

## **THE FOUR ABSOLUTES #2**

**THE FOUR ABSOLUTES** are: honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. You find them talked about in DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers, Anne Smith (Journal), early Oxford Group, and the Akron and Cleveland Central Committee of A.A. Dr. Bob referred to them as “yard-sticks” by which to measure our lives.

In the early years of AA there was no Big Book and no Steps but there was lots of literature being read. Dr. Frank Buchman, Founder of the Oxford Group wrote that Oxford Group people often made lists using the Four Absolutes as moral standards. They would write down the four standards. Then they would write down where they had fallen short of these standards. Then they would confess the shortcomings to another and go about forsaking the behavior, changing themselves, and making restitution for harms done-all based on surrendering their lives to God and receiving His guidance from the Bible, the Standards, prayer, listening to His Voice, and talking to each other.

From the writings of early AA's like Dr. Bob, Anne Smith, Clarence Snyder, or the Akron and Cleveland A.A. groups you find that these four principles (honest, purity, unselfishness and love) were "yardsticks" as Dr. Bob called them for A.A.'s:

- Fourth Step (Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves)
- Sixth Step (Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character)
- Seventh Step (Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings)
- Tenth Step (Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it)

- Twelfth Step (Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs)

Dr. Frank Buchman, Founder of the Oxford Group says he read these principles in Robert E. Speer's book, *The Principles of Jesus* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1902, pp. 33-35). And he taught these principles in Oxford Group meetings which Dr. Bob and Bill W attended. He taught that these represented the uncompromising moral principles taught by Jesus in the Bible.

Robert Speer provided the following Biblical documentation for the absolute standards of Jesus:

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HONESTY - When he (the devil) lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **John 8:44 (NIV)**

PURITY - You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>(28)</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>(29)</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>(30)</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. **Matthew 5:27-30 (NIV)**

UNSELFISHNESS - In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. **Luke 14:33 (NIV)**

LOVE - "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **(35)** By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." **John 13:34-35 (NIV)**

As you study the Big Book, you find these yardsticks (honest, purity, unselfishness and love) throughout the Book. Dr. Bob, in his last major address said he felt the Four Absolutes (honest, purity, unselfishness and love, taken from the Good Book) were still important to AA.

Major reference materials:

- Frank Buchman. Remaking the World. London: Blandford Press, 1961, pp. 36, 40, 96, 131.
- Samuel M. Shoemaker, Jr. The Church Can Save the World. NY: Harper & Brothers, 1938, pp. 119-20.
- DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers. NY: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1980, pp. 54, 163.
- Dick B., The Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous, 2d ed. Kihei, HI: Paradise Research Publications, Inc., 1998, pp. 237-46.
- Anne Smith's Journal: A.A.'s Principles of Success, 3rd ed, Paradise Research Publications, Inc., 1998, pp. 29-36, 49-53, 74-79, 94-95, 100-01, 104-08, 118, 121-22, 133.
- Mel B., New Wine: The Spiritual Roots of the Twelve Step Miracle. MN: Hazelden Foundation, 1991, pp. 76-138.
- The Four Absolutes. Cleveland: Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., n.d.

Source – AA History Lovers