spirits became the drink of choice for America's citizens. Attempts were made to change this trend, but they were unsuccessful.

During this same period, the small agrarian village of the colonial period grew into larger towns and cities. With this growth came a lessening of social control over individual behavior. No longer would everyone be in a position to know everyone else's business. Furthermore, the ideals of the American revolution added to the decline in community influence over individual behavior. In their Drinking in America, Mark Lender and James Martin summarize this process:

Society as the colonials had known it was hardly falling apart, but the old deferential patterns--and voluntary compliance with them--were clearly giving way to a more individualist, pluralistic set of values. The doctrine of liberty espoused during the Revolution went a long way toward weakening communal responsibility for individual behavior in many areas. But while republicans cherished the ideals of the Revolution, no one (who was willing to admit it) wanted these ideals to proceed to anarchy or to a decline in general morality or civil order. And in this concern for social stability and virtue, few things seemed to have more disruptive potential than the intemperance that apparently was accompanying the startling rise in the use of distilled spirits.²⁶

²⁶Lender and Martin 36.

Intemperance, as in the early period, was considered a social evil. But, unlike in the colonial period, Americans in the Revolutionary period began to identify the drink as well as the drinker as an evil. Intemperance and hard liquor needed to be avoided.

Liquor destroyed the individual; a destruction that adversely affected the family. And if the family was destroyed, the larger social structure was threatened. The threat was even more clearly identified as drinking patterns changed from a home/community setting to a tavern setting. A man would no longer have a drink with his wife and children during mealtime. Instead, he would travel to a local drinking establishment--sans wife and children. And though he might toast the good health of his drinking companions, the alcohol in his glass was no longer taken for medicinal purposes.

The push against hard liquor was assisted by religious and medical interest in the subject. Although William Penn had been one of the first to manufacture spirits in America, the Quakers took the lead in advocating a ban on liquor. The Mighty Destroyer Displayed, published in 1774 by Anthony Benezet, a Philadelphia Quaker with numerous philanthropic interests, was an important assault against liquor. Benezet argued that the use of liquor was not only unhealthy, but that its use caused both the individual and society to decline. Within ten years after the publication of The

Mighty Destroyer Displayed²⁹, both the Quakers and the Methodists were urging their members to avoid hard liquor.

Benjamin Rush's An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Mind and Body, published in 1784, was the classic medical study on the effects of alcohol.³⁰ Rush maintained the belief that beer and wine, when taken in moderate quantities, did have a medicinal benefit. However, according to Rush, alcohol was no longer to be identified as a "positive good" because the rise in liquor consumption negated any possible benefit from the alcohol. He believed that alcohol, over time, not only led to intoxication but to physical illness and eventually death.

Not only was Rush the first to identify the disease process of alcoholism, Rush's "A Moral and Physical Thermometer," published as part of the Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits... anticipated the Jellenik chart, which is now widely used to demonstrate the effects of alcoholism. As the individual drinker moved down Rush's intemperance thermometer, he or she, if not first killed by

²⁹Anthony Benezet, The Mighty Destroyer Displayed (Trenton, 1774).

³⁰Benjamin Rush, An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Mind and Body: To Which is added, a Moral and Physical Thermometer (Boston: Thomas Andrews, 1790).

one of the illnesses Rush identified as being associated with intemperance, would end up on the gallows.³¹

The disease process of alcoholism introduced by Benjamin Rush was expanded upon by the nineteenth-century temperance movement. It was correctly reasoned that if the alcohol in hard liquor was addictive, the alcohol in small beer and wine must also be addictive. Therefore, it was logically concluded that the use of any alcohol was intemperant. Thus, prohibition, instead of the temperant use of alcohol was advocated. It was incorrectly assumed that alcohol would lead directly to intemperance/alcoholism so that any use was too much use. Although modern medical science is still unsure as to what pre-disposes an individual to alcoholism, it is now known that not all people who drink will become alcoholics.

In addition, the idea that alcohol destroyed the family continued to gain strength. Barbara Lee Epstein summarizes the main arguments concerning the negative effect alcohol had on the family:

men who drank spent money on liquor that should have been spent at home; time that men spent in the saloons was that much time away from home. Crusaders and other temperance advocates believed that alcohol was addictive and debilitating and that it impoverished families by destroying men's ability to work.

³¹The Jellinek Chart is found in Elvin Morton Jellinek, The Disease Concept of Alcoholism (New Haven: Hillhouse Press, 1960).

Finally, they argued that drunken men were violent, likely to beat their wives and perhaps children or other members of their families as well. Alcohol, they claimed, turned gentle fathers and husbands into brutes.³²

The theme that men who turn to drink neglect their responsibilities at home and at work and, as a result, the family unit is destroyed is central to most temperance novels.

T.S. Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There, a best selling temperance novel published in 1854, tells the classic story of the young man who through drink and loose living loses everything that he has.³³ This popular nineteenth century novel focuses on an honest miller who sells his profitable business in order to run a boarding house and tavern. This upright family man, as a result of his close association with alcohol, brings himself and his family to ruin. His cheerful wife becomes a tearful woman who eventually goes insane. The miller himself loses his jovial nature and health as he begins to drink what he serves. His young son first serves beer, but eventually drinks it, plays cards, cavorts with women, and, in the final scenes, kills his father.

³²Epstein 102.

³³T.S. Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There, ed. C. Hugh Holman (1854; New York: Odyssey Press, 1966).

The only person who finds spiritual fulfillment and the good life which results from it is Joe Morgan, the town drunk. After Mary, his daughter, is hit in the head with a beer mug when she comes to the tavern to lead him home, Joe sits at her deathbed trying to nurse her back to health. Shortly before she dies, little Mary gets her father to promise that he will not drink until she is well. After obtaining this commitment, she confides to her mother that father will never drink again because she will never regain her health. Mary dies and her father reforms.

Joe Morgan's conversion was in the spirit of Christian perfectionism; a concept that caused sectarian schisms in American churches from the days of Anne Hutchinson to the present. However, John Wesley and the Methodist church he founded is most associated with this concept. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Methodism had its heyday. No longer a sect of the Anglican church, Methodism would become a mainline protestant church in America. John Wesley taught that moral ability was a gift of God's grace that could be attained by anyone, not only by those elected by God to receive it. Through Christ, everyone had the ability to respond to the gospel and to be saved for it was "[not] natural ability but faith in the atonement [which] unleashed the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and

raised penitents from the death of sinning to the new life of obedience to God's will."³⁴

To Wesley and his followers, original sin was not the guilt of Adam's sin but was the bent toward sinning. However, sin was not so important as God's willingness to heal it. Furthermore, he believed "that the gratitude for God's grace in conversion would impel earnest believers toward complete dedication to Christ and at the same time induce discontent with their remaining inner bent to sin."³⁵ As itinerant Methodist preachers traveled the American countryside, their message was adopted by other ministers. Perfectionism, "the doctrine that 'perfect sanctification' or complete holiness and the 'second blessing' were attainable or even necessary to the salvation of the converted Christian," became a major religious impulse in nineteenth century thought.³⁶

When Joe Morgan was able to identify the evil of his drunken lifestyle through the Christian witness of his

³⁴Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

³⁵Smith 115.

³⁶This theme is developed in A. Leland Jamison, "Religions on the Christian Perimeter," The Shaping of American Religion, eds. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) 162-231. The quote in this sentence is taken from Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People vol 1 (1972; Garden City: Image Books, 1975) 576.

daughter, he received a second blessing from God. It was not that he was somehow predestined to be chosen, rather, his willingness to accept Jesus' atonement provided the impetus for his ability to give up drink and to lead a Christian life.

While it would be inaccurate to argue that Alcoholics Anonymous was directly influenced by Methodism, AA does emerge from the tradition of nineteenth-century evangelism and some of these same elements can be seen in AA philosophy.³⁷ For example, even though individuals become responsible for their own sobriety, sobriety can only be attained by "turning one's will and life over to the care of God."³⁸ The willingness not only to stop drinking, but also to change the manner in which they live opens the channel for newly sober alcoholics to receive God's blessing. As a result of God's influence, the desire to drink is removed. Due to the gratitude which they now feel, newly sober individuals are allowed to lead a life of sobriety. Although these individuals are encouraged to find a God of their own understanding, the conceptions which are most helpful are those where, as with Methodism, God is more interested in extending a healing hand than in punishing

³⁷Of Special Interest is Oliver R. Whitley, "Life with Alcoholics Anonymous: The Methodist Class Meeting as a Paradigm," Journal of Studies on Alcohol 38.5 (1977) 831-848.

³⁸See Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 34-41.

past wrongs. Or, in the words of AA's second tradition, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience..."³⁹

Joe Morgan's drunken life style was tempered by a belief in a higher power that led to fulfillment. But the miller bent on self improvement without concern for God's will in his life found himself in a position where he could easily strike his son.

In addition to destroying the family, sexual vice was associated with alcohol use. Early colonial court cases often linked drunkenness and sexual promiscuity. Prostitution, often known as "white slavery," became associated with taverns and crusades to eradicate it, would concentrate some of their efforts on eliminating the taverns which unofficially included women as part of their offerings. "To the reform mind, inclined to see sexual intemperance as the root of all vice, the excesses of drink and of the brothel became joined."⁴⁰

In the middle to late 1800s, sexual reform was advanced, in part, through prostitution reform. While some argued for the regulation and licensing of prostitutes, the

³⁹Emphasis added.

⁴⁰David J. Pivar, Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973) 23.

early feminist movement saw prostitutes as white slaves who were seduced or tricked into a profession which they could not escape. Elimination of prostitution was therefore taken to be the desired goal.

Others opposed prostitution on moral grounds arguing that the business itself was immoral. These individuals following in the tradition of abolitionism could accept no compromise with evil and licensing would be viewed as a compromise. For, as William Lloyd Garrison wrote in his On State Regulations of Vice: "...if one sin can be licensed, why not another?"⁴¹

While non-marital sex was considered to be wrong, same-sex sexual activity was an even worse sin because of the non-procreative nature of same-sex unions. Same sex sexual relations were seen as attacks against both family and society. Therefore, severe punishment was deemed not only acceptable, but necessary. In the American colonies, sodomy was punishable by death and some men were executed after being convicted of this crime. But, they were not considered, nor did they consider themselves to be "sodomites," a group of individuals whose sexual orientations defined their characters. In the seventeenth-century, same sex sexual activity was placed in the same category of other sins of lust. Sodomites,

⁴¹Quoted in Pivar 71.

adulterers, rapists, and so forth did not exist in the seventeenth-century mind. Instead, there were individuals who committed the crime of sodomy, the crime of adultery, and the crime of rape. The severity of the punishment for sodomy came not only from the Biblical injunction against same sex sexual activity but from the fact that such activity was, as Jonathan Ned Katz argues in The Gay/Lesbian Almanac, a crime against both the family and the state. Households, procreation, family life, inheritance, and the economy were all affected by same-sex bonding.⁴²

In colonial America, non-married individuals disrupted the pattern by which households were formed and, as a result, disrupted social harmony. Single people were generally forbidden to set up a "household" either alone or with other single people unless given specific permission to do so. Families often took in single men or women to live with them and to become part of the household until these single individuals married and established traditional families of their own.

The household was important, in part, because it served as a place to control and monitor behavior. In the small communities of the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century,

⁴²Jonathan Ned Katz, Gay/Lesbian Almanac: A New Documentary (New York: Harper and Row, 1983). The argument that same-sex unions are crimes against family and state is summarized from Katz's "General Introduction: Lesbian and Gay History--Theory and Practice" found on pages 1-19.

the father could monitor the behavior of his children and see that they were raised to be good citizens. It was not until the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century that a cult of domesticity would form giving women the primary responsibility for raising children. Under the watchful eye of the patriarch, such illicit behaviors as intemperance and non-marital sexual activity could be checked. Without an established household, social control which began in the family and extended from there to the community could not be maintained.

Furthermore, households served as the basis for the economy. In an agrarian society with some cottage industries, each member of the household was needed to make the economy run. All members of the household--mothers, fathers, and children--participated in the daily activities which brought food to the table and kept a roof over the family's heads. Children were a necessary component of a healthy economy and because same-sex sexual activity was non-procreative, it served as a threat to the survival of the community. In the twentieth century, because the population explosion is a major concern on the planet, it is difficult to imagine the need for children. But in the colonial period, there was no assurance that the struggling villages or their inhabitants would survive in the new world.

Part of the problem was the scarcity of labor in the colonies. As a result, to survive, families needed to produce children as well as crops. Infertility in the marriage bed was as damaging as infertility in the field. Under these circumstances, sexual activity which was non-procreative was naturally viewed as a direct attack against the survival of the colony.

Finally, same-sex sexual activity, by not producing children, threatened the system by which property was transferred because the two most convenient times to transfer property was at the time of a child's marriage or at the parent's death. When a son married, the father would give him land which the son would be allowed to work until it was formally transferred to him at the time of the father's death. For his daughters, a father would usually give some other type of dowry--such as silver, linens, or a house--at the time of their marriage.

While discussing same-sex sexual activity before the twentieth century, it is important to realize that the concept of homosexuality and of homosexuals is of relatively recent origin. It was not until the 1880s that the distinction between heterosexual (which originally referred to someone who was sexually active with both men and women) and homosexual began to develop. In the nineteenth-century, society still labored under the belief that same-sex sexual activity was pathological as well as sinful. Even Walt

Whitman, now celebrated by many because of his homosexuality, at the end of his life would deny the homo-erotic aspect of the Calamus poems, an aspect that was not missed by John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter, nineteenth-century British, homosexual rights advocates.

The Society for Human Rights, founded in 1924, was the first American lesbian/gay rights organization. But the organization, though granted a charter by the state of Illinois, was short-lived; driven out of existence by unlawful persecution by the police. In 1950, Henry Hay would formed the "International Bachelors Fraternal Orders for Peace and Social Dignity" sometimes referred to as "Bachelors Anonymous" which in 1951 became known as the Mattachine Society. And in 1955 Del Martin and Phylis Lyon, authors of the now classic Lesbian/Woman, formed the Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian support group.⁴³

Even during this period of changing ideas about homosexuality, same-sex sexual activity was still viewed as a threat to home and family. During the McCarthy Hearings of the 1950s, it was communists and homosexuals who were perceived to be a national threat. Thus, when Alcoholics Anonymous was being formed, the disease concept of both latent and overt homosexuality was in full force. It is for

⁴³Jonathan Ned Katz, Gay American History: lesbian and Gay Men in the U.S.A. (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) 385-397, 406-433.

this reason that Bill W., as late as 1950, would refer to the gay man whose request to join AA was the beginning of the third tradition, as a "sexual deviate" whose other problems were worse than alcoholism.⁴⁴ But what is even more significant is that AA, in its second year, would permit a gay man to join its membership. The ramifications of this decision will be more fully explored in chapter six.

Although AA was deeply influenced by the movement toward perfection, it was equally influenced by the American trend toward individualism. And as a result of respecting the humanity and basic rights of the individual, the perfectionism and social control were kept in check.

⁴⁴A tape of Bill Wilson's remarks was played by Barry L. in "Historical Perspective: Homosexual Men and Women in AA" at the 1985 AA International Convention in Montreal.

CHAPTER 5:

THE TREND TOWARD INDIVIDUALISM

Although Americans viewed themselves as a light set upon a hill, movements toward perfectionism were countered with a need to respect individual rights. Although the rights of alcoholics and lesbians and gay men were often ignored, celebration of individuality laid the groundwork for lesbian/gay involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Benjamin Franklin, the archetype of the self-made man, believed that social improvement came from individuals working in their own self-interest. For many, Franklin's emphasis on individual self-reliance gave rise to utilitarian individualism.

Robert Bellah and others in The Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Social Life summarize this idea when they write:

In short, Franklin gave classic expression to what many felt in the eighteenth century--and many have felt ever since--to be the most important thing about America: the chance for the individual to get ahead on his own initiative. Franklin expressed it very clearly in his advice to Europeans considering emigration to America: "If they are poor, they begin first as Servants or Journeymen; and if they are sober, industrious, and frugal, they soon become Masters, establish themselves in Business, marry, raise

Families, and become respected
Citizens."¹

By the end of the eighteenth-century, those influenced by Franklin's individualism would argue that good would automatically emerge from a society where everyone pursued his or her own interests. But these "neo-Franklins" forgot that given "all the utilitarian aspects of Franklin's conception of individual self-improvement, it was nonetheless linked to the themes of public spirit and social responsibility."²

Frank Buchman, founder of the twentieth century Oxford Group, the group from which AA emerged, was one such neo-Franklin. However, he assumed that working toward one's self-interest automatically caused conversion to Christianity. Buchman also believed in the mimetic nature of the Christian life, so he adopted the "big man" theory whereby Oxford Group members attempted to convert the civic and social leaders. He believed that the men and women under the "the big men" would be influenced to convert as a result of the "big man's" example.³ Unfortunately, the

¹Quoted in Robert Bellah, et al, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 33.

²Bellah 311.

³Walter Houston Clark, The Oxford Group: Its History and Significance (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951) 233.

Oxford Group was never able to balance utilitarian individualism with social and political responsibility. And like other neo-Franklins, they were harshly criticized.⁴

Part of the problem was that Buckman was too concerned with being involved with the social and political elite, a concern that at times was quite self-serving. Especially after the Oxford Group became Moral-Rearmament and launched a world-wide movement, Buckman's credibility dropped.⁵

Alcoholics Anonymous, while being influenced by the trend of utilitarian individualism has been able to avoid the criticism heaped upon the neo-Franklins and the participants in Moral Re-Armament because the organization removes itself from issues of public controversy. By "neither endorsing no opposing causes,"⁶ AA, as an

⁴A good, brief analysis of the controversy which surrounded Buckman is found in Garth Lean, Frank Buckman: A Life (London: Constable, 1985) 1-2.

⁵Frank Buckman launched Moral Re-Armament in a speech he gave in London on May 29, 1938. By this time, the New York branch of what was to become AA had already broken with the Oxford Group and the Akron branch would break the following year. Although some of the AA-alcoholics might have been influenced by Moral Re-Armament, by the time the movement was gaining popularity, the basic philosophy of AA had already been written. A reader who might want to learn more about Moral Re-Armament can find a copy of Buckman's speech in Frank N.D. Buckman, Remaking the World: The Speeches of Frank N.D. Buckman (1947; London: Blandford Press, 1958) 45-50. A description of the organization's purpose is the subject of Basil Entwistle and John McCook Roots, Moral Re-Armament--What Is It? (Los Angeles: Pace, 1967).

⁶AA Preamble.

organization, keeps within its tradition of one alcoholic helping another. Once recovered, how these alcoholics work the AA principles in public and social affairs is left to the individual.

The American trend toward individualism was given theoretical and intellectual credibility as the Age of Reason--which had dominated American thought during the eighteenth-century--was replaced by Romanticism, a movement which placed importance on the emotions and, again, on the individual. The emphasis on emotions enhanced the importance of individuals because "if the test of truth lies within, in the flash of inward intuition, then the individual becomes paramount; the most dynamic ideal of Romanticism was its vision of greater freedom for the individual."⁷

The seeds of Romanticism are found in the eighteenth-century works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emmanuel Kant, Goethe, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle, and others. But the move to individualism which took place in American society prior to and during the Revolutionary War period was not, however, greatly influenced by these works. When Samuel Miller published his Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century in 1803, the works of the Romantics were

⁷Russell B. Nye, Society and Culture in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) 21.

all but passed over because, he felt, they tended to undermine virtue.⁸

The trend toward individualism was further advanced by transcendentalists who gave a new currency to Romantic thought. This movement allowed Thoreau to glorify individualism in his Walden and "Civil Disobedience." The theme of self-reliance which is found throughout Thoreau's writings, became, for Emerson, the cardinal virtue. As Emerson wrote in "Self Reliance": "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men--that is genius."⁹

Truth to one's own heart was taken a step further by Walt Whitman. Like Franklin, Whitman was born of poor parents and earned his living as a printer. But Franklin's utilitarian individualism contrasted sharply with Whitman's expressive individualism. Whereas Whitman and Franklin wanted to create personae which their descendants could emulate, their basic attitudes toward individualism was quite different. Unlike Franklin, Whitman's celebration of

⁸This argument is developed in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People vol 2 (1972; Garden City: Image Books, 1975) 32+.

⁹Washington Irving, The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. (1819; New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1954). Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience (Boston: Tucker and Fields, 1854). "Self Reliance" was first published in 1841 and has been often reprinted in books such as Sculley Bradley, et al. The American Tradition in Literature (1956; New York: Random House, 1981) 1329-1349.

the body was part of his public image. This image was erotic; hetero-erotic, homo-erotic, and auto-erotic.¹⁰

Whitman's work is contradictory and provocative. He is the author of Leaves of Grass, a celebration of self replete with overt sexual images which stood in stark contrast to prevailing social norms. And he was the reportedly heavy drinker who wrote the less well-known Franklin Evans; or, the Inebriate, a temperance tale that promoted a moral code in the tradition of T.S. Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar-Room.¹¹

Charley Shively's Calamus Lovers is the most noteworthy attempt to understand Whitman's expressive individual in terms of his sexuality and the mores of nineteenth-century American society. Shively is one of the most brilliant essayists and social critics in the contemporary lesbian and gay rights movement. But, unfortunately, he analyzed Whitman's work not in terms of Whitman's world, but in terms

¹⁰The idea of expressive individualism is developed in Bellah 33-34.

¹¹Emory Holloway, ed. Leaves of Grass: The Collected Poems of Walt Whitman (New York: Book League of America, 1942. Leaves of Grass was originally published in 1855. Thomas L. Brasher, ed., "Franklin Evans; or, The Inebriate," The Early Poems and the Fiction (New York: New York University Press, 1963) 124-239. "Arthur Evans" originally appeared in the New World in November 1842. A revised version of the text was reprinted in serial form in the Brooklyn Eagle from November 16-30, 1846 under the title "Fortunes of a Country Boy; Incidents in Town--and his Adventures at the South." T.S. Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar Room and What I Saw There (1854; New York: A.L. Burt, nd).

of his own.¹² As a result, Shively fails to understand that Whitman's homosexuality, per se, is not the cornerstone of Whitman's glorification of the self. Rather, the fact that he permitted the self to be sexual was what shocked and excited those who read him.

The expressive individualism found in Song of Myself can also be seen in the Davy Crockett myths which became popular in the early 1800s. Crockett's world is one of chaos. His father was a bankrupt farmer who ran a tavern near the Cumberland Gap where he earned a living selling liquor to passing wagoners. When his son was twelve, the senior Crockett sent Davy to school, but after but a few days the boy had disrupted the school, beat up a fellow classmate, and earned himself a whipping that would never be given. In order to avoid the whipping, young Crockett played hooky, but was caught by his father who threatened to whip him worse than the schoolmaster ever would. But Davy outruns the old man, hides in the woods, and the next day leaves for the frontier.¹³

¹²Charley Shively, Calamus Lovers: Walt Whitman's Working Class Comrades (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1987).

¹³The details of this myth are more fully developed in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Davey Crockett as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality, and Symbolic Inversion in Victorian America," Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985) 90-108.

The Crockett myth parodies the social world of Franklin, Emerson, Thoreau, and other Eastern reformers. Crockett, his family (which is seldom mentioned), and his friends are illiterate, drunk, and uncouth. Even the women in Crockett's world refused to fit into gender role stereotypes required by the nineteenth century notion of femes covert.

[These women] drank, toted guns, wielded knives, killed or tamed animals, and defended their beaux and husbands when the men were attacked by wild animals or other wild men. The women were ugly, they were not sexually repressed. Indeed, they freely agreed to bundle with men... and assumed in their own right mythic sexual qualities that far exceeded those of the loose young men.¹⁴

Crockett myths took self-reliance to an extreme that would have been inconceivable to Emerson. The Crockett persona--although heterosexually active--like the Whitman persona, rejected the heterosexual norm of home and family.

Because individualism was to be tempered with Christian perfectionism, overt sexuality was not an acceptable subject for conversation or activity. Journals and letters might include carefully veiled homoerotic references, but the public utterances of Whitman could not be tolerated even if

¹⁴Smith-Rosenberg, "Davy Crockett" 104. A detailed discussion of femes covert is found in Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

he were speaking the experiences of many. In a personal letter to H.G.O. Blake, Thoreau remarks on this ambiguity. After first commenting on both his fascination and discomfort with the sensual portions contained in Leaves of Grass, he writes:

Of course, Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?¹⁵

The writings of Thoreau and Whitman, as well as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Alexander Hamilton, and Herman Melville, and engravings such as "A Miner's Ball," demonstrate the importance of same-sex male bonding.¹⁶ But, sexual activity based on such bonding was still oppressed. Although enlightened thought no longer held that the Biblical penalty of death was appropriate for sodomy, castration was deemed acceptable.¹⁷ And even in contemporary America, same-sex sexual activity is still criminalized in twenty-five states.

Female bonding was also found in the nineteenth

¹⁵Henry David Thoreau in a December 7, 1856 letter to H.G.O. Blacke. Quoted in Jonathan Ned Katz, Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A. (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) 493.

¹⁶Katz, Gay American History 452-461, 481-494, 499-500, and 510.

¹⁷Thomas Jefferson authored bill 64 in 1779 which read: "Whosoever shall be guilty of Rape, Polygamy, or Sodomy with any man or woman shall be punished, if a man, by castration, if a woman, by cutting thro' cartilage of her nose a hole of one half inch diameter at the least."

century. The opening paragraph of Carol Smith-Rosenberg's "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" serves as a good summary of the situation.

The female friendship of the nineteenth century, the long-lived, intimate loving friendship between two women..is one aspect of the female experience which, consciously or unconsciously, we have chosen to ignore. Yet an abundance of manuscript evidence suggests that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women routinely formed emotional ties with other women. Such deeply felt same-sex friendships were casually accepted in American society. Indeed, from at least the late eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century, a female world of varied and yet highly structured relationships appears to have been an essential aspect of American society. These relationships ranged from the supportive love of sisters, through the enthusiasm of adolescent girls, to sensual avowls of love by mature women....¹⁸

Smith-Rosenberg's purpose in writing her essay is to encourage scholars to move away from the psychosexual interpretation of such friendships; an interpretation which looks for deviance in childhood or adolescent trauma as signs of "latent homosexuality" or as the seeds for "overt homosexuality." She effectively argues that same-sex

¹⁸Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985) 53-76.

friendships need to be viewed in a cultural context to have any meaning. In her attempt to diminish the psychosexual interpretation of same-sex bonding, Smith-Rosenberg at times sounds homophobic; as is evidenced in her description of "committed" heterosexual and "uncompromising" homosexuals found in her concluding paragraph. But in spite of the underlying homophobia, her general arguments are worth noting.

Based on my research into this nineteenth-century world of female intimacy, I would further suggest that, rather than seeing a gulf between the normal and the abnormal, we view sexual and emotional impulses as part of a continuum of spectrum of affect gradations strongly affected by cultural norms and arrangements, a continuum influenced in part by observed and thus learned behavior. At one end of the continuum lies committed heterosexuality, at the other uncompromising homosexuality; between, a wide latitude of emotions and sexual feelings. Certain cultures and environments permit individuals a great deal of freedom in moving across this spectrum. I would like to suggest that the supposedly repressive and destructive Victorian sexual ethos may have been more flexible and responsive to the needs of particular individuals than those of the mid- twentieth century.¹⁹

Smith-Rosenberg might be correct in her conclusion if one assumes that the flexibility would only be found in the

¹⁹Smith-Rosenberg, "Female World" 76.

norm of uncompromising heterosexuality. In a society based on Christian perfectionism, an expressive individualism--especially in matters sexual--was forbidden.

The basis of Christian thought and society was the family. Alcoholism destroyed the family and homosexuality prevented families from being formed. Although all homosexuals are born into families and many have children of their own, this generalization still is assumed to have merit. And to the nineteenth-century mind, there was no conception of the Kinsey scale or of a lesbian/gay family structure.²⁰

In spite of the trend to perfectionism, Alcoholics Anonymous, in its second year of existence laid the groundwork for the fellowship to celebrate individuality when a man came to the Akron Group and asked if he could join even though he was "the victim of another addiction even worse stigmatized than alcoholism."²¹ Although conference approved AA literature does not give us the details of this man's life, in 1968, Bill Wilson explained

²⁰The amount of mis-information about lesbians and gay men is still great. Ed Hurst, Overcoming Homosexuality (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1987) is but one of many recent books which ignore scientific information. Eileen P. Flynn, AIDS: A Catholic Call for Compassion, Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1985) is an example of the type of logic which permits an individual to find that human compassion is to be given to gay men only after they contract a deadly illness.

²¹Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York: AA World Services, 1954) 142.

that this man was "a sexual deviant."²² This acceptance eventually developed into AA's open membership policy. Found in the Third Tradition, AA's membership requirement simply states that "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." As is explained in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, this tradition is especially meaningful to the individual for AA is really saying that:

You are an AA member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you've gone, no matter how great your emotional complications --even your crimes--we still can't deny you AA. We don't want to keep you out....²³

As alcoholics who had been stigmatized because of their disease, instead of being helped to overcome their illness, the founders of AA realized the importance of not allowing the group to override the individual. In another section of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, concern for individuality is explicitly stated:

We believe there isn't a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No AA can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve

²²Bill Wilson, "Open Meeting," AA General Services Conference, 1968.

²³Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 139.

Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee AA's unity contain not a single "Don't." They repeatedly say "We ought..." but never "You must!"²⁴

Ironically, this passage is included in a discussion of the first tradition: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity." But AA has found that the seeming paradox of celebrating individuality while calling for common welfare and AA unity is the result of AA's singleness of purpose. Because alcoholics can only recover with the help of others, they must come together into community. But because the community has a singleness of purpose--helping each other recover from alcoholism--individuality does not lead to acrimony and anarchy.

Individuals coming together to work toward a common goal has as a precedent the forming of the United States. Because each of the colonies was settled by a different group of individuals for different religious or economic reasons, competing interests developed between them. Although each of the colonies was united by a common bond to England, on the surface, there seemed to be little unity between them in matters of economics, politics, and religion. Therefore, as the country began to unite and loyalists such as Benjamin Franklin became rebel leaders,

²⁴Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 129.

there was a need to bring the competing interests of the thirteen colonies into a unified nation.

In developing a unified nation, Jonathan Boucher's concerns that he could not see how Virginians could "form a cordial union with the saints of England" needed to be overcome.²⁵ Thus, a search for commonalty and a spirit of compromise became guiding forces in the new nation. As Russell B. Nye points out in Society and Culture in America:

Living for over a century in a new environment across the sea was bound to produce Englishmen whose habits diverged more and more from those who remained at home. By the eighteenth century, the majority of colonists had been born on American soil, had never seen England, and never would....The colonists were tied together by trade; newspapers circulated freely among all of them; travelers moved through them with increased ease; interchanges of ideas were as common as of goods.²⁶

Even before the Declaration of Independence was signed Americans looked at themselves, both as individuals and as a country, as being unique. For example, Eliza Pinckney, a loyal subject of the King, insisted on being introduced as an "American" when she was presented at court in 1750. And, of course, there were other individualists such as John Winthrop whose flight from England was based on a belief

²⁵Quoted in Nye 2.

²⁶Nye 2.

that his individualism could only be lived in the new world.

For the colonies to come together and form a successful nation, defending individualism became a political necessity. Protestant Christianity, instead of a particular sectarian or denominational interest, became the norm by which the behavior of individuals were judged. Protestants, respecting the individual views of other Protestants, were able to unite in a way in which the Virginian Anglicans and the New England saints could not.

Protection of individual rights was as much a political necessity to the growth and development of Alcoholics Anonymous as it was for the forming of a new nation. Although rooted in eighteenth century practices, AA's insistence on having only a singleness of purpose was especially influenced by the nineteenth-century Washingtonian movement.²⁷

The Washingtonian Society anticipated the development of AA and serves as an example and a reminder to current AA members of what could happen to their group if certain principles are not followed; particularly the principle of singleness of purpose.²⁸ Like other voluntary associations

²⁷Milton Maxwell, "The Washingtonian Movement," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 11 (1950) 410-451.

²⁸"Between 1945 and 1976, the AA G[rape] V[in]e carried twelve different articles (and several reprints of these) on the Washingtonians." Ernest Kurtz, Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979) 291.

of the period, the Washingtonians did spring from the Protestant tradition, but it initially was able to obtain a unique place within the overall temperance crusade because its focus was on individual alcoholics.

Because it sprang from the trend toward perfectionism, the Washingtonians, like other reform movements, took primitive Christianity as their model. As C. Howard Hopkins explains in The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915:

The social element in the Christian religion is at least as old as the gospel. Jesus inherited the high moral aspirations of the Hebrew prophets, who were, in a sense themselves social reformers. The followers of Christ have endeavored to apply his teachings in every age.²⁹

Explicitly Christian in their basic value system, reformers were also evangelists interested in spreading the good news of the gospel.

Initially, the temperance movement worked against intemperance, as opposed to their later work for total abstinence. But the focus was always on keeping the temperant drinker temperant. "As for the alcoholic, it was the prevailing opinion, up to 1840, that nothing could be

²⁹C. Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915 (1940;1 New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) 3.

done to help him."³⁰ Some alcoholics such as the fictional Joe Morgan did obtain a conversion experience and reform, but these cases were unusual. An often quoted comment made by Justin Edwards, an early temperance leader, typifies the attitude held by many: "Keep the temperate people temperate; the drunkards will soon die, and the land will be free."

The significance of the Washingtonian Movement was that an emphasis was placed on reforming the drunkard. Rather than allow drunks to die, the founders of this movement were reformed drunks who wanted to help other drunks return to the temperate life. The movement originated on April 2, 1840 when William K. Mitchell, John F. Hoss, David Anderson, George Steers, James McCurley, and Archibald Campbell were drinking together in Baltimore's Chase's Tavern. These six men were discussing a temperance lecture that was to be held that evening when it was decided that, for fun, some of them should attend and then report back to the others.

After the lecture, the six joined together and discussed the material that the Reverend Matthew Hale Smith had presented that evening. Three days later, on April 5, the six were strolling, drinking, and discussing temperance when it was suggested that they form a mutual aid society to help each other to stop drinking. Mitchell was elected

³⁰Maxwell 411.

president of the society and designed the following pledge for each member to sign:

"We, whose names are annexed, desirous of forming a society for our mutual benefit, and to guard against a pernicious practice which is injurious to our health, standing, and families, do pledge ourselves as gentlemen that we will not drink any spirituous or malt liquors, wine or cider."

On April 6, still suffering the effects of the previous day's drinking, Anderson became the first man to sign the Washingtonian pledge. The other six original members followed suit and at the second meeting of the society, two other men signed the pledge.

Ironically, the new society continued to meet at Chase's Tavern, but because they did not drink, they were eventually asked to hold their meetings elsewhere. The group's weekly meeting first moved to Mitchell's home, then to a carpenter's shop, and finally, to a rented hall.

On November 19, 1840, the first public meeting of the Washingtonian Society was held at the Masonic Hall. The meeting was successful not only in that it brought in new members, but the people of Baltimore were made aware of the group's existence. Due to the success of this first meeting, it was decided that a monthly public meeting would be held in addition to the regular weekly meetings. The society grew at such a rate that 1,000 reformed alcoholics

and 5,000 other supporters marched in the parade held to mark the society's first anniversary.

Washingtonian Societies, as was stated in the 1842 Washingtonian Pocket Companion, could be formed anywhere there were enough drinkers to "form a spree." All that was needed was for one or two individuals to go to those persons who make, use, or sell intoxicants, explain the great reform to them, and get them to take the pledge at a meeting, the time for which would be mutually agreeable. Gentleness and kindness were to be used as the method for persuasion. And it was believed that if the person who was soliciting pledges was a reformed drinker himself, that was so much the better.

At the meetings, those gathered would first sing one of the hymns found in the Washingtonian Pocket Companion, hymns which were "adapted Christian hymns and temperance songs, appealing basically to religious and patriotic sentiments." Because sectarianism, party political denunciation, and harshness were avoided, the songs contained no "phrases and sentiments which all Christians could not conscientiously sing."³¹

After the song, the Chairman, or some other person, would open the meeting by first stating its objectives and then "relating his experience in drinking, his past

³¹Maxwell 436.

feelings, sufferings, the woes of his family and friends, the motives and reasons that induced him to take the present step, and appeal warmly and kindly to his companions, friends, and neighbors to aid him in it by doing likewise."³² This opening talk is not unlike those talks given at open AA meetings where a man or woman who has recovered through AA "describes in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now."³³ As was suggested in the instructions for the Washingtonian speaker, the contemporary AA speaker frequently makes reference to how he or she could not have achieved sobriety alone.

On May 12, 1841, a group of women meeting in New York City formed the first Martha Washington Society. Their constitution explained their purpose:

Whereas, the use of all intoxicating drinks has caused, and is causing, incalculable evils to individuals and families, and has a tendency to prostrate all means adapted to the moral, social, and eternal happiness of the whole family; we, the undersigned, ladies of New York, feeling ourselves especially called upon, not only to refrain from the use of all intoxicating drinks, but, by our influence and example, to induce others to do the same, do therefore form ourselves into an association.

³²Quoted in Maxwell 436.

³³Alcoholics Anonymous (1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976) 58.

The Martha Washington Societies were at times ladies auxiliaries to the Washingtonian Societies in their area. But, they also fed the poor, clothed the naked, and helped reform female alcoholics.

Although it might be tempting to draw a parallel between the Martha Washington Societies and Al-Anon groups, to do so would mis-represent both. Unlike Al-Anon members--which include men as well as women--the Martha Washingtonians did not attempt to change themselves as they learned how to live with the alcoholic in their lives. Instead, they were actively involved in reforming alcoholics and advancing the general temperance cause, a reforming stance they learned from the Washingtonians.

In many ways, it was active political involvement which helped lead to the downfall of the Washingtonian Movement. Instead of concentrating their efforts on reforming individual alcoholics, they became involved in the overall temperance debate. Because they permitted non-alcoholics as well as alcoholics into their ranks, it was inevitable that they would be subsumed into the Temperance Movement. Furthermore, the Washingtonians, unlike AA-alcoholics, did not provide a clear recovery program for their members to follow. Signing the pledge to stop drinking was not unlike the process of taking the first step of AA, a step that requires the individuals to accept that they are powerless

over alcohol. But, after signing the pledge, Washingtonians, unlike AA-alcoholics, had no further steps to guide their recovery. The basic life-style changes that AA recognizes as requirements for contented sobriety result from living the AA program. They do not arise simply from the act of removing alcohol from the body. It seems natural to assume that many of the Washingtonians did not achieve the contented sobriety of Joe Morgan. Rather, they would likely have become non-drinking, non-recovered, dry drunks.

In its development, Alcoholics Anonymous has been very conscious of the Washingtonian Society; particularly in its efforts not to make the same mistakes as its nineteenth-century predecessor. And it is because of AA's sense of history and strong tradition of supporting individuals that lesbians and gay men, who have a desire to stop drinking, are welcomed into the fellowship.

CHAPTER 6
TREATMENT STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH
LESBIAN/GAY ALCOHOLICS

Alcoholics Anonymous is a spiritual program that fills the religious needs of those men and women who use it as their program of recovery from alcoholism. Although it is not the only treatment program available, it is the largest. Yet many lesbians and gay men are unable to find a way to work the program because of the spiritual/religious issues involved in it.

In working with lesbian and gay alcoholics, sponsors¹ and treatment providers must remember three points: 1) The individual has a unique set of experiences. 2) The individual is an alcoholic. 3) Sexual issues are frequently problems which need to be addressed in treatment.

No responsible sponsor or therapist would assume that all heterosexuals had the same life experiences. And, no responsible sponsor or therapist should assume that all lesbians and gay men are the same. In the same vein, it must also be understood that, as there is no heterosexual

¹The role of the sponsor is described in Questions and Answers on Sponsorship (1976; New York: AA World Services, 1983).

community, there is no lesbian community or gay community. There are many lesbian/gay communities. The young gay hustler and the older gay professional man living with his lover in the suburbs are both gay, yet their experiences as gay men are unique. The separatist lesbian and the lesbian whose best buddy is a man might live next door to each other, but, in actuality, they would live and function in separate communities. These differences must be taken into consideration if treatment is to be effective.²

While understanding that lesbians and gay men live in a variety of communities, their uniqueness does not alter the fact that they are alcoholic and that they have experiences and personality characteristics similar to other alcoholics.

Names and places might be different but the experience of alcoholism is the same.

Finally, for lesbians and gay men, as for non-homosexuals, sexual issues need to be addressed in treatment. And the emphasis needs to be on sexuality and not homosexuality. Where the person falls on the Kinsey scale is not, in and of itself, important. How people deal with their sexuality is. Too many times, therapists want

²For an excellent discussion of the cultural diversity among lesbians and gay men, see Dave Walter, "A Case for Gay Communities," Advocate 504 (1988) 33.

to treat the homosexuality of their lesbian and gay clients as if it were the root of all problems.³

Although they do not specifically identify these points, in Dual Identities, Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally discuss the special concerns of lesbians and gay men in treatment. In their book, Finnegan and McNally explain how lesbians and gay men have much in common due to the pressures of homophobia and shared social experience. However, because they understand that even with this commonalty, each lesbian and each gay man has unique life experiences, they do not give a list of questions that can be asked of all clients. Instead, they demonstrate how to choose appropriate questions to ask the newly sober lesbian or gay man. Dual Identities is written primarily for counselors, but it would also be appropriate for an AA sponsor interested in becoming more sensitive to the needs of lesbian and gay alcoholics.⁴

In addition to remembering the uniqueness of lesbian and gay experiences and the commonalty of the alcoholic experiences, there are seven other strategies that I would

³This article is developed in Stephen Beaton and Naome Guild, "Treatment for Gay Problem Drinkers," Social Casework 57 (1976) 302-308 and in Deborah L. Diamond and Sharon W. Wilsnack, "Alcohol Abuse Among Lesbians: A Descriptive Study" Journal of Homosexuality 4.2 (1978) 123-142.

⁴Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally, Dual Identities: Counseling Chemically Dependent Gay Men and Lesbians (Center City, MN Hazelden, 1987).

recommend be used by sponsors and therapists to help the new person learn to work the spiritual program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

1. Acknowledge that Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and other AA literature are culturally biased and be willing to explain the historical development of these basic AA texts. Stress that although Christianity is the normative experience of American AAs, that AA does not consider non-Christian experience to be abnormal or invalid for recovery.

2. Emphasize that dogmatism in religious matters is not conference approved.

3. Explain the special importance of the third tradition--"The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking"--to lesbian and gay alcoholics. In doing so, stress that AA, as with other controversial issues, takes no opinion on how individuals practice their sexuality.

4. Whenever appropriate and available, encourage the lesbian or gay alcoholic to attend special interest meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, caution the individual against "ghettoization."

5. Introduce the new person to the book Living Sober.

6. Whenever appropriate and available, encourage the newly sober lesbian or gay man to join the lesbian/gay religious caucus of the church of their childhood, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, or another spiritual group designed around the needs of lesbians and/or gay men.

7. Provide the newly sober lesbian or gay man with lesbian/gay positive literature.

Cultural Bias and AA Literature

Alcoholics Anonymous, like all writing, is culturally biased. As a result, it reflects the traditions and values of the culture in which it was produced. To produce a sexist book today for use in a recovery program is inexcusable and to produce a book that tends to overlook the experiences of various ethnic, religious, or sexual minorities is problematic. But, it is illegitimate to impose contemporary values on people who wrote Alcoholics Anonymous over fifty years ago.

During the time Alcoholics Anonymous was being written, the small group of recovering alcoholics in New York were just breaking their ties with the Oxford Group and those living in Akron would remain part of the Oxford group until 1939, the year the book was published. The first 100 AA members who were involved with the production of Alcoholics Anonymous were Christians attempting to live the principles of the Oxford Movement. They recovered from their addiction using that program and, as a result, when they shared their experience, they shared Oxford Group principles. Even though their own stories were filled with the experiences of Christianity, they attempted to make the AA program as "Christian free" as possible.

In 1935, an agnostic alcoholic who affiliated with AA would not find the Bhagavad-Gita in his/her hotel room. Like Ed, whose story is recorded in the third tradition, the alcoholic would find a Bible.⁵ Nor would have non-Christians been drawn to the principles of the Oxford Group. As a result, when Alcoholics Anonymous was being written, experience with non-Christian spirituality would have been virtually non-existent. Yet, such experience was not condemned by the AA program.

But Christian spirituality remains the normative mode for Americans who join Alcoholics Anonymous. This ought not be surprising because Christianity is the dominant religion in this country. And there ought not be a problem for non-Christians who enter AA because the phrase "God as we understand Him" allows individuals to turn their will over to a Goddess or gods or the AA program as a whole. Nowhere in conference approved AA literature does it state that Christianity is superior to other forms of spiritual expression.

Alcoholics Anonymous should not take an opinion on outside issues. Whether one lives as a Christian is an outside issue. Belief in a higher power is crucial. The type of higher power is irrelevant to recovery. All that is

⁵Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York: AA World Services, 1952) 143-145.

important is that the individual realize that she or he is not God.⁶

Religious Dogmatism is Not Conference Approved

The new person within AA will sit at the tables with dogmatic alcoholics who will insist that there are very specific ways in which the spiritual aspects of the program should be run. The person might even come across such pamphlets as A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous, A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, Spiritual Milestones in Alcoholics Anonymous, and Second Reader for Alcoholics Anonymous which are published by AA of Akron. Each of these pamphlets uses the name Alcoholics Anonymous, but they are not conference approved literature.⁷

The difference between AA and the philosophy of AA of Akron can be seen in the following observation by Ernest Kurtz in Not God:

At the 1975 Fortieth Anniversary Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous held in Denver, Colorado, some members attending received a private invitation to participate in one or more meetings of "AA of Akron." Those without such an invitation and unaccompanied by someone having one were not admitted to these

⁶The importance of individuals realizing that they are "not God" is the theme of Ernest Kurtz, Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979).

⁷A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous (Akron: AA of Akron, nd). A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (Akron, AA of Akron, nd). Spiritual Milestones in Alcoholics Anonymous (Akron: AA of Akron, nd). Second Reader for Alcoholics Anonymous (Akron: AA of Akron, nd).

meetings--if they could find them. Within the meetings, although in many ways the story-telling format reminded readily of "ordinary" AA meetings, a special kind of lamentation was expressed in virtually every presentation. Almost univocally, speakers bemoaned not the ravages of alcoholism but the declension of "so-called Alcoholics Anonymous" from the pristine purity of its original principles.⁸

As Kurtz rightly claims, the current members of AA of Akron are "the heirs, often literal but at times only spiritual, of early Akron AA" and that Akron was much more tied to the Oxford Group than was New York. And even outside of Akron, the spiritual heritage of the early Akron members still is found in the AA program.⁹

The reality of AA of Akron is best understood in terms of religious sects.

The sociologists define a sect as a religious movement that derives many of its ideas from the same dominant religious traditions as the churches do. The difference is that a sect adds some significant variation that separates itself from society and ordinary church style.¹⁰

⁸Kurtz 234.

⁹Kurtz 234-237. The quote is from page 234.

¹⁰Michael H. Barnes, In the Presence of Mystery: An Introduction to the History of Human Religiousness (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984) 126.

Although Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religion, the sectarian nature of AA of Akron is unmistakable. Following the pattern of Christian sects, the members of AA of Akron have become dissatisfied with the practices of "so-called Alcoholics Anonymous." On a not-uncommon pattern, they have found that regular AA-alcoholics take on too lighthearted views about such basic issues of rules, roles, and purposes.

Therefore, to paraphrase Michael Barnes' discussion of sects, because AA of Akron preaches strict and clear principles that tells a person exactly who to be, how to live, and what to live for, it provides a stable security that society and regular Alcoholics Anonymous does not.¹¹

The "lack of a stable security" in Alcoholics Anonymous is more a perception of those who would find more comfort in a group which had stricter rules than does AA. Millions of alcoholics have recovered from their addiction and found security using the AA program. But an essential portion of their recovery process was that they had to find a workable program for themselves. Even the Twelve Steps, the cornerstone of AA philosophy are only "suggested as a program of recovery."¹²

In working with newly sober alcoholics, the sponsor or therapist needs to emphasize that the dogmatism which is

¹¹Barnes 125-126.

¹²Alcoholics Anonymous (1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976) 59.

sometimes found in groups or individuals is not the AA program; it is a sectarian response.

Finally, emphasis can be placed on the tolerance which AA has of all who wish to join. The third tradition of AA which allows AA of Akron members and those who follow their belief in the supremacy of Christianity to attend meetings is the same tradition which prohibits the program from excluding lesbians and gay men.

AA's Third Tradition

In Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, there are two stories concerning the fact that "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." The first story involves an unnamed man and begins:

On the AA calendar it was Year Two. In that time nothing could be seen but two struggling, nameless groups of alcoholics trying to hold their faces up to the light.

A newcomer appeared at one of these groups, knocked on the door and asked to be let in. He talked frankly with the group's oldest member. He soon proved that his was a desperate case, and that above all he wanted to get well. "But," he asked, "will you let me join your group? Since I am the victim of another addiction even worse stigmatized than alcoholism, you may not want me among you. Or will you?"¹³

The group consciousness began to work. Some members were troubled and thought that this one should be sacrificed for

¹³Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 141-142.

the many. Others argued that it was only the group's reputation which was the real concern. Eventually, someone asked "What would the Master do?" And the issue was settled. This man was allowed into the fellowship.

Overjoyed, the newcomer plunged into Twelfth Step work. Tirelessly he laid AA's message before scores of people. Since this was a very early group, those scores have since multiplied themselves into thousands. Never did he trouble anyone with his other difficulty. AA had taken its first step in the formation of Tradition Three.¹⁴

For lesbian and gay alcoholics, this tradition has a special significance because it assures that lesbians and gay men cannot be excluded from AA if they have a desire to stop drinking. Furthermore, this story records the experience of the first gay member of AA, a member who tirelessly "laid AA's message before scores of people."¹⁵

Although the exact nature of this man's "other addiction" was not recorded in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, in 1968, Bill Wilson identified the man's sexual orientation when he spoke at the open meeting of AA's 1968 General Service Conference. Later, in an article which appeared in Box 1980, B.L. gives a version of the story. In this version, the man who showed up at an AA meeting

¹⁴Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 142.

¹⁵Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 142.

describes himself as "a jailbird, mental case, narcotics addict, homosexual, and alcoholic." The year, according to B.L. was 1945. As in the original version, someone asked "What would the Master do?" and the man was admitted.¹⁶

In 1937, year two of the AA calendar, there was no Kinsey scale to explain sexual orientation. Heterosexual activity was not only normative, it was considered to be normal. The "abnormality" of same-sex sexual expression was well known in scientific and religious circles. To admit, a gay man into AA was truly an act of courage.

Although the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not identify this man as being gay, prejudice should not be attributed as the cause. When Bill Wilson was drafting early AA literature, the intent was to make the program as universal as possible by dropping specifics within the stories. In later years, it became understood that people who were somehow different from the norm within AA--people who were not low bottom, white drunks--needed special stories of their own. As a result, special interest groups began to form and pamphlets such as Do You Think You're Different? appeared.

¹⁶A tape of Bill Wilson's remarks were played by Barry L. at his talk at the 1985 AA International Convention. In Barry's talk, titled "Historical Perspective: Homosexual Men and Women in AA," Barry also cites examples of other early gay involvement in the AA program. See also, B.L. "You Mean, Just Let Anybody In?" Box 1980 (September 1976) 26-29.

Published in 1976, Do You Think You're Different? was written for those people who thought that Alcoholics Anonymous would not work for them. The purpose of the pamphlet was to show that when "different" people came to AA, they "found that Alcoholics Anonymous worked just as well for them as it had for hundreds of thousands of others of us who thought that we were 'different.'" Because the pamphlet includes the story of a lesbian alcoholic and a gay alcoholic, it can be argued that it shows that AA has the same commitment to lesbians and gay men as it has to blacks, the elderly, Indians, young people, famous people, Jews, low and high bottom drunks, atheists and agnostics, as well as those who fit the characteristics of the first 100 who wrote and edited the original version of Alcoholics Anonymous.¹⁷

In its attempt to minimize differences between alcoholics, AA takes a positive view of sexuality. Here, too, the strong Christian beliefs of the founders were not imposed onto the program of recovery. In Alcoholics Anonymous, the founders wrote:

We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct....We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed....God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with

¹⁷Do You Think You're Different? (New York, AA World Services, 1976).

persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge.¹⁸

This advice, first published in 1939, is in line with contemporary psychiatric and medical views concerning sexuality. Although written prior to Kinsey's research about sexual response in men and women, the founders of AA choose not to make judgments on sexual activity.

Alcoholics Anonymous does not, however, take the position that any sexual conduct is healthy. Instead of focusing on types of activity, frequency of activity, sex of partner or partners, or the marital status of partners, focus is placed on the quality of the activity. Questions suggested as part of the fourth step inventory include:

We reviewed our own [sexual] conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should be done instead?¹⁹

While investigating sexual conduct, it is likely that lesbian and gay alcoholics as well as non-homosexual alcoholics have had sexual problems. And, Alcoholics Anonymous rightly counsels that for someone to work out their problems, they need to take advice from others. In

¹⁸Alcoholics Anonymous 69-70.

¹⁹Alcoholics Anonymous 69.

obtaining advice, lesbians and gay men will likely find those within AA who find that same-sex sexual activity is, a priori, immoral. It is also likely that they might face discrimination at the hands of all-too-human AA-alcoholics whose attempts to work the program are not perfect. Anticipating such cases, Alcoholics Anonymous warns that "We realize that some people are as fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice."²⁰

Special Interest Meetings

Since 1974, the international AA directory began to list lesbian and gay meetings. The fact that special interest meetings exist is still being debated within AA, but such meetings often have a very beneficial effect on a new person's recovery. Often, in such a meeting, the new person finds it easier to identify with the other alcoholics present and this makes it easier for them to develop a positive recovery program of their own. They also learn to see that their "uniqueness" does not need to prohibit them from obtaining a successful recovery through AA. As R.S. writes in Box 1980, "I myself, even though I am a gay man, don't go to a gay or men's meeting very often. But when I first got sober I needed them because I could identify with

²⁰Alcoholics Anonymous 70.

what they were saying in terms of the problems I was having."²¹

At lesbian and gay AA meetings, newly sober alcoholics will not only meet lesbians and gay men with quality sobriety, they will learn that their sexual orientation is not the problem. Quoting from The Homosexual Alcoholic, Ted W., writing in a 1981 Advocate article sums up this benefit: "[Within lesbian/gay AA meetings] many of us learn for the first time that it was our drunkenness and not our homosexuality that turned people off."²² To a woman or man with internalized homophobia, such a revelation helps them take the first steps to a positive self concept which will aid recovery.

Unfortunately, because of past instances of discrimination, lesbians and gay men frequently learn that they cannot trust non-homosexual people. But by attending only special interest meetings, lesbians and gay alcoholics do not have the opportunity to see others living outside the lesbian/gay ghetto. And because ghettos are not good places to live, newly sober individuals should be encouraged to attend meetings besides specialty ones. Do You Think You're Different? explains the problem well:

²¹R.S., Letter, Box 1980 44.2 (1987) 33.

²²Ted W., "Alcoholism: A Gay Drunk's Sobering Story" Advocate (6 March 1981) 18-19.

We have found it unwise to limit our AA circle to folks exactly like ourselves. Segregation gives our "uniqueness" an unhealthy emphasis. We find it more enjoyable, and more healing, to get into the mainstream of AA life and mingle with everybody else, not just "different" [e.g. lesbian and gay] people.²³

Or in the words of H.D.: "Special interest groups do serve a function for the newcomer and are a spot to take special problems. They do not and should not become the only AA contacts one enjoys."²⁴ Enjoyment in sobriety is, afterall, the result of a balanced life and balance is not found in a ghetto.

Although part of balance is having the lesbian or gay alcoholic find other lesbian or gay contacts, the reality of homophobia--both internal and external--cannot be ignored. Being open about one's sexuality in American society is risky. In the move to self-acceptance, it should be left to the newly sober individual to decide how open she/he wants to be. It is the new person who must live with the consequences of the decision to "come out," and it is not wise to force someone into self-disclosure until they are comfortable doing so.

Lesbians and gay men who are open about their sexual orientation at AA meetings signal to newcomers that they,

²³Do You Think You're Different?, 29.

²⁴H.D., Letter, Box 1980 44.2 (1987) 35.

too, can safely discuss issues which would involve self-disclosure. For example, talking about one's partner without feeling the need to "change" the person's actual pronoun reference is an important stage in recovery for lesbian and gay alcoholics.

Living Sober

Living Sober: Some Methods AA Members Have Used for Not Drinking is a pragmatic application of strategies which individuals use for not drinking. As is explained in the first section:

This booklet does not offer a plan for recovery from alcoholism. The Alcoholics Anonymous Steps that summarize its program of recovery are set forth in detail in the books "Alcoholics Anonymous" and "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." Those Steps are not interpreted here, nor are the processes they cover discussed in this booklet.²⁵

Instead, Living Sober, offers tips on how to maintain sobriety. Discussed in the text are ways of availing one's self of a sponsor, use of "telephone therapy," being grateful, being wary of drinking occasions, getting active, and twenty five-additional categories.

What is missing from the booklet is the spiritual program of recovery which, as quoted above, is found in

²⁵Living Sober: Some Methods AA Members Have Used for Not Drinking (New York: AA World Services, 1975).

Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Yet, AA's twelfth step which states that "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs" lies at the heart of these suggestions. However, newly sober lesbians and gay men who react negatively to the God talk in AA might be able to more easily read the less "religious/spiritual" book, Living Sober. Lesbians and gay men unable to understand what seem to be very theoretical steps might first begin to work those steps by implementing the suggestions offered in Living Sober.

However, the suggestions in Living Sober are not a substitute for the twelve step recovery program. By following the suggestions offered, new people might not drink again, but it would be virtually impossible for them to develop a contented sobriety.

Besides being a non-spiritual complement to the spiritual twelve step program, Living Sober is also an example of the positive contribution and acceptance which lesbians and gay men have within Alcoholics Anonymous. As with Alcoholics Anonymous, Living Sober is written in the plural because neither of these books is the sole product of an individual's labor or insight. Yet, both had an individual serve as a primary editor/author. Bill Wilson, as AA history records, was the principle author of



Alcoholics Anonymous and Barry L. was the chief editor of Living Sober.

In a talk he gave at the fiftieth anniversary convention held in Montreal, Barry L., a gay man, discusses the history of lesbians and gay men in Alcoholics Anonymous.

As part of his talk, he discusses his involvement in the development of Living Sober. The value of Living Sober is not enhanced by knowing that a gay man was instrumental in its development. But, for a newly sober lesbian or gay man, the knowledge of Barry's involvement might be an added incentive to learn to work the program.²⁶

Involvement with Religious Caucuses

As with most Americans, lesbians and gay men often were exposed to a particular religious denomination in their childhood. Many remain involved with that denomination through their lives while others slip away. For the lesbian and gay alcoholics attempting to live a spiritual program of recovery, these childhood religions often serve as the basis from which they begin their search for "God as we understand Him."

Most major religious denominations now have lesbian and gay caucuses such as Dignity (Catholic), Integrity (Episcopal), or Affirmation (Mormon). These caucuses serve as a bridge between lesbians and gay men and the religious

²⁶Barry L., "Historical Perspective."



denomination to which they affiliate. People who are involved with these groups have found a way in which to understand that their sexuality does not prohibit them from being active members in their congregations. A sponsor or therapist working with a lesbian or gay man who has a great deal of hostility toward his/her childhood religion might recommend that the individual obtain information from the local chapter of one of these groups, or the group's national office.

Alcoholics Anonymous does not take a position on religious affiliation although many members do associate themselves with a denomination. The first 100 AAs wrote:

We think it no concern of ours what religious bodies our members identify themselves with as individuals. This should be an entirely personal affair which each one decides for himself in the light of past associations, or his present choice. Not all of us join religious bodies, but most of us favor such memberships.²⁷

As was pointed out in Chapter 3, many lesbians and gay men have a hostility to Christianity. This hostility does not, however, preclude the fact that many of these people wish to feel welcomed within their denominations and that many remain active in their denominations even if they see the affiliation as imperfect.

²⁷Alcoholics Anonymous 28.

Lesbians and gay men wishing to affiliate with a religious body might be well served by working with a religious caucus. Because it is not the intention of the caucuses to replace their religious denominations, joining a group such as Dignity ought not be presented as a substitute for attending Catholic services. Affiliation with a denomination or caucus is a highly personal affair and the final decision on what to do should be left to the individual. Before recommending a caucus to a newly sober lesbian or gay man, the sponsor or therapist might first write to the national office to obtain information for him/herself.

Besides the religious caucuses, the¹Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has developed a direct ministry to lesbians and gay men. Before recommending that a lesbian or gay man attend an UFMCC service, the sponsor or therapist should understand the theological basis for the Fellowship and make sure that the God which UFMCC understands is compatible with the "God as we understand Him," which is being developed by the newly sober alcoholic. UFMCC is a religion as Catholicism or Methodism or Judaism is a religion.²⁸ As such, an individual affiliating with UFMCC might be introduced to a

²⁸The founding of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is described in Troy Perry, The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay (Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1972).

Christian God very different from the God of their childhood.

Lesbian/Gay Sensitive Literature

Simply because a woman identifies herself as a lesbian or a man considers himself to be gay does not mean that they know anything about homosexuality beside the fact that homosexuals have a same-sex identification for their partners. Ignorance of homosexuality is not limited to heterosexuals. Most--if not all--lesbians and gay men have internalized at least some homophobia. Few lesbians and gay men have had the opportunity to learn much about the nature of their orientation or the history of lesbians and gay men.

In working with lesbian and gay alcoholics, it is first necessary to confront the alcoholism, for, unless the person is sober, there is little or no chance that they will be able to develop a positive self-identity. In early recovery, books such as The Way Out and Out From Under as well as the pamphlet Do You Think You're Different? will help individuals learn that sobriety is a viable option for lesbians and gay men. But, as part of recovery, it might be necessary to introduce individuals to lesbian/gay positive books and periodicals so that they can develop healthy attitudes about themselves and their orientation.

In the NALGAP Annotated Bibliography, there is a list of some of the better books in the fields of sexuality,

lesbian/gay recovery, religion, sociology, and fiction. Periodicals reflecting the range of lesbian/gay interests are also included.²⁹

Before recommending any book or periodical to a newly sober individual, the sponsor or therapist should first review the publication to make sure that the material is appropriate for the individual to whom it will be recommended. As always it is necessary to remember that there are a variety of lesbian and gay communities and that what is appropriate for one person might not be appropriate for another. For example, a gay man interested in leather sex might learn much from reading John Preston's Entertainment for a Master. But the types of sexual activity portrayed, even though all of it is safe, would be very offensive to many--if not most--gay men. A politically active lesbian might find great strength in reading Cris South's Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses. But a lesbian dealing with rape issues might find the extremely graphic and violent rape of the main character of the book too unsettling.³⁰

²⁹Steven L. berg, Dana Finnegan, and Emily McNally, The NALGAP Annotated Bibliography: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Lesbians/Gay Men (Fort Wayne: IN: National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals, 1987).

³⁰John Preston, Entertainment for a Master (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1986). Cris South, Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984).



Summary

By remembering that Alcoholics Anonymous is developed from a specific historic and cultural experience, the lesbian or gay man being introduced to its twelve step recovery program has a much better chance of learning to adopt the program to his/her needs than is someone who does not take an hermeneutical approach to the text. A sponsor or therapist who understands the uniqueness of lesbian/gay experiences can better help them learn that they are not too unique to get sober through AA than a therapist who has no such understanding. Spirituality is not foreign to the lesbian/gay experience.

CHAPTER 7

EPILOGUE

Alcoholics Anonymous is a paradox. On one hand, AA demands unity which is described as "the most cherished quality our Society has."¹ The organization's twelfth tradition--that "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities"--is a constant reminder that individuals can only succeed if they keep the good of the group first and foremost in their minds. Yet, because unity is not equated with uniformity, the organization can rightly claim that

We believe there isn't a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk, and act as he wishes.²

AA has been able to grow and to flourish because it has successfully integrated the competing needs of nineteenth-century perfectionism with the sense of individualism which Americans cherish. It has been able to balance these often conflicting needs because early members adopted a structure which forced them to live the primitive Christianity which

¹Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1952) 129.

²Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 129.



the Oxford Group advocated. As a result, they concentrated on spiritual growth rather than religious development.

Too often, authors writing on AA spirituality have been content to repeat the AA cliché that AA is a spiritual program and not a religious one. Others have focused on attempts to prove or disprove that AA is a religion. However, the best explanation of the spiritual vs. religious distinction comes not from AA approved literature or literature about AA. The explanation is found in the daily meditation guide which has been approved by Al-Anon, where the reading for September 14 explains, in part, that

We hear it over and over again, in both AA and Al-Anon: this program is spiritual and not religious. Each of us must find our own way into Heaven and the Al-Anon teachings reinforce our faith in the way we choose to worship...the tenets of any faith can be applied with the Al-Anon program.³

So too, it is with AA, the program on which Al-Anon is based. Alcoholics Anonymous does not provide a generic spirituality for people to follow. Rather, it provides spiritual tenets which can be and must be adopted into the individual's personal belief system. AA does not deny the Christian roots of its recovery program, and it is a mistake for people to pretend that those roots do not exist. But it

³One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (New York: Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, 1984) 258.

is equally in error to claim that Christianity is the preferred form of spiritual expression.

Controversy followed Bill Wilson's proposal that the second step of recovery should read "[We] came to believe that God could restore us to sanity." While some argued that the steps should be made more explicitly Christian, others claimed that "God" should not be mentioned at all. The first AA-alcoholics moved to a consensus, and "God" in the second step was changed to "a power greater than ourselves" and the qualifier "as we understood him" was added to steps three and eleven. It was a result of such compromises that AA permitted individualism to flourish without destroying its development in the spirit of perfectionism. "The final version of the Steps reflects the force and value of these heated early discussions, and attempts to strike a balance, making AA open to all, regardless of personal beliefs, or no beliefs at all."⁴

Perfectionist societies of the nineteenth-century would not have permitted such latitude in spiritual beliefs. Christianity was the foundation for action not only because it was the religious tradition from which these movements sprang. To the participants of those societies, Christianity was clearly the only proper form of spiritual

⁴Jan P. "Gateway to Sanity," Box 1980 45.9 (1989) 5. This article provides a good, brief discussion of these early debates and their significance to the development of the spiritual nature of AA.

expression. AA remains in the tradition of perfectionist movements because its ecumenism was broad enough to include not only members of various Christian denominations, but also individuals whose spirituality came from non-Christian traditions as well as individuals who identified with no religious tradition. AA meetings and literature came from a Christian religious tradition but they are presented in a way which permits individuals to adapt them to their own unique belief systems, whether or not those systems are recognizably formal religions or not.

Too often, contemporary recovery literature promotes AA as if it were some type of generic spirituality that can be all things to all people. Such is the case with Stairway to Serenity: The Eleventh Step.⁵ The problem with Stairway to Serenity and similar materials is that they attempt to be relevant to everyone's spiritual/religious tradition. And in doing so, they deny AA its spiritual heritage of Christian perfectionism. AA does not need such advocates.

When the first AA-alcoholics compromised on the religious language, they provided "an infinitely wide acceptable pathway"⁶ by which alcoholics could enter the program of recovery which they had developed. Acceptance of others was considered to be so important to the continued

⁵Stairway to Serenity: The Eleventh Step (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1988).

⁶Jan P. 5.

survival of AA that the original members gave up their right to decide who would be permitted to join their organization. Instead, they gave those who were not already members the right to declare themselves as members of the program. Or, in the words of the program:

You are an AA member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out....We don't want to keep you out....We just want to be sure that you get the same great chance for sobriety that we've had. So you're an AA member the minute you declare yourself.⁷

The problem for many alcoholics investigating AA is that they reject the program before they discover that all they need to have for membership is a desire to stop drinking.⁸

Lesbians or gay men who have been the victims of church-sanctioned persecution will not likely be able to easily overcome their distrust of a program they initially define as Christian. It takes time for the new person to discover the acceptance which AA promises in the third tradition. Often, lesbians and gay alcoholics who have only recently stopped drinking do not have the mental capacity to appreciate the fine distinction between AA's understanding of spirituality and religion.

⁷Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York: AA World Services, 1952) 139.

⁸The third tradition reads, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."



The fact that there can be recognizably religious elements in AA even though AA is not a religion and does not promote a specific religious program is the type of concept that newly sober persons find hard to grasp. To paraphrase an old cliché, they find that if it looks like a religion and sounds like a religion it must be a religion. And to deny that AA often looks like a religion and sounds like a religion is dishonest.

Too often, the new person leaves the program before hearing the promise of acceptance. But if newly sober lesbians and gay men are given literature that does not emphasize the spiritual nature of AA, that focuses on AA's third tradition, and that demonstrates that lesbians and gay men have contributed to the development of AA, have recovered through AA, and are welcomed into AA, they might stay around the program long enough to open themselves up to benefit from the spiritual rebirth available to those people who work the twelve steps in their lives.

It is not the responsibility of the newly sober person to know AA history and tradition; it is the duty of therapists to make sure that their lesbian and gay clients are adequately educated. It is even more important for sponsors and other AA members to carry the message of acceptance to new members because the twelfth step teaches that if AA members do not carry the message, they, themselves, cannot remain sober.

PLEASE NOTE:

Page(s) missing in number only; text follows.
Filmed as received.

U·M·I

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

The twelve steps are taken from Alcoholics Anonymous and are reprinted with permission.

APPENDIX B

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders a but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The twelve traditions are taken from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and are reprinted with permission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AA for the Woman. 1968; New York: AA World Services, 1986.
- Aaron, P. and D. Musto. "Temperance and Prohibition in America: A Historical Overview." Alcohol and Public Policy: Beyond the Shadow of Prohibition. eds. M. Moore and D. Gerstein. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1981.
- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. A Religious History of the American People. 1972; Garden City: Image Books, 1975.
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.
- Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered From Alcoholism. 1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976.
- "Alcoholism." Mandate: The International Magazine of Entertainment and Eros 6.69 (1981): 30-32+.
- Aldrich, Alice. "Sobering Thoughts." Out From Under. Ed. Jean Swallow. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983. 152-160.
- Ames, Genevieve M. "American Beliefs About Alcoholism: Historical Perspectives on the Medical-Moral Controversy." The American Experience with Alcohol. eds. Linda A. Bennett and Genevieve M. Ames. New York: Plenum, 1985. 23-39.
- Armstrong, Renate G. and David B. Hoyt. "Personality Structure of Male Alcoholics as Reflected in the IES Test." Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 24 (1963): 239-248.
- Arthur, T.S. Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There. ed. C. Hugh Holman. 1854; New York: Odyssey Press, 1966.
- "An Atheist's Journey." Came to Believe. New York: AA World Services, 1973. 79-80.

- B.L. "'You Mean, Just Let Anybody In?'" Box 1980
(September, 1976): 26-29.
- Bailey, Kathie. "I Hate Christmas." Lesbian Connection 4.7
(1979): 11.
- Bales, Robert Freed. "Social therapy for a Social Disorder:
Compulsive Drinking." Journal of Drug Issues 1.3
(1945): 14-22.
- Banner, Lois W. "Religious Benevolence as Social Control."
Religion in American History. eds. John M. Mulder and
John F. Wilson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall,
1978. 218-235.
- Barnes, Michael H. In the Presence of Mystery: An
Introduction to the Story of Human Relationships.
Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984.
- Barry L. "Historical Perspective: Homosexual Men and Women
in AA." June 1985.
- Bauman, Bob. The Gentleman from Maryland: The Conscience
of a Gay Conservative. New York: Arbor House, 1986.
- Bean, Margaret. "AA and Religion." Psychiatric Annals 5.3
(1975): 52.
- Beaton, Stephen and Naome Guild. "Treatment for Gay Problem
Drinkers." Social Casework 57.(1976): 302-308.
- Bell, A. P. and M. S. Weinberg. Homosexualities: A Study
of Diversity Among Men and Women. New York: Simon and
Schuster, 1978.
- Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America." American
Civil Religion. eds. Russell E. Richey and Donald G.
Jones. New York: Harper and Row, 1974. 21-44.
- Bellah, Robert N., et al. Habits of the Heart:
Individualism and Commitment in American Life.
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- Benezet, Anthony. The Mighty Destroyer Displayed. Trenton,
1774.
- Bennett, G., C. Vourakis and D. S. Woolf. Substance Abuse:
Pharmacologic, Developmental, and Clinical
Perspectives. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1983.

- The American Experience with Alcohol: Contrasting Cultural Perspectives. eds. Linda A. Bennett and Genevieve M. Ames. New York: Plenum, 1985.
- Berg, Steven L. "Drunks Make Poor Revolutionaries." NALGAP News 7.1 (1986): 9-10.
- Berg, Steven L. "Drunks Make Poor Revolutionaries." The Agenda 1.6 (1986): 10.
- Berg, Steven L. "Responding to Alcoholism." Dignity, Inc. Newsletter 18.8 (1986): 6.
- Berg, Steven L. "Rev. of "Alcoholism and Homosexuality"." NALGAP News 7.3 (1986): 2-3.
- Berg, Steven L. "Rev. of Dual Identities." Caucus Comments: Association for Gay and Lesbian Issues in Counseling 13.2 (1987): 2.
- Berg, Steven L., Dana Finnegan and Emily McNally. The NALGAP Annotated Bibliography: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Lesbians/Gay Men. Fort Wayne, IN: National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals, 1987.
- Biddle, William E. "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Gay Alcoholic." Gay and Sober. Thomas O. Ziebold and John E. Mongeon. 1982; New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985. 81-88.
- Blair, Ralph. An Evangelical Look at Homosexuality. New York: Privately Printed, 1972.
- Blume, Sheila B. The Disease Concept of Alcoholism Today. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, nd.
- Blume, Sheila B. "The Disease Concept of Alcoholism, 1983." Journal of Psychiatric Treatment Evaluation 5 (1983): 471-478.
- Bobdo, John R. The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954.
- Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective, Ed. Lesbian Psychologies: Explorations and Challenges. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Brokenshire, Norman. This is Norman Brokenshire: An Unvarnished Self Portrait. New York: David McKay Company, 1954.

- Buckman, Frank N. D. Remaking the World: The Speeches of Frank N.D. Buckman. 1947; London: Blandford Press, 1958.
- Cain, Arthur H. "Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?" Harper's Magazine 226.1353 (1963): 48-52.
- Cain, Arthur H. "Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?" The Cured Alcoholic. New York: John Day Company, 1964. 61-74.
- Cain, Arthur H. The Cured Alcoholic. New York: John Day, 1964.
- Came to Believe: The Spiritual Adventure of AA as Experienced by Individual Members. New York: AA World Services, 1973.
- Campbell, Anne pseud]. "God's Love is Priceless." Lesbian Nuns. Eds. Rosemary Curb and Nancy Manahan. 1985; New York: Warner Books, 1986. 213-219.
- Catherine. "An Address to Alcoholic Lesbians by a Drunken Dyke." Lesbian Connection 1.5 (1975): 18-20.
- Christian, Meg. "Turning It Over". Out From Under. ed. Jean Swallow. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983. 50-51.
- Christopher, Jim. "Firewalking, Sobriety, and Magical Thinking." SOS: National Newsletter for Secular Organizations for Sobriety 1.1 (1988): 1.
- Clark, Walter Houston. The Oxford Group: It's History and Significance. New York: Bookman Associates, 1951.
- Cohen, Felix. "Personality Changes Among Members of Alcoholics Anonymous." Mental Hygiene 46.3 (1962): 427-437.
- Cole, Charles C. Jr. The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1820-1860. New York: Columbia University Press, 1954.
- Coleman, Donald, et al. "Ethics and Morality Workgroup Final Report." Compiler. Michigan House of Representatives' Civil Rights Committee's Family and Sexuality Task Force. Detroit, MI: Michigan Organization for Human Rights, 1982. np.

- Coleman, Eli, ed. Integrated Identity for Gay Men and Lesbians: Psychotherapeutic Approaches for Emotional Well-Being. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1988.
- Conn, Joan Wolski, ed. Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development. New York: Paulish Press, 1986.
- Conn, Joan Wolski. "Women's Spirituality: Reconstruction and Reconstruction." Women's Spirituality. ed. Joan Wolski Conn. New York: Paulist Press, 1986. 9+.
- "Conspiracy of Silence." Integrity Gay Episcopal Forum 1.6 (1975): 8-9.
- Cott, Nancy F. The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Covey, Ron. "IV Drug Abuse and AIDS: What Counselors Need to Know." Professional Counselor 1.3 (1986): 37-39+.
- Curb, Rosemary and Nancy Manahan. Lesbian Nuns: Breaking the Silence. 1985; New York: Warner Books, 1986.
- Daly, Mary. The Church and the Second Sex. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
- Davis, David Brian. Ante-Bellum Reform. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- Delaney, Martin and Peter Goldblum. Strategies for Survival: A Gay Men's Health Manual for the Age of AIDS. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.
- Diamond, Deborah L. and Sharon W. Wilsnack. "Alcohol Abuse Among Lesbians: A Descriptive Study." Journal of Homosexuality 4.2 (1978): 123-142.
- Dignity and Recovery: A Gay Catholic's Story. East Lansing: Dignity Region 5 Substance Abuse Task Force, 1985.
- Do You Think You're Different? New York: AA World Services, 1976.
- Dombrowski, Mark. "Between the Icecubes and Bedsheets: Alcohol Use and Abuse in Gay Literature." NALGAP News 9.1 (1978): 1+.
- Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

- Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: A Biography, With Recollections of Early AA in the Midwest. New York: AA World Services, 1980.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Self Reliance." The American Tradition in Literature. eds. Sculley Bradley, et al. 1956; New York: Random House, 1981. 1329-1349.
- Entwistle, Basil and John McCook Roots. Moral Re-Armament--What Is It? Los Angeles: Pace, 1967.
- Epstein, Barbara Lee. Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.
- Ernie K. Ninety Meetings, Ninety Days. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1984.
- "Faith In People." Came to Believe. New York: AA World Services, 1973. 83-85.
- Fenichel, O. The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis. New York: W.W. Norton, 1945.
- Fifiield, Lilene. On My Way Nowhere: Alienated, Isolated, and Drunk--An Analysis of Gay Alcohol Abuse and an Evaluation of Alcoholism Rehabilitation Services for the Los Angeles Gay Community. Los Angeles: Gay Community Services Center, 1975.
- Finnegan, Dana and Emily McNally. Dual Identities: Counseling Chemically Dependent Gay Men and Lesbians. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1987.
- Flynn, Eileen P. AIDS: A Catholic Call for Compassion. Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1985.
- Forrest, Gary G. Alcoholism, Narcissism, and Psychopathology. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications, 1982.
- Forrest, Gary G. Alcoholism and Human Sexuality. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1983.
- Forrest, Gary G. Intensive Psychotherapy of Alcoholism. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1984.
- Franklin, Benjamin. The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin and Other Writings. ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New York: Yale University Press, 1964.

- Freud, Sigmund. Die Zeit. Vienna, 1903.
- Garrison, Anne C. "Homily for Integrity/Chicago on the Feast of the Holy Innocents." Integrity Forum 8.2 (1982): 21.
- The Gay Blade. Chino, CA: Chick Publications, nd.
- Gengle, Dean. "Ban on Theologian Lifted--Almost." Advocate 180 (1975): 8.
- Goodstein, David B. "Transforming Relationships." Advocate 256 (1976): 5-7.
- Gordon, Keith. "An Issue Finds Its Voice." Advocate 201 (1976): 7-8.
- A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Akron: AA of Akron, nd.
- Gusfield, Joseph R. Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963.
- Gusfield, Joseph R. "Temperance, Status¹Control, and Mobility, 1826-1860." Ante-Bellum Reform. ed. David Brian Davis. New York: Harper and Row, 1967. 120-139.
- H.D. "Letter." Box 1987.44 (1980): 2.
- Hall, Richard. "Gay Fiction Comes Home." New York Times Book Review (19 June 1988): 1,25-16.
- Hamilton, Wallace. Kevin. New York: New American Library, 1980.
- Hansen, Marty. "Love a Gay." The Other Side (June 1978): 48-52.
- Harris, Irving. The Breeze of the Spirit: Sam Shoemaker and the Story of Faith-At-Work. New York: Seabury, 1978.
- Heather, Nick and Ian Robertson. Controlled Drinking. London: Methuen, 1981.
- Herberg, Will. "American Civil Religion: What It Is and Whence It Comes." American Civil Religion. eds. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones. New York: Harper and Row, 1974. 76-88.

- Hoagland, Sarah Lucia. Lesbian Ethics: Toward New Value. Palo Alto, CA: Institute of Lesbian Studies, 1988.
- Holland, Flint. Secret in a Bottle: The Cause and Cure of Alcoholism. New York: Pageant, 1952.
- Holloway, Emory, ed. Leaves of Grass: The Collected Poems of Walt Whitman. New York: Book League of America, 1942.
- Hopkins, C. Howard. The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915. 1940; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Horner, Tom. Homosexuality and the Judeo-Christian Tradition: An Annotated Bibliography. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981.
- Horner, Tom. Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.
- Howard, Frank. Frank Buckman's Secret. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961.
- Hunter College Women's Studies Collective. Women's Realities, Women's Choices: An Introduction to Women's Studies. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hurst, Ed. Overcoming Homosexuality. Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1987.
- "Inclusive, Never Exclusive?" Box 1980 38.12 (1980): 41.
- "Inner Voice." Came to Believe. New York: AA World Services, 1973. 83.
- Irving, Washington. The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. 1819; New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1954.
- Isherwood, Christopher. My Guru and His Disciple. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980.
- Isherwood, Christopher. Ramakrishna and His Disciples. 1959; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.
- Isherwood, Christopher, ed. Vedanta for Modern Man. 1945; New York: New American Library, 1951.
- Israelstam, Stephen and Sylvia Lambert. "Homosexuality as a Cause of Alcoholism: A Historical Review." The International Journal of Addictions 18 (1983): 1085-1187.

- It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell. New York: AA World Services, 1979.
- Jamison, A. Leland. "Religions on the Christian Perimeter." The Shaping of American Religion. eds. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. 162-231.
- Jan P. "Gateway to Sanity." Box 1980 45.9 (1989): 2-5.
- Jarlsson, Rolf Tor. "Sodomites and Gay People." Advocate 224 (1977): 37.
- Jaye, Allen. "Cock Art: Where East Meets West." Blueboy (November 1981): 82-87.
- Jellinek, E. M. The Disease Concept of Alcoholism. Highland Park, NJ: Hillhouse Press, 1960.
- Johnson, Paul R. Quotations from Chairman Falwell. Los Angeles: Marco and Johnson, 1982.
- Jones, Ernest. "Recent Advances in Psycho-Analysis." International Journal of Psychoanalysis 1 (1920): 169.
- Kantrowitz, Arnie. "I Kink Therefore I Am." Advocate 205 (1976): 27.
- Kantrowitz, Arnie. "Where's the Action?" Advocate 180 (1975): 42.
- Kathe and Liz. "Loving Friends." Lesbian Connection 4.3 (1978): 2.
- Katz, Jonathan Ned. Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- Katz, Jonathan Ned. Gay/Lesbian Almanac: A New Documentary. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.
- Kavanaugh, John. "Jewish and Christian Morality: The Cement of Prejudice." Detroit Gay Liberator (November 1970): 7.
- Kepner, James. "World Religions and the Homophile." Homophile Studies 2.4 (1959): 124+.
- King, G. P. T. Paget. "The Church and the Homosexual." ONE 14.11 (1966): 8-10.

- King, Ursula. Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise. Houndmills, England: MacMillan Education Ltd, 1989.
- Kinsey, Alfred C., et al. Sexual Behavior in the Human Female. 1953; Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1966.
- Kinsey, Alfred, Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin. Sexual Behavior in the Human Male. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948.
- Kitchen, V. C. I Was A Pagan. New York: Harper and Row, 1934.
- Kristi. "Lesbians and Alcoholism." Lesbian Connection 1.3 (1975): 5-6.
- Kurtz, Ernest. AA: The Story. Cambridge: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Kurtz, Ernest. Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979.
- Kus, Robert J. "The Alcoholics Anonymous Sponsor and Gay American Men." 32nd International Institute on the Prevention and Treatment of Alcoholism. 1986.
- Kus, Robert J. "Alcoholics Anonymous and American Gay Men." Integrated Identity for Gay Men and Lesbians: Psychotherapeutic Approaches for Emotional Well-Being. ed. Eli Coleman. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1988. 253-276.
- Kus, Robert J. "Gay Alcoholism and Non-Acceptance of Gay Self: The Critical Link." Nursing Research--Hawaii '85. 1985.
- Kus, Robert J. "Gay Consultations in Non-Gay Treatment Settings." Professional Counselor (July/August 1987): 46-55.
- Kus, Robert J. "Gays and Their Higher Power: An Ethnography of Gay Sobriety." National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Conference. September, 1985.
- Kus, Robert J. "The Higher Power and Gay American Men: A Study in Sobriety." Special Program in Honor of Dr. Gordon Browder. 25-26 April 1986.
- L., B. "'You Mean, Just Let Anybody In?'" Box 1980 (September 1976): 26-29.

- L., K. "Here I Am." Box 1980 (January 1980): 13-14.
- Langone, John and Delores de Nobrega Langone. Women Who Drink. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1980.
- Larve, Gerald A. "Christian Debate." Advocate 170 (1975): 18.
- Lauritsen, Hank and Hank Wilson. Death Rush: Poppers and AIDS. New York: Pagan Press, 1986.
- Lean, Garth. Frank Buckman: A Life. London: Constable, 1985.
- Lender, Mark Edward. "Jellinek's Typology of Alcoholism: Some Historical Antecedents." Journal of Studies on Alcohol 40.5 (1979): 361-375.
- Lender, Mark Edward and James Kirby Martin. Drinking in America: A History. New York: Free Press, 1982.
- Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Patriarchy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Lewis, Collins E., Marcel T. Saghir and Eli Robins. "Drinking Patterns in Homosexual and Heterosexual Women." Journal of Clinical Psychiatry 43.(1982): 277-279.
- Liberacki, Alex [Steven L. Berg]. "Homosexuality in an Unwelcoming Environment." More Light Update (March 1985): 6-7.
- Living Sober: Some Methods AA Members Have Used for Not Drinking. New York: AA World Services, 1975.
- M., F. "A Dykes Drunkalogue." Bay Windows (25-30 May 1985): 12.
- Madsen, William. "Alcoholics Anonymous as a Crisis Cult." Alcohol Health and Research World (Spring, 1974): 27-30.
- Madsen, William. "AA: Birds of a Feather." The American Alcoholic. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1974. 154-197.
- Mann, Marty. Marty Mann Answers Your Questions About Drinking and Alcoholism. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970.

- A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous. Akron: AA of Akron, nd.
- Margy. "Choose Four: Lesbian/Feminist, Woman, Dyke, Chick, Homosexual, Lesbian, Amazon, Girl." Lesbian Connection 1.2 (1975): 11-15.
- Maxwell, Milton A. "Interpersonal Factors in the Genesis and Treatment of Alcoholism." Social Forces 29.4 (1951): 443-448.
- Maxwell, Milton. "The Washingtonian Movement." Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 11.(1950): 410-451.
- McNeill, John J. The Church and the Homosexual. 1976; New York: Pocket Books, 1977.
- Medeiros, Humberto Cardinal. Pastoral Care for the Homosexual. Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1979.
- Menninger, Karl A. Man Against Himself. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1938.
- Moirai, Catherine Risingflame. "Four Poems in Search of a Sober Reader". Out From Under. Ed. Jean Swallow. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983.¹
- Alcohol and Public Policy: Beyond the Shadow of Prohibition. eds. M. Moore and D. Gerstein. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1981.
- Morales, Edward S. "Third World Gays and Lesbians: A Process of Multiple Identities." American Psychological Association. 27 August 1983.
- Morris, Paul D. Shadow of Sodom: Facing the Facts of Homosexuality. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1978.
- Mowrer, O. Herbert. "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Third Reformation." Religious Life 34 (1964): 383-397.
- Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays. eds. John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978.
- N., J. "'I Want to Belong'." Box 1980 (October 1977): 9-11.
- Nardi, Peter M. "Alcohol Treatment and the Non-Traditional 'Family' Structures of Gays and Lesbians." Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education 27.2 (1982): 83-89.

- Nicoloff, Lee K. and Eloise A. Stiglitz. "Lesbian Alcoholism: Etiology, Treatment, and Recovery." Lesbian Psychologies. Ed. Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987. 283-293.
- Novak, Michael. The Joy of Sports: End Zones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit. New York: Basic Books, 1976.
- Nye, Russell Blain. Society and Culture in America. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
- One Day at a Time in Al-Anon. New York: Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, 1984.
- Pass It On: The Story of Bill Wilson and How the AA Message Reached the World. New York: AA World Services, 1984.
- Paul H. Things My Sponsor Taught Me. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1987.
- Pedersen, Lyn. "Editorial." ONE 14.11 (1966): 4-5.
- Perry, Troy. The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay. Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1972.
- Pfau, Ralph and Al Hirshberg. Prodigal Shepherd. Indianapolis: SMT Guide, 1958.
- Pittman, Bill. AA: The Way It Began. Seattle: Glen Abbey, 1988.
- Pivar, David J. Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973.
- Plaskow, Judith. "Blaming Jews for the Birth of Patriarchy." Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology. ed. Evelyn Torton Beck. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1982. 250-254.
- Prabhavanada, Swami and Christopher Isherwood, trans. Bhagavada-Gita: The Story of God. 1944; Hollywood, CA: Vendanta Press, 1972.
- Prabhavananada, Swami and Christopher Isherwood, trans. How to Know God: The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali. 1953; Hollywood, CA: Vendanta Press, 1981.
- "A Practical Philosophy." Came to Believe. New York: AA World Services, 1973. 114-116.



- Preston, John. Entertainment for a Master. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1986.
- Questions and Answers on Sponsorship. 1976; New York: AA World Services, 1983.
- R.S. "Letter." Box 1980 44.2 (1987): 33.
- "A Rainy Night." Came to Believe. New York: AA World Services, 1973. 70-72.
- Randall, Thomas. The Twelfth Step. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957.
- "Real Sin of Sodom was Inhospitability, Says Priest." Advocate 121 (1973): 19+.
- RFD [Reality Finally Dawns]. 28 (1981).
- "Rev. of The NALGAP Annotated Bibliography." The Feminist Bookstore News 10.4 (1987): 73.
- Richey, Russell E. and Donald G. Jones, eds. American Civil Religion. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
- Rist, Darrell Yates. "Bauman: The Man Behind the Sex Scandal." Advocate (4 March 1987): 37-39+.
- Robb, Arthur. "Gas Gays." The Torch: The Revolutionary Magazine of WHITE America 9.3 (1977): 4.
- Robertson, Nan. Getting Better: Inside Alcoholics Anonymous. New York: William Morrow, 1988.
- Roberts, William. "Anti-Gay Homosexuals in the Church." Gay Dreams. New York: Privately Printed, 1982. np.
- Rogers, William. "Sincere, discreet..." In Touch 33 (1978): 30-31, 75.
- Roth, Lillian. I'll Cry Tomorrow. New York: Frederick Fell, Inc., 1954.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. The Social Contract and Discourses. 1762; London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1973.
- Rudy, David R. Becoming Alcoholic: Alcoholics Anonymous and the Reality of Alcoholism. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.
- Rush, Benjamin. An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Mind and Body: To Which is Added,

- a Moral and Physical Thermometer. Boston: Thomas Andrews, 1790.
- Saghir, Marcel T., et al. "Homosexuality, IV: Psychiatric Disorders and Disability in the Female Homosexual." American Journal of Psychiatry 127 (1970): 147-154.
- Scanzoni, Letha and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?: Another Christian View. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978.
- Schreiber, Ed. "Cutting Through Denial: Or Alcohol, Marx, and Buddha." RFD 13.4 (1987): 56-57.
- Schroeder, Ivan. "The Relationship Between Coming Out of the Closet and Recovery from Alcoholism." MA Thesis. California Family Study Center, 1988.
- Scoppettone, Sandra. The Late Great Me. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1976.
- Scott, Edward M. "Psychosexuality of the Alcoholic." Psychological Reports 4.4 (1958): 599-602.
- Second Reader for Alcoholics. Akron: AA¹ or Akron, nd.
- Shilts, Randy. "Alcoholism: A Look in Depth at How a National Menace is Affecting the Gay Community." Advocate (25 February 1974): 16-19+.
- Shively, Charley. Calamus Lovers: Walt Whitman's Working Class Comrades. San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1987.
- [Shively, Charley.] "Cocksucking as an Act of Revolution." Fag Rag 3 (1972): 8-9+.
- Shively, Charley. "Indiscriminate Promiscuity as an Act of Revolution." Gay Sunshine 22 (1974): 3-5.
- Smith, James Ward and A. Leland Jamison, eds. The Shaping of American Religion. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Smith, Thomas M. AIDS and Alcoholism: Denial Strikes Again. San Francisco: San Francisco Department of Public Health, 1985.
- Smith, Timothy L. Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War. New York: Harper and Row, 1957.



- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "Davy Crockett as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality, and Symbolic Inversion in Victorian America." Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victoria America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. 90-108.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. 53-76.
- South, Cris. Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984.
- Spiritual Milestones in Alcoholics Anonymous. Akron: AA or Akron, nd.
- Sproxton, Judith. "Alcoholics Anonymous." The Tablet (2 August 1980): 746-747.
- Stairway to Serenity: The Eleventh Step. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1988.
- Statement of Position and Purpose. Washington, DC: Dignity, Inc., 1981.
- Steve B. "Rev. The Gentleman from Maryland." Newsletters Anonymous 4 ([1987]): 7.
- Stewart C. A Reference Guide to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Seattle, WA: Recovery Press, 1986.
- Stone, David. "Satan's Dummy." Advocate 175 (1975): 50.
- Stonekey, Sharon. "Reminders." Out From Under. ed. Jean Swallow. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983. 46-49.
- Swallow, Jean. "Keynote Speech." Lesbian Health and Addiction Conference. 4 April 1986.
- Swallow, Jean. Out From Under. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1985.
- Swallow, Jean. "What is Calistoga?" Out From Under. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983. 52-64.
- Swartz, Linda. Alcoholism in the Lesbian/Gay Community: Coming to Terms with an Epidemic. Phoenix: Do It Now Foundation, 1980.

- Taintor, Eliot [pseud]. September Remember. New York: Prentice Hall, 1945.
- Ted W. "Alcoholism: A Gay Drunk's Sobering Story." Advocate (6 March 1981): 18-19.
- Thomsen, Robert. Bill W. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
- Thoreau, Henry David. Walden. Boston: Tucker and Fields, 1854.
- Tiebout, Harry M. Conversion as a Psychological Phenomenon. New York: National Council on Alcoholism, nd.
- Too Young? New York: 1977; AA World Services, 1987.
- "Toward a New Vocabulary." Lesbian Connection 4.7 (1979): 3.
- Troia, Terry. "What Does It Mean to be 'Inclusive'?" Dignity/Baltimore News 9.3 (1982): 5.
- Tsui, Kitty. "In Training". Out From Under. ed. Jean Swallow. San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983. 34-43.
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. New York: AA World Services, 1953.
- Van de Moortel, Ray. "Gay and Catholic." Bridges 9.6 (1981): 3.
- "The Vicious Cycle." Alcoholics Anonymous. 1939; New York: AA World Services, 1976. 238-250.
- Vorakis, C. "Homosexuals in Substance Abuse Treatment." Substance Abuse. eds. G. Bennett, C. Vorakis and D. S. Wolf. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1983.
- W. B. "The Support We All Need." Box 1980 (January 1980): 15-17.
- Walter, Dave. "A Case Study for Gay Communities." Advocate 504 (1988): 33.
- Warman, Donald. "Film: A Gay Odyssey." In Touch 33 (1978): 24-27, 68-70.
- Warner, W. Lloyd. "An American Sacred Ceremony." American Civil Religion. eds. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones. New York: Harper and Row, 1974. 89-111.



- Whitley, Oliver R. "Life With Alcoholics Anonymous: The Methodist Class Meeting as a Paradigm." Journal of Studies on Alcohol 38.5 (1977): 831-848.
- Whitman, Walt [under the pseudonym J.R.S.]. "Fortunes of a Country Boy; Incidents in Town." Brooklyn Eagle (November 16-30).
- Whitman, Walt. "Franklin Evans; or the Inebriate." New World (November, 1842).
- Whitman, Walt. "Franklin Evans; or the Inebriate." Walt Whitman: The Early Poems and the Fiction. ed. Thomas L. Brasher. New York: New York University Press, 1963. 124-239.
- Whitman Walker Clinic. The Way Back: The Stories of Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics. 1981; Washington, DC: Whitman Walker Clinic, 1982.
- Whitney, Scott. "The Ties That Bind: Strategies for Counseling the Gay Male Co-Alcoholic." Gay and Sober. eds. Thomas O. Ziebold and John E. Mongeon. 1982; New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985.
- Whitney, Scott. "The Ties That Bind: Strategies for Counseling the Gay Male Co-Alcoholic." Gay Relationships. ed. John De Cecco. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1988. 273-279.
- Willenbacker, Thom. "Drugs." In Touch 33 (1978): 32-33, 82, 84-85.
- Winner, John. "Treatment or Indoctrination?" SOS: National Newsletter for Secular Organizations for Sobriety 1.1 (1988): 2.
- "A Witches Curse." Lesbian Connection 3.4 (1977): 11.
- Woods, Richard. Another Kind of Love: Homosexuality and Spirituality. Chicago: Thomas More, 1977.
- Woolverton, John F. "Evangelical Protestantism and Alcoholism, 1933-1962: Episcopalian Samuel Shoemaker, the Oxford Group, and Alcoholics Anonymous." Historical Magazine 52.(1983): 53-65.
- Young People and AA. 1969; New York: AA World Services, 1979.

A Faith of One's Own: Explorations by Catholic Lesbians.

ed. Barbara Zanotti. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1986.

Ziebold, Thomas O. "Alcoholism and Recovery: Gays Helping Gays." Christopher Street 3.6 (1979): 36-44.

Ziebold, Thomas O. and John E. Mongeon, eds. Gay and Sober: Directions for Counseling and Therapy. New York: 1982; Harrington Park Press, 1985.

Ziebold, Thomas O. and John E. Mongeon. Journal of Homosexuality [Special Issue on Alcoholism]. 7.4 (1982).



MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293007728557