AND AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The Twelve Steps as a Spiritual Journey of Individuation

IAN McCABE



CARL JUNG AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



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Ian McCabe



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To Jenny, my present from Heaven!



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Ian McCabe, Dublin



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ABBREVIATIONS

Alcoholics Anonymous = A.A.

Anonymous = Anon

Alcoholics Anonymous Archives, General Service Office, New York = AAA

Quotations are referenced according to year, Box and Reel number: AAA, year, Box 18, R 8

Collected Works of C. G. Jung = CW

Stepping Stones Archives, Bedford Hills, New York = Stepping Stones Archives



INTRODUCTION

This book explains the programme of Alcoholics Anonymous and the twelve steps principally through the writings of Carl Jung and the co-founder of A.A., Bill Wilson. The book is divided into six chapters; the first will feature the correspondence between Carl Jung and Bill Wilson from 1945 until Jung's death in 1961. The second part of the chapter will give an account of Bill's experiments with LSD. This will contain an examination of a controversial letter from Wilson to Jung asking for his comments about using LSD in the treatment of alcoholics.

The second chapter will follow Bill Wilson's attempts at recovery and include an account of his entering Towns Hospital, New York, to dry out. There he had a Pauline 'road to Damascus' type spiritual experience that transformed his life. This led him to decide to devote his life to helping fellow alcoholics. Six months later, in a moment of temptation he contacted another alcoholic, Dr. Bob Smith, who was to become the co-founder of A.A. This chapter explains how A.A. works and how the "Bible" of A.A., namely the "Big Book",¹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, came to be written.

The third chapter will attempt to understand the illness of alcoholism from a medical and psychological perspective principally through the case notes of Carl Jung. His insightful and graphic descriptions are an excellent introduction to understanding the symptoms and behavioural problems associated with alcoholism.

Chapter Four will explain the short preamble of A.A., which contains the principles of how A.A. actually works. Also included in this chapter is an explanation of how A.A. meetings are organised and what happens inside an actual meeting.

The following chapter explains the twelve steps by means of personal stories from recovering members of A.A., and includes a Jungian perspective. Many of these stories involve alcoholics who, upon reaching their "rock bottom",² were startled by sudden spiritual moments of clarity. The programme of A.A. is then compared to Jungian analysis; in particular, this chapter will highlight the similarities of the Jungian journey of individuation and the A.A. spiritual awakening.

The final chapter will be devoted to explaining spiritual experiences and spiritual awakenings. This will include a narrative from William James's book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, from the nineteenth century that shows a direct link between a recovering alcoholic, Samuel Hadley, and the Episcopalian church in Manhattan where Bill Wilson first tasted sobriety.

This chapter will also examine the question of whether A.A. and Jungianism are cults. Even though this topic is outside the scope of this book, it will be addressed simply because both organisations are subject to the criticism that they are "cult-like".

The conclusion will discuss several topics including why A.A. works, its universal success, and Bill's research into LSD.

The appendices at the end of this book include the original correspondence between Carl Jung and Bill Wilson, the twelve steps, the twelve traditions, the twelve promises, and correspondence from Bill Wilson who shared his thoughts about his spiritual experience with a member of A.A. The final appendix reproduces a page of Wilson's second letter to Jung about using LSD to treat alcoholics.

Carl Jung and Bill Wilson 1945–1961

Communication between Bill Wilson and Carl Jung as mediated by their "Student", Margarita Luttichau

The correspondence between Bill Wilson and Carl Jung dates back to 1945. This was made possible through Margarita Luttichau¹ who acted as an intermediary between both men. She was a student of Carl Jung and was also a protégé of Bill Wilson. Effectively she was mentored by both men. She travelled between America and Switzerland and in letters and conversations made each man aware of the words, writings, and ideas of the other. Margarita was interested in applying the format and principles of A.A. group work to "general neurotics". In the summer of 1945, Margarita gave Bill Wilson a copy of Jung's book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. Bill wrote to her at the beginning of October 1945:

You must know the memory of our chat together at Nantucket comes back often and most pleasantly and I am very grateful for that book you handed me, not only does it confirm fragmentary impressions I had of Dr. Jung—it reveals him as a truly great man. His feeling for people, his real humility, his capacity for synthesis

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in a field still so confused—these qualities in him are delightful to observe I hope the A.A. book I sent you on my return here did not go astray. (AAA, 1945, Box 18, R 8)

In November 1945 Margarita met with Jung in Zurich and talked to him about Bill Wilson. She showed him "bits of printed matters I had along" about A.A.

She replied to Wilson's letter in early December 1945:

Jung was perfectly fascinated and wanted to know a lot more. Of course I told him about the neurotics who were turning to you too and I felt that you should both talk the matter over to see if there was any such way as the A.A. might open up in other countries. (AAA, 1945, Box 18, R 8)

Interestingly, given Jung's reputed disdain for groups, Margarita also recorded that, "He was deeply interested and said he was sure only some such solution whereby a great many people could receive help could possibly erase the terrible need of to-day" (Ibid.). Margarita planned to talk further with Jung when he had read over the A.A. literature. She ended her letter:

I have very often thought about that wonderful Saturday in New York and I want to thank you again most warmly. Please give my greetings and best wishes to your wife and to all friends I met at the party. (Ibid.)

A month later on 10 January 1946, Wilson sent a three-page letter to Margarita in which he contrasts the understanding of neurosis by Freudians and Jungians. Essentially Freud was an atheist whereas Jung, whose father and uncles were church ministers, included the spiritual aspect in his psychology.

Wilson began his letter, "Dear Margarita, your long and fascinating letter was received with the greatest pleasure" (AAA, 1946, Box 18, R 8). He wrote that he had "read and re-read" the book *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.

Building upon Freud's pioneering, Dr. Jung comes to very different conclusions about diagnosis, treatment, composition of the personality and man's place in the cosmos. Dr. Jung seems capable of open-mindedness, a capacity for sympathetic constructions that appears pretty much lacking in Freud. He seems to be a truly great man. I would much like to meet him someday. (Ibid.)

Wilson told Margarita that he had been reading Freud's book, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*:

That he is reported to have died a gloomy old man I can understand. Hoisted by his own petard I cannot resist the conclusion that the philosophical implications arising from Freud's work have done a great deal to poison modern thought. Many people are constantly coming into A.A. who have been under treatment by Freudians. Their reactions are interesting. The most common one is ridiculing any and all psychiatrists. Of course this is unfair and unfortunate. That is the impression they have.

Then we have the type that seems to have been shattered by treatment instead of healed. Believing what psychiatry has told him about himself he cannot "take it". He is more miserable than ever. Then we have the third and very interesting type of Freudian patient. These are apt to be sold on Freud in the sense that adherents of a religion worship their founder. They brook no questioning or doubt. They say, "It is so because the master says so". They venerate Freud as a great debunker of the human race. These people realise they are strong enough to take their own debunking. They beat on their chests, as it were, crying, "our heads are bloody, but unbowed". They tend to be atheists, cynical, ruthlessly competitive and hard as nails. Politically they are apt to admire Communists.

Bill continued,

Of course I haven't too much basis for these observations. As a newcomer in the field I really have no right to make them at all. There is bound to be a great deal of bias, because in A.A. we see only the failures of psychiatry. Then, to, [sic] most of the people we get in have been treated by Freudians. But it is also true, that after coming into A.A., many who have received psychiatric treatment report that they are able to go back over the experience and pick out of it much that is helpful. (Ibid.) 3

Wilson also asked Margarita to remind Jung that it was a former patient of his, Rowland Hazard, "an alcoholic … who when associated with the Oxford Group² here in New York helped me very much with my own recovery" (Ibid.).

On 2 September 1947, Margarita wrote to Bill about "a long talk" she had had with Jung during a conference on analytical psychology in Ascona, Switzerland. Her letter refers to Jung's antipathy to group work: "As well I knew he is interested in the forming of an individual not in group work—but after hearing the whole thing he was very interested and gave me extraordinarily complete instructions how it might be managed" (AAA, 1947, Box 18, R 8).

A month later, in October 1947, Wilson replied to Margarita's letter, "I was delighted with your account of your meeting with Dr. Jung and am encouraged that he thinks there might be something to the group method with neurotics—though the contrary opinion seems still to prevail" (Ibid.).

Earlier in March 1947, Wilson wrote to a friend in Washington, D.C. asking her to assist Margarita in finding accommodation when visiting there. He commentated that "she is one of the few persons holding a personal endorsement from Dr. Carl Jung." (AAA, 1947, Box 18, R8)

It was my friend Margarita who first carried the news of AA to Dr. Jung who at once showed an intense- even an excited interest. He expressed the hope that AA methods could finally play a great part in the general field of neurosis—that it might have a far wider scope than alcohol. (Ibid.)

Wilson explained that Margarita wanted to set up her own private practice and he said he was "intensely interested, partly because of my own severe experience with depression." Wilson explained that Margarita wanted to "participate as one of us in some experimental group work on neurosis", and when she returns to New York "we have in mind starting a group of neurotics of which I shall surely be candidate number one." He ended his letter with a personal approval of Margarita:

Though not an alcoholic, Margarita is qualified as "one of us". She has known the most acute mental suffering for which she has been freed by Dr. Jung plus her own spiritual resources which, by the way, are great. (Ibid.) From this triangular correspondence involving Wilson, Jung, and Margarita we can see the development of their belief that the format and principles of A.A. were capable of being extended to many neuroses and other addictions. Since then the twelve steps of A.A. have been extended to many other problems and today there exists twelve step programmes for abuse survivors, anorexia and bulimia, anxiety and depression, phobics, and financial problems. The twelve-step programme transferred seamlessly to other addictions so today there exists: Narcotics Anonymous, Workaholics Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Co-Dependents Anonymous, and Pills Anonymous.

Carl Jung's attitude to applying A.A. group work to "general neurotics"

Jung reputedly believed that groups stifle the individuation process. Jungian analyst Dr. Robert Strubel writes "It would be wrong, however, to pin Jung down to such a bias without considering his other statements on this subject" (p. 2 of the original article kindly forwarded by Robert Strubel, reproduced in Beebe, 1983).

The correspondence between Margarita Luttichau and Bill Wilson supports the proposition that Jung was flexible enough to endorse group work. The proof of the success of Alcoholics Anonymous in using a group method was the reason why Jung was so receptive to Margarita Luttichau's ideas about adapting group work to "general neurotics". Jung had in fact been quite critical of group psychology; he believed that any transformations experienced in groups did not last. He wrote:

To experience transformation in a group and to experience it in oneself are two totally different things. If any considerable group of persons are united and identified with one another by a particular frame of mind, the resultant transformation experience bears only a very remote resemblance to the experience of individual transformation. (CW 9i, para. 225)

Jung also believed that transformation in a group was "also much easier to achieve, because the presence of so many people together exerts great suggestive force. The individual in a crowd easily becomes the victim of his own suggestibility" (CW 9i, para. 225).

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Jung was aware that Hitler had mesmerised groups at the pre-war Nazi rallies in Nuremberg. Jung disliked groups because he believed that a group would sink to the level of the consciousness of that of its lowest member.

The total psyche emerging from the group is below the level of the individual psyche. If it is a large group, the collective psyche will be more like the psyche of an animal, which is the reason why the ethical attitude of large organisations is always doubtful. (CW 9i, para. 225)

Paradoxically, while the quoted words of Jung are generally critical of groups, they are actually supportive of the organisational structure of A.A. group meetings. For example when he states that if change happens in a group

the group experience goes no deeper than the level of one's own mind in that state. It does work a change in you, but the change does not last. On the contrary you must have recourse to mass intoxication in order to consolidate the experience and your belief in it. (CW 9i para. 226)

Jung's belief that change in a group does not last is exemplified by evangelical meetings. Indeed Bill Wilson, inspired by Ebby Thacher, first attended a meeting of the evangelical Oxford Group in Calvary Church and went forward and swore off alcohol but was drinking the following day. For change to become permanent people need to replicate the same feeling through regular attendances at such meetings. This need to attend meetings regularly to keep the inspirational feeling alive validates the need for people who achieved sobriety through the support of an A.A. group to continuously attend meetings. A person who recovers owes their sobriety to the support of the group and generally in order to maintain sobriety they need the continuous support of the fellowship of A.A. and its twelve-step programme. This is the reason they need to "keep coming back" to the meetings.

Jung surprisingly does offer an encouraging note about groups:

There are also positive experiences, for instance, a positive enthusiasm which spurs the individual to noble deeds or an equally positive feeling of human solidarity. Facts of this kind should not be denied. The group can give the individual courage, a bearing, and a dignity which may easily get lost in isolation. It can awaken within him the memory of being a man among men. (CW 9i, para. 228)

The importance of the A.A. group as a means of support for alcoholics is referred to in an unpublished thesis by Dr. Gerold Roth, a psychiatrist working in the field of addiction. The results of his research shows that attendance at A.A. does not simply cause an addiction shift, but often leads to actual behaviour changes (Personal communication, 28 January 2013).

Therapeutic work in groups can be very effective as it builds up a common humanitarian bond and indeed can activate the collective unconscious. Today there are many different groups for "neurotics" that are based or patterned on the twelve steps of A.A., most prominently the group AWARE that offers group support for people with depression (aware.ie). It should be noted that pioneering work is being accomplished by some Jungian analysts who work very successfully with groups in analysing dreams (Castleman, 2009). However, Jung was correct in stating that groups do naturally look for scapegoats and can bully individual members as exemplified in Dr. Arthur Colman's book, *Up From Scapegoating* (Colman, 1995).

Bill Wilson's first letter to Carl Jung, 1961

Bill wrote two letters to Jung and several to his secretary, Aniela Jaffe. The first letter was dated 23 January 1961 (see Appendix One). Wilson attached a cover letter to Aniela Jaffe,³ "enclosing a letter that should have been sent to Dr. Jung long ago. As you will see, it deals with the very important part he played in the forming of Alcoholics Anonymous" (Letter to Jaffe is also dated 23 January, 1961, Stepping Stones Archives). In his letter to Jung, Wilson wrote that according to his recollection a former patient of Jung, Rowland Hazard, who was being treated for alcoholism, had a relapse and revisited Jung in 1931 (actually it was 1926, see Bluhm, 2006). Wilson reminded Jung of the conversation he had with Hazard:

First of all, you frankly told him of his hopelessness, so far as any further medical or psychiatric treatment might be concerned. This candid and humble statement of yours was beyond doubt the first

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foundation stone upon which our Society has since been built. (see Appendix One)

Wilson continued:

When he then asked you if there was any other hope, you told him that there might be, provided he could become the subject of a spiritual or religious experience—in short, a genuine conversion. You pointed out how such an experience, if brought about, might remotivate him when nothing else could. But you did caution, though, that while such experiences had sometimes brought recovery to alcoholics, they were, nevertheless, comparatively rare. You recommended that he place himself in a religious atmosphere and hope for the best. This I believe was the substance of your advice. (Ibid.)

Upon his return to America, Rowland joined the Oxford Group, which helped him to stop drinking temporarily (Kurtz, 1991, p. 9). Later Rowland Hazard convinced Ebby Thacher to stop drinking, who in turn introduced Bill to the Oxford Group where he gained sobriety at the end of 1934.

Wilson ended his letter by commending Jung's role in the formation of A.A. "Please be certain that your place in the affection, and in the history, of our Fellowship is like no other". Wilson always acknowledged that Jung's advice to Hazard "set Alcoholics Anonymous in motion" (Anon, 2000, p. 125). While Jung's advice to Hazard was an important link in the chain of events that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous, Wilson did credit others, including William James as being amongst the founders of A.A. (Anon, 1991b, p. 124).

However Wilson's acknowledgment of Jung's contribution to the formation of A.A. was not an impulsive ingratiating gesture; he had included this opinion fifteen years earlier in a letter to Margarita Luttichau. Referring to the advice Jung had given to Rowland Hazard and how it had influenced himself; he wrote humorously, "So you see, I could claim to be a lineal descendant from Dr. Jung. And this is far more comforting to think about than though I were descended from Freud" (L.D. 10 January 1946, Box 18, R 8). This may have been a reference to the fact that Rowland Hazard first applied to be a patient of Freud's but he was too busy, so Rowland then went to see Jung (Bluhm: See also, Jung, 1985, pp. 141–142).

Jung's reply to Wilson's letter

Jung replied to Wilson's letter seven days later on 30 January 1961 (see Appendix One). After thanking Bill for his letter Jung then referred to Rowland Hazard, writing that he had, "often wondered what had been his fate". Jung wrote that his talk with Roland [sic] was "based on the result of many experiences with men of his kind". Jung hinted about the difficulties he was under at that time, "I could not tell him everything" because in "those days I had to be exceedingly careful of what I said. I had found out that I was misunderstood in every possible way". Jung explained that this caution extended to Rowland Hazard, "Thus I was very careful when I talked to Roland H". Jung explained that the reason he could not give a full explanation to Rowland was because Jung identified the nature of Rowland's illness as spiritual.

Jung continued, "His craving for alcohol was the equivalent on a low level of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in medieval language, the union with God". Jung was explaining that alcohol was a short cut to achieving a false spiritual experience. He added, "The only right and legitimate way to such an experience is, that it happens to you in reality and it can only happen to you when you walk on a path, which leads you to higher understanding" (Ibid.). This viewpoint of Jung's in relation to how a spiritual experience is achieved is noteworthy given that Wilson's follow-up letter dated 20 March 1961 advocated the use of LSD to introduce alcoholics in denial to an "instant" transcendent experience (Appendix Six).

Jung in his letter, further explained that his understanding was that there was evil in the world and perhaps for some people alcohol is an evil, "a depraving poison".

Jung wrote that he was

strongly convinced that the evil principle prevailing in this world leads the unrecognized spiritual need into perdition, if it is not counteracted either by real religious insight or by the protective wall of human community. An ordinary man, not protected by an action from above and isolated in society, cannot resist the power of evil, which is called very aptly the Devil.

Jung had already written in 1957 about the vulnerability of people who have no guiding spiritual resource and titled a chapter of his book,

The Undiscovered Self, "The plight of the individual in modern society". In this book he elaborated and stated his belief that "The individual who is not anchored in God can offer no resistance on his own resources to the physical and moral blandishments of the world" (Jung, 1974, p. 24).

In his letter to Bill Wilson, Jung rhetorically asked, "How could one formulate such an insight that is not misunderstood in our days?" (Jung, Letter to Bill Wilson, 1961). And as though taking stock of the "risk" he was taking in referring to matters of spirituality, even in the early sixties, he then wrote, "But the use of such words arouses so many mistakes that one can only keep aloof from them as much as possible" (Ibid.).

While Jung's spiritual advice may seem acceptable today, in the twenties and thirties Jung was being assailed by the psychiatric and psychoanalytical professions who were not concerned with the healing power of spirituality. The psychiatric and psychoanalytical professions at that time were trying to gain scientific credibility for their methods and attempts to bridge spirituality and psychology were anathema to practitioners. Any indication by Jung that he was offering his patients "religious" advice or that he recognised a spiritual deficit in his patients would give grounds for him to be ridiculed. Even today, the term "religious or spiritual problem" only made it into a sub-section of the most recent edition of the psychiatrists' and psychologists' "bible", namely the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5). The term was placed in the category of "Other conditions that may be the focus of clinical attention" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 725).

In the mid-thirties in America, physicians were reluctant to treat alcoholics. In 1935, two years after the end of Prohibition, the American Medical Association (AMA), reputedly pronounced that alcoholism was a "moral failing" that was not responsive to conventional medical treatment. The AMA concluded that alcoholics were guilty of moral turpitude and this was a self-inflicted malady and thus alcoholics were responsible for their own condition and attempts to treat them were a waste of time for doctors! The AMA did not suggest any alternatives for curing alcoholism. There is a coincidence about the timing of the foundation of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935 in that it could be viewed as a compensation that filled the vacuum left by the American medical establishment.

Although Jung mentioned in his letter to Wilson that he had "often wondered" about the fate of Rowland Hazard, there is a reference in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung, 1985), to a patient

or perhaps a composite of several patients, who are similar to Rowland. For example there is a reference to an American colleague who sent a patient to Jung with the diagnosis of incurable "alcohol neurasthenia". The doctor had also advised the patient to see a "neurological authority in Berlin, for he expected that my attempt at therapy would lead to nothing" (Jung, 1985, pp. 141–142). Coincidently, Rowland was first advised to see Freud in Vienna, but Freud was too busy, so Rowland then visited the next most world-renowned psychiatrist, Carl Jung (Bluhm). There is a second reference by Jung to a patient who is even more similar to Rowland, "when a member of the Oxford Group comes to me in order to get treatment, I say, 'You are in the Oxford Group; so long as you are there, you settle your affair with the Oxford Group. I can't do it better than Jesus'" (CW 18, para. 620).

Related to this is the following case presentation that Jung gave:

A hysterical alcoholic was cured by this group movement, and they used him as a sort of model and sent him all round Europe, where he confessed so nicely and said he had done wrong and how he had got cured through the group movement. And when he had repeated his story twenty, or it may have been fifty times, he got sick of it and took to drink again. The spiritual sensation had simply faded away. Now what are they going to do with him? They say, now he is pathological, he must go to a doctor. See, in the first stage he has been cured by Jesus, in the second by a doctor! I should and did refuse such a case. I sent that man back to those people and said, "If you believe that Jesus has cured this man, he will do it a second time. And if he can't do it, you don't suppose that I can do it better than Jesus?" But that is just exactly what they do expect: when a man is pathological, Jesus won't help him but the doctor will. (CW 18, para. 621)

As long as a fellow believes in the Oxford Group movement, he stays there; and as long as a man is in the Catholic Church, he is in the Catholic Church for better or worse and he should be cured by those means. And mind you, I have seen that they can be cured by those means—that is a fact! Absolution, the Holy Communion, can cure them, even in very serious cases. (CW 18, para. 622)

Jung's reference to a group who praise publicly someone for their temperance is a parody but carries a serious message in that anyone who is recognised by the public as a recovering alcoholic and a member of A.A. and then relapses does by association reduce people's confidence in the efficacy of the A.A. programme. Perhaps, it was similar caricatures of "famous" people who had slips in their prostelysing recovery that encouraged A.A. to develop the concept of anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. The principle of anonymity encourages members to adhere to the spiritual principles of A.A. rather than allowing their egos to feed off media publicity about how wonderful they are in having achieved sobriety.

Bill Wilson's experiments with LSD

Within A.A. headquarters there is still a great deal of protectiveness surrounding Bill's second letter to Jung. This is because the third page of Bill's letter refers to his advocacy of treating alcoholics, who were having difficulty with the spiritual aspect of the programme, with LSD. According to Kurtz, "Wilson's main efforts outside A.A. in the final fifteen years of his life were attempts to remove the mental or psychological and physical obstacles that impeded some persons from openness to the spiritual" (Kurtz, 1991, p. 137).

Abram Hoffer, a biochemist and professor of psychiatry, and Humphrey Osmond, a psychiatrist, co-authored a book about using LSD to treat alcoholics, titled New Hope for Alcoholics (Hoffer & Osmond, 1968). They accidently stumbled upon LSD as a treatment for alcoholics. Originally, they were using LSD for treating schizophrenics and thought it induced "something very similar to delirium tremens" (Anon, 1991b, p. 369). As a form of Pavlovian behaviour training, they thought it would be a good idea to create a state of delirium tremens in alcoholics as a warning to them. Instead, somewhat amusingly, alcoholics actually enjoyed the LSD experience and reported that instead of being terrified by delirium tremens they found the experience "illuminating" (Ibid.). Hoffer and Osmond then realised that LSD could initiate alcoholics into having a spiritual experience that could help them stop drinking. Their book cites several case studies of alcoholics successfully being treated with LSD. Hoffer told Bill Wilson about these results and initially "he was extremely unthrilled. He was very much against giving alcoholics drugs" (Ibid.).

However, Wilson was impressed by the success rate Hoffer and Osmond were having which was much higher than that of A.A. Wilson hoped that if LSD could produce an experience of transcendence in the alcoholic then they would see that by using alcohol they were "using the wrong chemical to that end" (Kurtz, 1991, p. 136). That is, by using alcohol they were trying to gain a low-grade spiritual experience.

Bill Wilson investigated further and became a patient of Abram Hoffer. He took LSD in 1956, when it was legal, in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Los Angeles under the medical supervision of psychiatrist Sidney Cohen (Lattin, 2012, p. 195). According to his long-term secretary Nell Wing, "He had an experience that was totally spiritual, like his initial spiritual experience" and "far from keeping his activities a secret, he was eager to spread the word" (Quoted in Anon, 1991b, p. 371). Even though his wife Lois had a heart condition he persuaded her to take LSD and reported that she "is undergoing a very great general improvement since even this mild administration" (Ibid., p. 372). Bill was a salesman and had obviously sold himself on the benefits of LSD. However, Lois herself reported, "Bill gave me some. Actually, I could not tell any difference. I don't know. I looked down, and I saw things that were clearer, but they weren't any greener-it's supposed to make your perception greater. But I'd always been an observer of nature anyway and looked carefully at things" (Ibid.). From this it might appear that Bill was a blind advocate of LSD, but he was not a dogmatist and later wrote, "Of course, the convictions I now have are still very much subject to change" (Ibid., p. 375).

In 1957, Wilson wrote to Gerald Heard, a prominent philosopher and writer, about the personal psychological benefits he had gained from using LSD; he referred to the alleviation of his depression and his greater awareness and keener appreciation of beauty (Lattin, 2012, p. 183).

In June 1958, Wilson wrote a long letter outlining his positive views on LSD to Reverend Sam Shoemaker (Minister of the Calvary Church where he first gained sobriety) (Anon, 1991b, pp. 373–375). Bill believed that LSD might help alcoholics and in this letter Bill outlined his case for using LSD with alcoholics:

I've taken lysergic acid several times, and have collected considerable information about it. The public is today being led to believe that LSD is a new psychiatric toy of awful dangers. It induces schizophrenia, they say. Nothing could be further from the truth ... In the course of three or four years, they (Hoffer and Osmond) have

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