



Turning Point: A History of Early A.A.'s Spiritual Roots and Successes

Dick B.

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Ten years ago, Dick B. regarded this comprehensive volume of research and writing as his magnum opus. The reason is that its 776 pages brought together his detailed discoveries about the major historical roots of the A.A. movement--the Bible, the Oxford Group, Rev. Sam Shoemaker's writings, Dr. Bob's Library, Anne Smith's Journal, and the religious literature early AAs read. The work was quickly acclaimed by the many scholars and AAs who read and endorsed it. And Dick believed he had covered the waterfront as to the spiritual history of early A.A. Certainly he had covered it in a way that no prior history had even approached in depth, content, and scope. Thus for those who wanted and want an accurate composite of the major contributing religious and spiritual factors that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, this is the appropriate reference source. It has, in fact, been used to teach classes, fill academic library spots, and educate those interested in spiritual recovery. But there was to be much more. As time and research continued, Dick delved into the nooks and crannies and came up recently with some 16 wellsprings of A.A. roots and ideas. The discovery neither negated nor outdated the contents of Turning Point. It simply made the picture more clear and detailed. Thus Dick's later books took several new turns: First, he looked into the actual cure situation in early A.A.; and he also looked into the origins and meaning of the so-called nonsense gods; that had developed in A.A. These absurd creations began calling a so-called higher power; a Coke bottle, a tree, a chair, a radiator, a light bulb, Something, Somebody, Gertrude, the Great Pumpkin, Santa Claus, and many many other idolatrous creations. Next, Dick looked more deeply into the individuals who had contributed ideas that became embedded in A.A. and even spawned some of the absurd names, half-baked prayers, and self-made religion (as A.A. co-founder Rev. Samuel M. Shoemaker characterized them for AAs). The individuals included William James, Carl Jung, Emmet Fox, Richard Peabody, William D. Silkworth, and others. In turn, this quest led him to other movements that had contributed to A.A.'s development both before and after 1935--United Christian Endeavor Society, Young Men's Christian Association, the Gospel rescue missions, the Salvation Army, and others. Dick then turned to writing books that would explain to AAs and others exactly how to utilize the history and founding sources to achieve recovery today. And at present, he has turned to biographical materials about Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob that will explain the source of their own particular ideas and practices as those were transmitted into the early A.A. program--conversion, Bible studies, prayer meetings, morning meditation, and even revival techniques. The search and research go on. But Turning Point remains the turning point that describes in much detail how the early AAs turned to the one, true, living God for the solution to their problems, and used His Word to tell them more.

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