

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session04c.doc

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The Dr.'s Opinion

(Tape 2 - 00:00:37.0)

Charlie said you can get to trouble going to town. That's the trouble with trouble; it always starts off as fun, isn't it? How many of you went off to get drunk and to get into trouble. I would go out and get drunk and have a little fun. And that's the trouble with trouble it always starts out as fun, at least that's the way it did with me.

You know I just love to watch normal, social, temperate, moderate drinkers. Fascinating to watch them, saw one on the airplane yesterday. Yeah, yeah, he ordered a drink, got him a mixer with it and he put his mixer in this glass with ice in it, poured his little bottle in there. They buy little-bitty bottles on airplanes. I think it costs them four dollars today and hell there's not a drink in that bottle period but anyhow that's what they get. And he poured it in there and then he took a little stick, and he went through a stirring ceremony. I don't know much about stirring when it comes to drinking but he stirred and he stirred and he stirred, and after a while he laid his little stick down and you know what he did then? He picked up his magazine and started reading his damn magazine. I'm sitting there watching him saying drink the damn stuff what the hell did you get it for. That's what we call alcohol abuse. Now that may be normal but I call that sick to drink like that. So I think I'll read this again,

Big Book p. xxiv, par.3 "The doctor's theory that we have an allergy to alcohol interests us. As laymen, our opinion as to its soundness may, of course, mean little. But as ex-problem drinkers, we can say that his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account."

J & C And the explanation for this explains many things for which I could not otherwise account. It explained to me why I would go down by the bar with every intention of having two and the next thing I know it's midnight or one or two or three o'clock in the morning or the next day or the next week and I'd wonder what in the hell happened. I just went down there to drink two. Well this idea about this allergy to alcohol interested me; it explained many things, which I couldn't otherwise account. Now let's go to Roman numeral page xxvi. A good textbook will never tell you anything for what it doesn't give you more information to back it up. He's talked here about the allergy, now let's go over to Roman numeral xxvi, first paragraph; let's expand on that just a little bit.

Big Book p. xxvi, par. 2 "We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy: "*

J & C I used to hate that word, they'd call me a chronic alcoholic and I hated it. I don't particularly like it today, but I found out too that chronic just means something that you do over and over and over, so therefore I was a chronic drinker or a chronic alcoholic.

Big Book p. xxvi, par. 2 "... is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.*

J & C You know this manifestation of allergy that Charlie talks about, the phenomenon of craving after we take the few drinks.

We don't have the craving before we take the few drinks.
It's only after we take the few drinks that the phenomenon of craving develops,
and then we have to have more and more and more, and
only alcoholics have that

Non-alcoholics do not crave alcohol after they take a drink, they just don't. They get all they want to drink every time they drink which is two or three maybe and that's all they want cause they don't have this phenomenon of cravings but alcoholics have.

* An allergy is an abnormal reaction to any food, beverage, or substance of any kind.

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The action of strawberries on one who is allergic to strawberries, is manifested by a rash.

The action of milk on one who is allergic to milk is manifested by dysentery.

The action of ragweed on one who is allergic to ragweed, is manifested by itchy, watery eyes, sneezing and etc.

The action of alcohol on one who is allergic to alcohol, is manifested by, and he refers to it as the phenomenon of craving.

He uses the word phenomenon cause he didn't understand it.

So what it is, is manifested by an actual physical craving in the body that demands more of the same after we have started.

And the word craving is very, very important.

The Allergy is manifested by a physical craving, which is triggered by the first drink
You can't see it, you can only feel it
and only alcoholics feel it

Now I hear people today say well I came to A.A. and I craved a drink for four years. No, in the context of the Big Book that's the wrong use of the word craving. They might have needed a drink or wanted a drink, desired a drink.

The only way an alcoholic can crave alcohol is to first put it the body, then the physical craving develops and then we can't stop and we end up drunk.

So in the "recovery section (Roman numeral section +1st 164 pages) of the book - when you see the word 'craving' it's always referring to the body, never to the mind, we'll use the word 'obsession' for the mind, the word craving is for the body.

Now he goes on a little further over on Roman numeral xxviii and he talks about five different kinds of drinkers. Then he drives this idea of the phenomenon of craving home being an allergy one more time. Let's look at these five drinkers. He says the classification of alcoholics, this is on Roman numeral page xviii,

Big Book p. xxviii, par. 3 "The classification of alcoholics seems most difficult, and in much details outside the scope of this book. There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable. We are all familiar with this type. They are always "going on the wagon for keeps." They are over-remorseful and make many resolutions, but never a decision."

J & C We call that Type 1.

Big Book p. xxviii, par. 4 "There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment."

J & C That's Type 2.

Big Book p. xxviii, line 15 'There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger.'

J & C Type 3.

Big Book p. xxviii, line 18 'There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.'

J & C Now that's Type 4. Now I've always thought I was the next one, type five.

Big Book p. xxviii, par. 5 "Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people."

J & C God I like that, wasn't that good. Any more type fives in the room tonight? Yeah, a whole bunch of them. Now, he makes his point one more time.

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Big Book p. xxviii, par. 6 "All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence."

J & C Now I think what he said is this, that if all we alcoholics in this room tonight should take a drink, God forbid that happen, but if we did, we would not all react just exactly the same. In just a little bit one of us would be crying in our beer, oh, boo hoo hoo, the world's not treating me right. In just a little bit, one of 'em be up here on this stage, whooping and hollering and dancing, and cutting up and having a hell of a good time. In just a little bit there'd be two over in that corner getting in a fight just sure as anything. Look over here and there'll be a couple, one putting the make on the other, we tend to do that too when we drink. We would do many different things, but if we're a real alcoholic there's one thing that every one of us would do, we would start looking for a second drink. The phenomenon of craving has taken over now, the allergy has manifested itself, and now we can't stop. Got to have a third drink and a fourth and a fifth, and a sixth, and an eighth and a tenth and on and on until we're drunk, sick and in all kinds of trouble.

**Now it really doesn't make any difference whether we're born with it,
or whether we drank ourselves into it.**

I was born with it I'm sure. The first drink I took at age fourteen the allergy presented itself that night and I got drunk. Every time I drank I got drunk. I drank twenty-six years I don't ever remember taking one drink of anything that had alcohol in it, it always led to two, to three to six to eight to ten, etc. Some of you, I'm sure, drank with safety for several years, but somewhere you crossed the line and the same thing began to happen to you after several years of drinking that happened to me from the very beginning, but what difference does it make. The fact is that that's the way we are tonight. I know that's the way we are tonight too because if we were not that way tonight, we wouldn't be in this room tonight. If you and I could drink without getting drunk, where would we be? We'd be out there drinking without getting drunk but you see we can't do that. That's what we've got in common in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, is

We can't drink without getting drunk

wanting more, wanting another

(Tape 2 -00:10:02.0)

10 minutes