

April 14, 1959

Dear Russ,

Am right sorry for my delay in answering. Lois and I were a long time out of the country and this was followed by an attack of the marathon flu that has been going around here in New York. We are okay now, however, but I did want to explain my delay.

Now about the business of adding the Lord's Prayer to each A.A. meeting. This practice probably came from the Oxford Groups who were influential in the early days of A.A. You have probably noted in "A.A. Comes of Age" what ,the connection of these people with A.A. really was. I think saying the Lord's Prayer was a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us.

Of course, there are always those who seem to be offended by the introduction of any prayer whatever into an ordinary A.A. gathering. Also, it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document.

Nevertheless this Prayer is of such wide-spread use and recognition that the argument of its Christian origin seems to be a little far-fetched. It is also true that A.A.'s believe in some kind of God and that communication and strength is obtainable through His grace. Since this is the general concensus it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in connection with our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic and atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding our light under a bushel.

However,' around here, the leader of the meeting usually asks those to join him in the Lord's Prayer who feel that they would care to do so. The worst that happens to the objectors is taat they have to listen to it. This is doubtless a salutary exercise in tolerance at their stage of progress.

So that's the sum of the Lord's Prayer business as I recall it. Your letter made me wonder in just what connection you raise the question.

Meanwhile, please know just how much Lois and I treasure the friendship of you both. May Providence let our paths presently cross one of these days.

Devotedly yours,

Bill Wilson **BW/lw**

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