

AA Grapevine, April 1950

INTERGROUP OF NEW YORK SETS A PRECEDENT

THE Intergroup Association of AA of New York, Inc. recently found itself on the horns of a rather pleasant dilemma. It was faced with accepting or rejecting a sizeable legacy . . . \$10,000, which had been willed to it by a wealthy woman, an early member of AA. In traditional AA fashion, more than 100 delegates from the groups in the area, met to talk the thing out.

Bill W. was asked to express his views. . . "This is an unprecedented meeting," he said. "History can be made, here, tonight, if you choose to do so. No one is more committed to simplicity than I. . ." Then he sketched briefly the history and the early struggling days of Alcoholics Anonymous. He told of the times when sizeable contributions from the deceased literally kept the sheriff from the door of the little office on Vesey Street. He pointed out, too, that many things that

could be done with the money if the group assembled were to accept it, and he told of the perils which could arise from that acceptance.

The voting delegates made their decision and unanimously accepted a resolution to reject the legacy. The resolution read in part:

"WHEREAS, such large bequests or donations will probably be made in the future,

"Now then be it resolved, that it is the expressed desire of the Delegates of the Intergroup Association of AA of New York, Inc., in meeting assembled to reject such imminent bequest and to here signify their intentions of rejecting any such future bequests, donations or other offerings and,

"BE it further resolved, that these Delegates, heartily suggest and endorse similar action on the part of the Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation."

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY

AS WE SEE IT—

AA Rejects a Legacy

TO THE Alcoholics Anonymous Intergroup Association of New York, congratulations for a courageous action. The group has rejected a legacy of \$10,000 bequeathed by a grateful woman member.

Readers of The Daily News know of the fine service AA has performed in reclaiming victims of alcoholism. In declining the legacy a spokesman for AA said:

"Members have discovered they cannot mix money and its management with the spiritual nature of the work they are trying to do."

Each case of alcoholism must be regarded as an individual matter. It must be treated individually. The victim and those who help him must give each case personal attention. The problem cannot be handled by hired case workers. Those who do the work must do it because they believe that the doing is its own reward.

There should be a thought here for other organizations that seek to accomplish social or political reforms. Organization may be essential. But a big campaign fund is no substitute for earnest individual endeavors. One firm and well-informed volunteer advocate of a cause can do more by direct contact with his fellow men than a crew of paid exhorters.

In too many organizations with worthy objectives, management of the machinery becomes the major objective and the tail wags the dog.

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Let's not kid ourselves. We like to read complimentary words like these reprinted here. But let us, too, keep our halos in place and our egos cut down to size!

We in AA and AA as a whole are in a unique position and one which might be envied by other organizations that must depend upon public contributions for their funds. These groups need, in many instances, highly skilled professionals to carry on their programs of help to others.

In the final analysis, the work of Alcoholics Anonymous can go on just as it began. . . with one man helping another. We could, if we had to, go on helping sick alcoholics without the aid of our dearly beloved coffee and cakes.

We are indeed fortunate in having proved to ourselves and the world that ours is a truly working Tradition. Traditions Seven and Eight work for us, but they might not feasibly work for others.

So let us not get too set up over these fine tributes. Let us rather look at our accomplishments . . . our international headquarters, our fine clubs and meeting places, and humbly thank God that we have been able to maintain them through our own efforts. At the same time, let us realize that the Tradition of refusing outside aid throws a greater burden of responsibility on each one of us.