

# Background Notes



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DISTRICT 0490  
Central New York  
Area 47

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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 recover 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.

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## FROM the Newsletter Chair:

Service and staying active in AA has always enhanced my sobriety. Those things helped me and continue to help me broaden my fellowship, form and retain sober friendships (and I have many), serve others, to meet and help newcomers in sobriety. At times I have said “never volunteer for anything in AA or you’ll never get rid of it”...of course I don’t believe that, it is an attempt at humor. I have found that service of any kind for AA helps me most. Over the years my service to the fellowship included personal, group, and district service. I like to have a coffee commitment and frequently do. I attend home-group meetings. I’ll take a service position in the group or several across several groups (I have one home-group). I attend district meetings and often do a commitment at the district level. As most of you know, I have taken over the Newsletter for the district from one of our fellows (Jim L.) who moved to Colorado and still faithfully published the newsletter for over a year after moving (OK there is some truth to the joke!). Jim started reaching out to have our fellows, you in particular, to contribute to the newsletter with their experience strength and hope. Anything really that is related to alcohol or living your sober life (much like sharing at a meeting). I need material. Please do this easy task and help me, the district, and untold members of AA by submitting your thoughts to [backgroundnotes@yahoo.com](mailto:backgroundnotes@yahoo.com). I thank you in advance! — Bob K.



**Spiritual Corner****SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

The terms “spiritual awakening” are used many times in this book (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) which, upon careful reading, shows that personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms.

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. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.

In the first few chapters a number of sudden revolutionary changes are described. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many alcoholics have nevertheless concluded that in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming “God-consciousness” followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the “educational variety” because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it “God Consciousness”.

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in light of our experience to recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*

*“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.”*

—Herbert Spenser

**Spiritual Journey**

I always believed in God! I was raised in a Catholic family. Went Church. Received the sacraments. Went to Catholic Grade School, High School, and a Jesuit College. My mother worked for the Bishop when she went back to work as the kids got older. I was the last of six kids. Three girls and then three boys. The kids were all about two years apart. I started drinking at about 12 years old. Even as a little kid I was too distracted to believe with my whole heart, but somewhere deep inside I believed. When I started drinking, my attitude changed. I started to look at my religious training and picking out the hypocrisy, focusing on the people instead of the principles that were being taught, and disregarding anything that was inconvenient for me. I would go through the motions and participate as little as possible. I never prayed on my own. My parents would insist we go to mass every Sunday, so when asked “what mass are you going to?”. We would reply “oh, I’m not sure, which are you going to?”. What ever mass they said we would reply with “oh, we are going to [fill in the time slot they weren’t going to]”. Then we would drive around and get high. On the Sundays I had to go, I suffered through. How can you believe in an all powerful being, do nothing to get close to it, and be OK? I was quickly spiritually bankrupt. My drinking and use progressed and I thought everything was alright. When my drinking finally reached the fore-ordained conclusion of hopelessness, I cried out to God to help me. I immediately felt an overwhelming peace and had a deep understanding to my core that I would be OK. A spiritual experience? Without a doubt! I believed it then and I do now. I didn’t stay sober then. I thought I would, I had not plugged into AA with complete abandon. I drank and the despair got worse. Finally when I had the character defects removed enough to get sober, I did plug into AA. Alcohol beat those egotistical character defects down enough to do that. The program of AA did the rest. My sponsor walked me through the steps. I started praying daily even before I really got into the steps. I think I had to, I was to far gone. I learned to pray effectively by listening in the rooms. I learned to not ask, demand, or expect certain outcomes from God. I learned to humbly pray. My prayer and meditation has grown and progressed. At first I prayed through the window of my car with the radio off on my daily commute. I commune with nature. I find peace and serenity in the rooms. I pray that I find peace and serenity by being of service to God, Myself, other sick and suffering alcoholics, my family, friends, and friends I have yet to meet. I sit quietly for a period of time after doing so and try to keep my mind clear and still. While doing the latter, thoughts float in, some solutions, some key points, some I am not to sure about at all; I let them go and try to still my mind again. I learned through trial and error, suggestion, some remnants of my religious upbringing to find these simple things that work for me. I always start early in prayer asking God “Please lord help me to see your Miracles today, so that I may be a better servant to you!”. I have seen miracles! When I am spiritually fit, I see them often. I have been blessed with both the sudden and spectacular spiritual awaking, but the most effective and long lasting has been the educational variety. I hoe you find

## Honest Humility

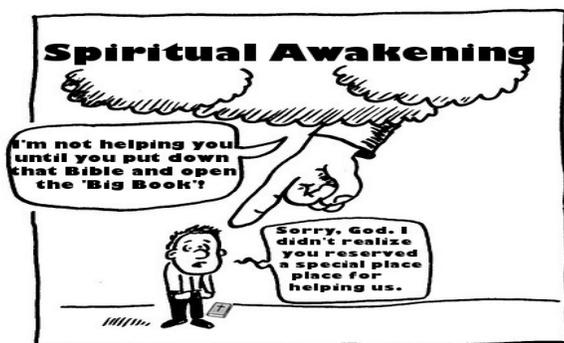
At the end of a workshop I was facilitating someone asked me how I learned so much about the traditions. I gave some egotistical answer and referred them to several books and pamphlets.

On the flight home I started thinking about it. Thinking about how I actually acquired what little knowledge I have. And if I'm going to be totally honest, I learned everything I know about the traditions from breaking them. In my first couple of years I was absolutely convinced that the traditions we're just a way of controlling everything and the only one we really needed was number 3, which states the only requirement... And even that one I didn't have a full understanding of at that time.

One of my defects is that I am a right-fighter. Meaning I always want to be right. In this case that defect actually worked in my favor because when I was new running around breaking traditions right and left, I would get called out by the old timers, and then want to find a way to prove them wrong, so I would get into the literature looking for ways to find where I could prove them wrong, and inevitably every single time would end up proving myself wrong! And more importantly, I would end up learning something and gaining a little more understanding of our history. Not just the way it works but why it works the way it works.

Carrie B.—Bend Oregon

## On the lighter side



## Aspects of Spirituality

“Among A.A.’s there is still a vast amount of mix-up respecting what is material and what is spiritual. I prefer to believe that it is all a matter of motive. If we use our worldly possessions too selfishly, then we are materialists. But if we share these possessions in helpfulness of others, then the material aids the spiritual”

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“The idea keeps persisting that the instincts are primarily bad and are the roadblocks before which all spirituality falters. I believe that the difference between good and evil is not the difference between spiritual and instinctual man; it is the difference between proper and improper use of the instinctual. Recognition and right channeling of the instinctual are the essence of achieving wholeness.”

1. Letter 1958
2. Letter 1954

## God Appeared and..

A long time AA member named Joe R has lived to a very old age and one morning God appears to him, as Joe lies in bed.

Joe: What have you come for God?

God: Well Joe, I've come with some good news and some bad news, what do you want first?

Joe (being an optimist): I like to start the morning with good news

God: I have come to tell you that we have AA meetings in heaven

Joe: Alright - that's great! So what's the bad news?

God: You're chairing tonight's meeting....

**Anniversaries**

Jim G	18	1st Traditions Group	Terri A	17	Rule 62 Group
Mark F	10	End of Day	Fawn M	6	Nooners-Oneida-M-F
Michael S	1	Nooners-Oneida-M-F	Dave H	35	Camden
RoseMary M	24	Oneida-Nooners-M-F			

**District News and Events**

May 14th—District 12 Spiritual Breakfast. Registration 9:00 am \$12 at the door.

The Beeches—7900 Turin Road, Rome NY

May 16th—Stockbridge Group Annual Anniversary Meeting and BBQ. 6:00pm BBQ—7:30pm meeting and speaker. Carlin Field Munnsville NY All are welcome. Bring a dish to pass if you can.

May 19th—Maxwellhouse 24th Anniversary Diner 6:00pm. Oneida First Presbyterian Church 304 Broad Street(corner of Broad & Stone St.).

May 20th-22nd—A.A. 4th Annual Women’s Retreat—Adams Eden 4812 Cook Corners Road-Lafayette, NY \$70.00. [info@adamsedencamp.com](mailto:info@adamsedencamp.com) or Mikki- @315-559-0588 or Melissa @315-412-4847 (call or text)

<b>District 0490</b>		<b>HOTLINE NUMBERS</b>	
PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: <a href="mailto:district0490@yahoo.com">district0490@yahoo.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.aadistrict0490.org">www.aadistrict0490.org</a>	Next District Meeting: May 15, 2:00pm Oneida Rec. Center 217 Cedar St, Oneida, NY	Oneida Rome Utica Syracuse	315-533-1227 315-201-6644 315-732-6880 315-463-5011

<b>Area 47</b>		<b>Alcoholic Anonymous World Svc.</b>	
CNY Area Committee Registrar PO Box 18063 Rochester, NY 14615 Website: <a href="http://www.aacny.org">www.aacny.org</a>	Next Area Assembly: May 8, 1:00pm—5:00pm TBA visit website for details	Grand Central Station Box 459, New York 10163 Website: <a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.org</a>	