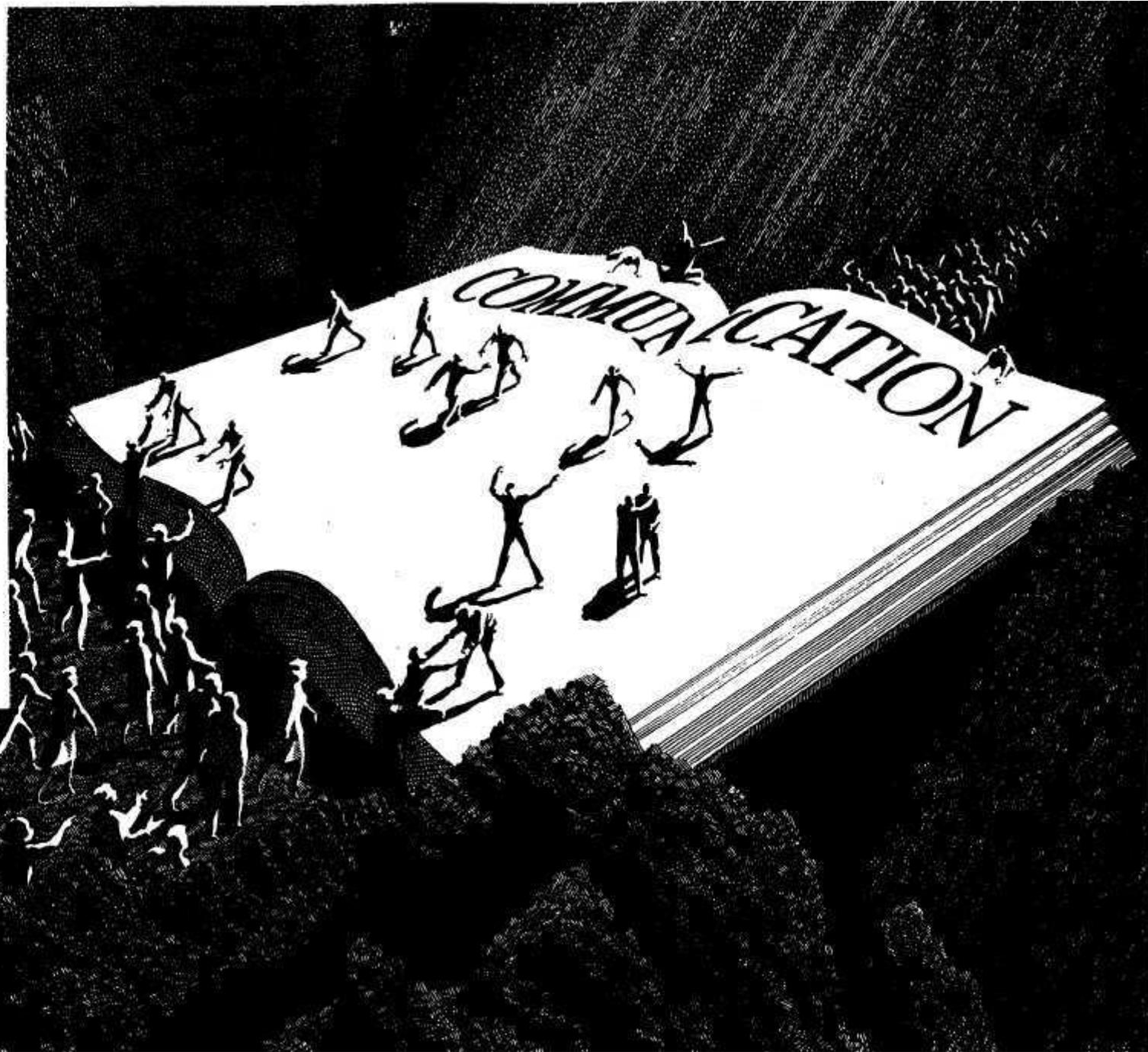


May 1964

A Message

from Bill

DEAR Friends,
I'm glad indeed that we so often say to each other, "Faith without works is dead — action is the magic word!" As we strive to devise better ways of carrying the AA message to those who still suffer, I hope that we will also try to create a wider understanding of the operation and needs of AA's world services — that all-important cluster of activities which enables our fellowship to function as a whole. Because



these far-flung services reach into every quarter of the world, their direct influence for good is too often unseen, and therefore unknown.

Without that global effort, we would now be in a most sorry and chaotic state. Let me illustrate this by two examples:

Suppose, for instance, that, during the last twenty-five years, AA had never published any standard literature — no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics generally we would today be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, AA would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity.

Nevertheless, effective literature was prepared, and in 1939 the publication of the Big Book became our very first world service. From that time on, it became perfectly clear what AA is, what it believes, and how it works. Millions of our pamphlets and hundreds of thousands of our books are today in circulation. AA's message can never be garbled; anyone at all can find out about us with ease. What the dividends of this single project in world communication have been, only God Himself knows.

One more illustration. Our fellowship enjoys a vast good will everywhere. In large measure this

is directly due to another AA world service — the service of public information. For many years wonderful accounts of AA have poured from the press and from other media of communication. This astounding success has required of your General Service people great labor, top skills and unstinted dedication. There is no question that this continued torrent of favorable publicity has brought to AA one-half its present membership.

But just suppose that these great channels of communication had been left wide open to the winds of chance; or, worse still, had never been developed by us at all. Had there been such a failure, we may well shudder at the dire consequences. Tens of thousands of today's AA membership would still be drinking. Many indeed would now be mad or dead.

I'm sure you have already seen that AA world service is utterly necessary to our future unity and growth— even to our survival as a fellowship.

To maintain these life-giving arteries of world communication in full flow, and in good repair, will always be a top-priority task for each new generation of our Society. This will require of us a greatly increased understanding of the immense need to be met, and a sustained devotion of the highest order.

The world of today harbors the appalling total of twenty million alcoholic men and women. Without

doubt a large fraction of these fellow-sufferers could begin to find their sobriety and a new way of life if only they could see and hear just one AA meeting. Experience has already proved that our world services constitute the largest and the most powerful single agency that we shall ever possess to bring those legions of sufferers within reach of what we — AAs around the world

— have so providentially discovered for ourselves.

Knowing this fellowship, I feel entirely confident that we will eagerly shoulder and discharge well this most high responsibility to our Third Legacy.

As we continue in the language of the heart to carry AA's message across all distances and all barriers, may God bless us.

Bill