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## Step Five Essay: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

One of the lies that I used to tell myself is that “I’m different.” I used to think that I’m not like the rest of all the other alcoholics in A.A. That created all kinds of problems for myself. I was lonely, resentful, filled with self-pity, and suffered from all sorts of rationalizations. When I was sick of my life, I got a sponsor. My sponsor asked me if I was willing to go to any lengths to gain victory over alcohol. After assuring him that I was, he told me to review the 12 Steps because those were some of the lengths he was referring to. We then started working through the steps, following the instructions in the Big Book.

When it came to my 4<sup>th</sup> Step, I felt hesitant. My alcoholic thinking had already anticipated both the 5<sup>th</sup> Step and the 9<sup>th</sup> Step, and I certainly didn’t want to reveal some of my deeper secrets. However, in reading both the *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *12 Steps & 12 Traditions*, I found specific warnings that if I skimmed on the 5<sup>th</sup> Step, I might not overcome drinking.\* As well, both books warned that my ego reduction would be mostly theoretical until I cleaned house and became entirely honest with another person. The Big Book also says, “We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world” (p.74). So I firmed my resolve to be thorough and honest. I knew that I was only as sick as my secrets. I made an appointment with my sponsor and prepared for a long talk.

In going into my 5<sup>th</sup> Step, I was nervous. I had brought my 4<sup>th</sup> Step. I tried to tell my sponsor that it wasn’t neat enough — maybe I should type it up. He asked me if it was an honest appraisal; perfection wasn’t the goal, but that it was to be fearless and thorough. To alleviate my fears, we began by praying and inviting our Higher Power into our conversation.

We talked about things that were on my 4<sup>th</sup> Step, and we shared stories that were similar. I talked about my character defects, how they affected me, and what my mistakes were. No part of my life was spared. Resentments, fears, and even my sex conduct were all disclosed. We discussed my part of each situation. I began to see how my character defects were holding me back in life. I was using dishonesty and self-seeking to avoid responsibility and keep others distanced from me. I was using resentments as justifications to judge others, feel self-pity, and justify my harms to others. I used fear to justify nearly all my character flaws and attempts to control my life and others. Drinking was just a symptom of all my problems.

Just as I had thought that my drinking mostly harmed myself, I thought that my character defects were really only harming myself. Now, I could see exactly where I had been selfish, and how my shortcomings were affecting my loved ones, friends, and coworkers. At one point, I felt ashamed; but by being honest with my sponsor, I felt a burden being lightened. My sponsor told me “you’re not alone.” He assured me that I didn’t have to live like this anymore. I felt free for the first time in my sobriety. The loneliness I felt had disappeared. He told me that my 5<sup>th</sup> Step was really not very different at all from his. So, I wasn’t different, after all! I was just like all the other people in A.A. There was a feeling of belonging that brought a new hope.

We ended our talk with prayer, thanking God for letting us get to know Him and each other better. Afterwards, I spent an hour quietly reflecting on things. For that hour, I was at complete peace. I felt I could look others in the eye and walk upright in this world. My mind was calm and clear, and my heart was light. I felt humility, without humiliation. Afterwards, I called my sponsor. We reviewed the previous steps. I was sure we were ready to keep going. A thorough 5<sup>th</sup> Step prepared me well for Step 6, since I could see the true cost of all my defects of character. I could see how they shut me off from the “sunlight of the spirit,” and how they affected all those around me.

Since then, I have heard many 5<sup>th</sup> Steps. Each time, we are swapping stories, and each time we find that there is hope. The 5<sup>th</sup> Step helps me become more honest, open-minded, and willing. In hearing each other’s stories, we graduate from being in the spirit of fellowship to the Fellowship of the Spirit. Each time I find that we are not alone, I am not as unique and disconnected from others, and that we all live with a common spiritual solution.

— Patrick M.

\*See “Into Action” p. 72 *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and “Step Five” p. 56 *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

## **Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

“The unique ability of each A.A. to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or on any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety. These legacies of suffering and of recovery are easily passed among alcoholics, one to the other. This is our gift from God, and its bestowal upon others like us is the one aim that today animates A.A.’s all around the globe.”

— from p. 151, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, reprinted with permission from AA World Services Inc.

“Faith is more than our greatest gift; its sharing with others is our greatest responsibility. May we of A.A. continually seek the wisdom and the willingness by which we may well fulfill that immense trust which the Giver of all perfect gifts has placed in our hands.”

— Bill W., from *The AA Grapevine*, April 1961, Copyright © *The AA Grapevine, Inc.* Reprinted with permission.

## **Message from the Manager: GSO Sets A Great Example of How We Help!!**

Last month we received a call from a man whose brother needed a Twelfth Step call in his native language: Vietnamese. So, we checked our Twelfth Step list — no Vietnamese speakers. We called the Minneapolis Intergroup, and they didn’t have anyone. Then we tried Milwaukee, Chicago, LA, New York, Mississippi and Alabama. Finally, someone suggested we talk to the General Service Office in New York — they might have dealt with this before, and might have an idea.

By this time it was 4:15 pm central time on a Friday, but I thought I’d call anyway in case there was a quick answer. Two staff members at GSO got involved, and they called AA contacts all over the country to find a way to help our guy. They found out that there was a Service Conference going on in the Northwest, and arranged for an announcement to be made. They called me back after 5pm our time — after 6pm in New York — to tell me what they had done and what else I might try in the meantime.

Early the next week, the newcomer showed up in the Intergroup office looking for a meeting directory. He’d already received a Twelfth Step call in Vietnamese from an AA member in Oregon, and someone had already shipped him a Vietnamese Big Book! I was amazed at the power of our fellowship, and how quickly AA responded to this seemingly difficult situation!

The staff at our General Service Office—whom we support with our Seventh Tradition contributions—set a great example. They show just how we ought to act towards the newcomer, and they take our Declaration of Responsibility very seriously : “When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”

### **2006 Steering Board**

<b><u>Chair:</u></b>	<b>Marty M.</b>
<b><u>Alt. Chair:</u></b>	<b>Jeff T.</b>
<b><u>Secretary:</u></b>	<b>Eric H.</b>
<b><u>Treasurer:</u></b>	<b>Mary Jo N.</b>
<b><u>Members at Large 2006:</u></b>	<b>Alfred K. and Roxi S.</b>
<b><u>Members at Large 2005:</u></b>	<b>Tom S. and Kristin</b>
<b><u>Advisor to the Board:</u></b>	<b>Renee B.</b>
<b><u>Office Manager:</u></b>	<b>Tom N.</b>

### **Office Calls**

Meeting Information	165
Inventory/Hours	18
12th Step Calls	14
Temporary Sponsors	8
Speaker Requests	11
Special Events	1
Outside Issues	28
Administrative	24
Other	86
<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>355</b>
<b>Daily average</b>	<b>14.2</b>
Visitors	47

*\*Call tally is for calls taken during office hours only and does not include calls taken during Night Owl shifts.\**

## **Saint Paul AA Intergroup - Minutes from March 21, 2006 Main Body Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30.

The meeting was opened with the serenity prayer.

In Attendance: Eric H, Jonathan G, Roxi S, Mary Jo, Tom N, Paul T, Bonnie R, David A, John K, Suzanne B, Marty M, Mike, Peggy O, Tom S, Julia I, John B, Greg M, Jeri L, Diane E, Kristin Y, Alfred K, Renee B, John F, Jeff T, and Jonathan.

The primary purpose of Intergroup was read.

The February minutes were approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Jo presented the treasurer's report. We had a fantastic month, largely because of literature sales during the Women's Conference. Both our office sales of literature and contributions from groups were higher than February of 2005.

**Office Report:** Tom presented the office report. Direct deposit for Intergroup staff was approved as was the clearance to access online banking information. Intergroup has several new items in stock, adding to the variety in our office. The pamphlet explaining a treasurer's duties was revised. Tom also had a heartwarming tale of a local Vietnamese man in need of a Twelfth Step call and the success our office eventually had in arranging it.

**Website Report:** Jonathan presented the website report. Though down from last month, the site was viewed many times compared to any month last year. Jonathan also announced that the website has space for individual events and made a call for local groups to let him know about theirs.

**Outreach Program:** Alfred presented the outreach report. He continues to make progress by visiting individual business meetings and is making a point of visiting the larger AA clubs at this point. He is still looking for assistance and passed around information packets for outreach volunteers.

**Night Owl Report:** Diane presented the Night Owl Report. All shifts are filled and Intergroup's phones are being answered 24 hours a day. Thanks for volunteering!

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Spring Fling-May 13
- Open House - TBA
- Ice Cream Social
- Fall Workshop
- Gratitude Night
- New Year's Eve

### **Old Business**

**New Business:** Kristin is the new Member at Large for Intergroup.

**Open Discussion:** The question of providing ethnocentric Twelfth Step calls was brought up by Renee; nothing was decided. Marty raised the question of an ASL interpreter as brought up by a representative who is deaf. That rep has not shown up since the original discussion and it is a concern that he may be absent because of the lack of an interpreter.

**Closed with the Lord's Prayer.**

## 7th Tradition Suggestions For Groups

“Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

Your group can make an informed decision regarding contributions with information from A.A. World Services. The information below is a suggestion taken from the pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where money and spirituality mix.”

### 50% St. Paul Intergroup

Spruce Tree Center  
1600 University Ave. #407  
St. Paul, MN 55104

### 30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

### 10% Southern MN Area 36

Area Assembly  
P.O. Box 2812  
Mpls., MN 55402

### 10% District Committee

Ramsey County:

District 8, P.O. Box 2267  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dakota County:

District 19, P.O. Box 1466  
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:

District 15, P.O. Box 181  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

SE Ramsey County:

District 26, P.O. Box 75980  
St. Paul, MN 55175

## INTERGROUP INCOME FOR MARCH

Total Group Contributions:  
\$2253.36

Number Groups Contributing: 30

Number of Faithful Fivers: 17

Total from Faithful Fivers: \$340.00

### District Meetings

#### **District 8 (Ramsey Co.)**

Fairview Community Center  
1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 203, Roseville  
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM

#### **District 15 (Wash. Co.)**

Christ Lutheran Church  
11194 N. 36th St., Lake Elmo  
4th Mon., 7:00 PM

#### **District 19 (Dakota Co.)**

Rosemount Community Center  
13885 South Robert Trail  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

#### **District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)**

1099 Payne Ave. St. Paul  
2nd Fri., 6:00 PM  
www.district26-area36.org

### **Thanks to all the terrific volunteers who helped in the Intergroup Office during April!**

Andy, Andy B, Anne B, Brad, Christen, Eliot, Ethan W, Gil, Lynda, Jack R, Jerry, Kelly S, Ken O, Mike, Mike A, Matt, Patti S., Rebecca H, Red B, Roxi, Frank, Tom S, Terry, & Val.



Thanks to all the Night Owl volunteers and groups as well.

### **12th Step Opportunity**

Women's Workhouse AA meeting  
Volunteers of America  
Dale and Larpentuer, St. Paul  
Saturday, 11:00 AM, Tuesday 4 - 5 PM  
You'll need a background check (paid for).  
Women only, please.

Thank you, to all of the groups that contributed in the month of March:

11 W. Bernard Group, Amigo's III, Basic Text Women's Group, Cliffhangers, Cottage Grove, Dakota AA, River Hills AA, East Side Club, East Side Squad 6, Fri. 12x12 By the Book, Happy, Joyous, and Free, Highland Park AA, Hour of Power, Hugo AA, Lindstrom AA Group, Midway AA, New Brighton Alano, North Branch Thursday, ORV AA, Pages of, Wisdom BB, Primary Purpose, Red Wing AA, River Rats, River town BB, Roseville Wednesday Night AA, Shalom, Shoreview Big Book Plus, Sisters of Serenity, South Suburban, St. John's AA Little Canada, St. John's of the wild, St. Luke AA, Stillwater Women's, Thank God It's Friday, Third Edition AA, Third Tradition Northfield, Uptown AA, Valley Creek Monday AA, Valley Creek Thurs Night AA, White Bear Lake Area AA, Women's 12x12, Women's Daily Reflection

### **BE A NIGHT OWL !!**

A Night Owl shift is a once-a-month commitment to answer phones during the hours that Intergroup is closed. Some shifts can be done in the office; all can be done from home. The commitment can be filled by an individual or a group. Taking on a Night Owl commitment means that when still suffering alcoholics call AA for help, they find another alcoholic at the other end of the line. When you or your group sign up to take a shift, you are trained in how to respond to calls and given all of the materials that are needed. **Please call Katie at the office or go to our website at [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org) if you can help. There are still open shifts in May.**

### ***The Lifeline: Purpose Statement***

*The Lifeline* is a monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup Association office of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by, and for members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or Intergroup. (Exception: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets are reprinted with permission from A.A. World Services, Inc.; The A.A. Preamble is reprinted with permission of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.) We welcome articles of opinion or descriptions of personal experience (no poetry, please), which should be sent to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue #407, St. Paul MN 55104. Materials or articles cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length and contents that may violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc. The deadline is the 2nd of the preceding month. Thank you.

## The Twelve Concepts: Concept V

**“Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.”**

“In granting this traditional “Right of Appeal,” we recognize that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are partly or wholly in error they still perform a most valuable service when, by asserting their “Right of Appeal,” they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.” (p.22)

*--Reprinted from Twelve Concepts for World Service with permission from AA World Services Inc.*

### UPCOMING EVENTS!!

#### **St. Paul Spring Fling !!**

Saturday May 13, 2006  
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer  
285 North Dale St, St. Paul MN 55102  
Speakers: 7:00 pm  
Dance: 9:00 pm—12:00 am  
Dance Admission: \$5.00  
More Information: 651-227-5502

#### **Gopher State Round Up XXXIII**

“Twelve Steps to Freedom”  
May 26, 27, 28, 2006  
Sheraton Bloomington  
Highway 100 & 494, Bloomington, MN  
Registration: \$10.00  
More Information Available at:  
[www.gopherstateroundup.org](http://www.gopherstateroundup.org)

#### **“Life Will Mean Something At Last” 14th Annual Erie Area AA Women’s Retreat**

June 2, 3, 4, 2006  
Camp Findley  
Findley Lake, New York  
More Information:  
Kathy B. (814) 899-6497  
Sallie H. (814) 899-0614

#### **Sponsorship, Service & Self Support: In a Changing World**

Saturday, June 10, 2006 12:30 pm—4:30 pm  
Union Congregational Church  
3700 Alabama Ave South  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416  
Sponsored by Mpls Intergroup: 952-922-0880

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Motorcycle AA Convention**

June 23, 24, 25, 2006  
Emerald Acres Campground Pearl City, IL  
Pre-Registration: \$30.00 before June 6th  
More Information:  
Jodi S. (815) 703-6071  
Tom S. (815) 623-5329

#### **“A new freedom and a new happiness” 31st Annual Atlanta Round Up**

July 20, 21, 22, 23, 2006  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
More Information:  
770-395-3900

### **Akron Founders’ Day**

**71st Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous at the Birthplace of AA**

June 9, 10, 11 2006  
University of Akron, Akron Ohio 44325  
[www.akronAA.org](http://www.akronAA.org)

### **Is your meeting represented at Intergroup?**

The May Representatives’ meeting will be held May 16 at 7:30pm,  
at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 N. Dale St., St. Paul, 55103.

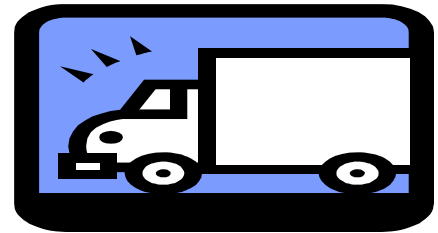
St. Paul Intergroup  
Spruce Tree Center  
1600 University Ave. W., Suite #407  
St. Paul, MN 55104

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Thank you!



**St. Paul Intergroup Faithful Fiver Form**

Contribute five dollars to St. Paul Intergroup every month so we can continue to carry our life-saving message of hope. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the Lifeline.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street, City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send this form and a check to:**

St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue W. #407, St. Paul MN 55104