

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session09.doc

Page 1 of 1

Bill's Story

(Tape 2 - 01:23.44.0)

J & C On about December the 10th probably, 1934, Bill was put back in the hospital for the third time, for withdrawal from alcohol by Doctor Silkworth. Ebby comes to visit with him,

1. they begin to apply the little Oxford Group program of action, and
2. Bill had his spiritual experience. (after Steps 3-12)

Let's look on page 13. Let's see if we can't see the last 10 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. He's taken 1 & 2, let's see if we can't see the last ten. He said,

Big Book p.13, par.2 At the hospital I was separated from alcohol for the last time. Treatment seemed wise, for I showed signs of delirium tremens.

There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then I understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost.

J & C **The first tenet that the Oxford Group had was Surrender.** Now Bill later on when he wrote the steps he realized that no alcoholic would like the word surrender so he changed their 1st Step into our 3rd where, "**We made decision to turn our will and life over to the Care of God as we Understand Him**". We see him there taking the first Oxford Group tenet, which turned out to be our Step 3. He's now taken 1, 2 and 3. He said,

Big Book p.13, par. 3 I ruthlessly faced my sins

J & C I ruthlessly faced my sins. **Their second tenet was exam your sins.** And Bill knew that no good alcoholic's going to do that, so he changed that into **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** He's taking Step 4 there

Big Book p.13, par. 3 and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. I have not had a drink since.

J & C "**... became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch**". You'll notice friend is capitalized. This is one of the words Bill uses for God. And that little statement "**... became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch**", later became **Step 6 and 7.** We became willing to have God remove these things and humbly asked Him to do so. There we're dealing with six and seven.

Big Book p.13, par. 4 My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies.

J & C He's taking what we know today as **Step Five**, there in the Towns Hospital with Ebby.

Big Book p.13, par. 4 We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters to the utmost of my ability.

J & C They had an Oxford Group **tenet** called **Restitution.** And Bill knew that no self-respecting alcoholic is going to do restitution, so he took that and made two Steps out of it, **Step 8 and 9**, where **we made a list and became willing, and then made amends.** There he's dealing with eight and nine.

Big Book p.13, par. 5 I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense

J & C That statement later became **Step 10** where **we continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly explained it, I mean admitted it.** That's the new Step 10.

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session09.doc

Page 2 of 2

Big Book p.13, par. 5 I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure.

J & C And there we see all the elements of Step 12, **where we sought through prayer and medica., meditation to improve our conscious contact with God** so on and so forth. **There he's dealing with Step 11**, I'm sorry, Step 11.

Big Book p.13, par. 6 My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems.

J & C It's got to be **the first part of Step Twelve... Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps.**

So we see Bill in the Towns Hospital applying the Oxford Group tenets which later he made into the last ten steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is why he was able to say in How It Works, these are the steps we took which are suggested as a program of recovery. Bill took them in the Towns Hospital with the help of Ebby. Now let's see what happened to him

Big Book p.13, par. 6 Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements. Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.

J & C Poor old alcoholics have to give up the 2 most important things in our lives and the first thing is our alcohol and the second thing is our self-centeredness. Very difficult to do, very difficult but very simple.

Big Book p.14, par. 3 These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never know. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound. For a moment I was alarmed, and called my friend, the doctor, to ask if I were still sane. He listened in wonder as I talked.

J & C You know Bill overheard Lois and Dr. Silkworth talking so he'd thought he gone crazy. He thought he'd check it out with Dr. Silkworth to see if he had gone crazy. Finally he shared with the Dr. his experience.

Big Book p.14, par. 5 "Finally he shook his head saying, "Something has happened to you I don't understand. But you had better hang on to it. Anything is better than the way you were." The good doctor now sees many men who have such experiences. He knows that they are real. "

J & C Now we don't know what happened to Bill that day, we were not there to see that. But we know this was probably about December the 14th of 1934. We do know that Bill didn't die until January of 1971. We do know that it was never necessary for him to take another drink from this day until the day that he died. **Something profound took place in his life that day.**

Bill always said, 'I had a vital spiritual experience as the result of these steps, during which old ideas were cast aside and replaced with a new set of ideas, and I was able to live the rest of my live without drinking.'

Now here's a guy that went in the hospital, **selfish and self-centered to the extreme, always doing what he wanted to do whenever he wanted to do it.** That was his attitude when he went in there. Let's look at his attitude now that he's had the spiritual experience

Big Book p.14, par. 6 While I lay in the hospital the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given me. Perhaps I could help some of them. They in turn might work with others.

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session09.doc

Page 3 of 3

J & C Bill had that **gigantic spiritual experience** and then he immediately began to think of how he can give it to other people. Something profound happened with Bill. He said.

Big Book p.14, par 7 My friend

J & C and this time you'll notice it's a small 'f', he's referring to Ebby now.

Big Book p.14, par 7 My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that

J & C Thank God Bill knew that and accepted that fact cause when he was in Akron about to get drunk he remember how back in New York City even though **he'd never helped anybody else that he himself had felt better**. That's why he got hold of Dr. Bob, to try to help Dr. Bob. **Not necessarily to sober up Bob, but to keep Bill from getting drunk**. And thank God it kept him from getting drunk, and Bob sobered up and from there we have the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Faith without works is dead.
(Chapter 6, Into Action, p. 76 & 88)

And you know just about

anybody I see drink today that's been in A.A. for any period of time,
usually they have quit working with other people.

And when they quit working with other people

1. **they start thinking about self only** and,
2. **after a while all the old problems come back**, and
3. **we end up getting drunk** all over again.

Always working with others will help us when nothing else will.

He said,

Big Book p.15, par. 2 My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems. It was fortunate, for my old business associates remained skeptical for a year and a half, during which I found little work. I was not too well at the time, and was plagued by waves of self-pity and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink, but I soon found that when all other measure failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day. Many times I have gone to my old hospital in despair. On talking to a man there, I would be amazingly lifted up and set on my feet. It is a design for living that works in rough going.

J & C We took a design for living that works in rough going and turned it into a non-drinking society I'm afraid. This is a design for living.

And the work is really, really hard, but the pay is really, really good too.

We've managed to stay sober, isn't that something? Now if we're a brand new alcoholic out here in California, no fellowship around us, the first contact we've ever had is this book called Alcoholics Anonymous, and we've

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session09.doc

Page 4 of 4

1. read the Dr.'s Opinion, we've been able to **see what our problem is.**
2. read Bill's story, we've been **able to identify with another alcoholic.**
3. seen him go from
 - a) fun **drinking** to
 - b) drinking **because of absolute necessity** going finally
 - c) to the sickest of all, **complete oblivion.**
4. seen him **recover from that condition**

and surely, surely we can say to ourselves

**we're enough like this guy that if he can recover
just maybe we could too.**

The beginning of belief, the beginning of hope.

(Tape 2 - 01:33.31.0)

10 minutes