

October 1997



## How AA STARTED IN

# Brazil

*The following is an exchange of letters between the wife of an early AA member (she and her husband were Americans living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), and the associate secretary of the AA Headquarters in New York.*

September 30, 1947

Dear Miss L.,

With the first prospective AA, one Adheneer G. de P., referred to us in your letter of August 22, we already have visions of a group in Rio, Belem, Sao Paulo! Senor de P. visited with Herb — his questions and problem discussed at length — to the extent that when he left at midnight, still talking AA, Herb's suggestion for a Brazilian group met with instant response. Contrary to our belief that there are no alcoholics in Brazil, our very new member says there are plenty here — they just don't show the same signs that we North Americans do, but the results are the same.

It is our thought to try to secure a room for meetings in the AB1 (newspaper) building — with another very wobbly prospect and the enthusiastic support of an ex-alcoholic in Herb's office (although not an AA) together with Senor de P., the beginning of "something" is afoot! Don't be disturbed about our dreams for

groups in Belem, Sao Paulo, etc.; we will come down to earth and Senor de P. — the rest will come later and slowly as these things will. We want to create a small strong group of Brazilian AAs here, so that when we leave here the group will continue to function. Of course, American, English, etc., are welcome, but the need is great here among the Brazilians.

On the basis of a possible widening of AA horizons, we would like, if possible, additional literature. We are very careful with the literature and pamphlets, but there may be calls that we cannot fill. In Spanish (the Brazilians read it fairly well — so very much like Portuguese) could you send (in Spanish or English) 12 "AA" [the Big Book], 12 "AA" (pocket size), 6 "So you can't quit." Also the name and address of the publisher of the Upper Room [series of daily devotional pamphlets]. We would like six of these. If you can send these to us, we will reimburse you. In this connection with the tightening up of money here in Brazil, it is a major operation to send a check to the States. Could we send check to you for the Grapevine, a small contribution for Alcoholics Anonymous as well and for the Upper Room? Thus, only one check.

If you have suggestions regarding opening of a new group, we will appreciate such information. We are particularly anxious to bring the meaning and spirit of AA to this group. Are there any suggestions or "things to avoid" in a newspaper article? Would there be any objection to such an article or should it be referred to New York before it is published? What we want is to bring AA to the attention of the Brazilian public. Possibly you have such an article that we could use. Would it be permissible to run a small announcement stating that there is a group here in Rio? We do not want to advertise, but we want to reach people who need this. We plan to contact the hospitals here also. We appreciate your letters and the bulletins.

Sincerely,  
Herb and Elizabeth D.

## THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION

General Headquarters —  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
Box 459, Grand Central Annex  
New York 17, N.Y.

October 2, 1947

Dear Herb and Elizabeth:

We are all so pleased with the thoughts of your group in Rio. It sounds like a very real and fine start. You've no idea how excited we are at the prospects. By all means, go ahead with your plans of bringing AA to the attention of the public. Many groups have found newspaper articles helpful in getting started and there is no contradiction, as long as you stick by the traditions of AA — anonymity, purpose, money, etc. I'll try and find an extra copy of some articles to send you in the near future. After the opening blast of publicity, a number of groups have used ads — just small ones, in the personal column, for instance — giving the information that AA is active there and the address is used, such as a post office box, or the place and time of meetings.

I know how hard it is to get money out. We have the same problem in some of the other foreign groups. It will be perfectly all right to send us one check to cover the Grapevine and Upper Room subscriptions and literature. We'll take care of ordering, etc. for you. Incidentally, we sent you 12 AA pamphlets in English and 12 in Spanish. We didn't think you wanted Big Books in that amount, and we don't have it in Spanish.

Keep in touch with us for we are very interested in how everything turns out. Our visions are right in step with yours — though I think both of us realize that it will take time and hard work to make them come true!

Sincerely,  
Charlotte L.  
Associate Secretary