

December 1995

## *The only authority*

From Lakeview Terrace, Calif.:

**Once** again, the speaker at my jail panel announced that "The only authority in Alcoholics Anonymous is the Big Book." Where do he and others get this

nonsense from? The authors of the Big Book itself stated in "A Vision for You": "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We know only a little."

How could such a statement be twisted to suggest that the Big Book is to Alcoholics Anonymous what the Bible is to Christianity? Besides, what of the "Twelve and Twelve," written by primarily the same author (Bill W.) with another ten-plus years of sobriety? Not an authority? Why not?

Actually, the Traditions make a very clear statement about authority in AA. Tradition Two states that "there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

Why didn't it say, "as he may express himself in our Big Book"?

Since no book is self-interpreting, this is to be expected. Different people will come away with quite different interpretations. Therefore it would be very unwise to make a book an authority. Such a policy actually perverts the sources of human knowledge and belief about God's world.

I believe AA should stay as far away from this stuff as possible. Its connection to God is not dependent on any other-worldly near-psychotic beliefs, backed up by dishonest appeal to the "authority" of a "book." Please let's keep our Bibles to ourselves and stick to our own literature. Remember "A Vision for You" and Tradition Two. The best use of the Big Book is not as a club to beat people with.

Bob S.