

AA Grapevine, July 1980

*Laughter is
our best
medicine*

*Excerpts from the new AA book
"Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers"
show both humorous and serious sides
of our co-founder*

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EDB. REMEMBERED that Dr. Bob used to tell stories at meetings to illustrate certain points — much as parables are used in the Bible.

"He would always stress that being at the meeting was itself part of a spiritual awakening, that it didn't necessarily have to come to you in a flash of light," recalled Ed. "And to make the point in a humorous way, he would tell about the cop shining the light on a couple making love in the park. 'It's all right,' the man said. 'We're married.' 'I'm sorry,'

the cop replied. 'I didn't know it was your wife.' 'Neither did I until you shined the light on us,' the man said."

Ed had quite a collection of Dr. Bob stories.

"He told one about these 'shotgun' AAs — the ones who had come in to get the wife off their backs. This farmer brought a man to the doctor's office. 'Here, Doctor, I shot my son-in-law full of buckshot.' The doctor said, 'You ought to be ashamed, shooting your

son-in-law.' 'Well, Doc, he wasn't my son-in-law *until* I shot him.'

"Then you know how we talk about God never forgetting us. Dr. Bob had a story for that, too. One man was telling another about all the trouble his son got into, and the second fellow said, 'You know, Jim, if that was my son, I'd kick him out.' The first fellow said, 'If he was your son, I'd kick him out, too.' That was to stress that God didn't kick us out. We left of our own accord.

"Then about getting out of AA what you put into it. Doc told about the farmer asking this fellow if he wanted to work the harvest. 'What are you paying?' the man asked. 'I'll pay you what you're worth,' the farmer said. 'No, thanks,' the fellow said. 'I'll be damned if I'll work for that little.'"

According to Ed, Dr. Bob would explain prayer by telling how the camels in a caravan would kneel down in the evening, and the men would unload their burdens. In the morning, they would kneel down again, and the men would put the burdens back on. "It's the same with prayer," Dr. Bob said. "We get on our knees to unload at night. And in the morning when we get on our knees again, God gives us just the load we are able to carry for that day."

"I remember one story he repeated over and over," said Ed. "It was about this boy who burned his hand. The doctor dressed it and bandaged it. When he took the ban-

dage off, the boy's hand was healed. The little boy said, 'You're wonderful, Doctor. You cure everybody, don't you?' 'No, I don't,' the doctor replied. 'I just dress the wound. God heals it.'"

Finally: "There was the woman who called and asked, 'Are you the Dr. Bob who helps alcoholics?' When he replied that he was, she asked him to send her two bottles of that Alcoholics Anonymous for her sick husband. 'Don't you think one would be enough?' he asked. 'Oh no,' she replied. 'My husband is in the hospital. He needs two.' . . .

Through this period [the onset of his fatal illness], Dr. Bob continued going to AA meetings at King School. Anne C. recalled hearing someone asking him at this time, "Do you have to go to all these meetings? Why don't you stay home and conserve your strength?"

Dr. Bob considered the question for a time, then said, "The first reason is that this way is working so well. Why should I take a chance on any other way? The second reason is that I don't want to deprive myself of the privilege of meeting, greeting, and visiting with fellow alcoholics. It is a pleasure to me. And the third reason is the most important. I belong at that meeting for the sake of the new man or woman who might walk through that door. I am living proof that AA will work as long as I work AA, and I owe it to the new person to be there. I am the living example."