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Hey, I'm Mike Z and it's time for another episode of Agnostic Reading of the AA Big Book. Today we're starting with the foreword to the third edition.

Forward to the third edition. By March 1976, when this edition went to the printer, the total worldwide membership of Alcoholics Anonymous was conservatively estimated at more than 1 million people, with almost 28,000 groups meeting in over 90 countries. Surveys of groups in the United States and Canada indicate that AA is reaching out not only to more and more people, but to a wider and wider range.

Women now make up more than one fourth of the membership among newer members. The proportion is nearly one third. 7% of the AA surveyed.

Are less than 30 years of age. Among them many in their teens. The basic principles of the AA program, it appears, hold good for individuals with many different lifestyles. Just as the program has brought recovery to those of many different nationalities, the 12 steps that summarize the program may be called Los Doce Pasos in one country. les Douze Etapes in another I'm sure I mispronounced that, but they trace exactly the same path to recovery that was blazed by the earliest members of Alcoholics Anonymous. In spite of the great increase in the size and span of this fellowship, at its core it remains simple and personal.

Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins. When one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength and hope.

So in that, as you saw already, I had 1976 membership, 1,020,000 groups, 90 countries continues to grow. And really, the most important part is, the simple and personal and recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength and hope. Notice there's no reference to the word God there. It's just people, right?

So that's my agnostic take on, AA is, you'll see, is it's just people, you know, being honest, being vulnerable, sharing what works and what doesn't work for them. Hey. And if you're, you know, the faithful religious divinity type, good for you.

I'm not. And I'm speaking to those who are like me. Next is the foreword to the fourth edition.

Forward to the fourth edition.

This fourth edition of Alcoholics Anonymous came off press in November 2001, at the start of a new millennium. Since the third edition was published in 1976, worldwide membership of AA has just about doubled to an estimated 2 million or more, with nearly 100,800 groups meeting and approximately 150 countries around the world.



Literature has played a major role in its growth, and a striking phenomena of the past quarter century has been the explosion of translations of our basic literature into many languages and dialects, and country after country where the AA seed was planted. It has taken root Slowly at first, then growing by leaps and bounds when literature has become available.

Currently, Alcoholics Anonymous has been translated into 43 languages. As the message of recovery has reached larger numbers of people, it is also touched the lives of a vastly greater variety of suffering alcoholics. When the phrase We are people who would not normally mix.

Page 17 of this book was written in 1939. It referred to a fellowship composed largely of men and a few women, with quite similar social, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Like so much of it, is basic text. Those words have proved to be far more visionary than the founding members could ever have imagined.

The stories added to this edition represent a membership whose characteristics of age, gender, race and culture have widened and deepened to encompass virtually everyone. The first 100 members could have hoped to reach. While our literature has preserved the integrity of a message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the fellowship.

Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, AA members with computers can participate in meetings online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country and around the world. In any meeting, anywhere it is share, experience, strength and hope with each other in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. Modern to modern or face to face is speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity.

So, you saw already the various things I had illustrated. Again, I'll just run through it, you know, it just continue to go. 2 million people, 100,800 groups, hundred and 50 countries, 43 languages. Proved to be more visionary than the founding members could have ever imagined. Again, that just goes to my belief that, AA is like the U.S Bill of rights, better than the men who wrote it, better than the people who created, There was a footnote here in 2021. Alcoholics anonymous is in 73 languages. Again, just showing growth. And, last thing I had underlined was aa speak the language of the heart and all its power and simplicity. Of course, when you're sitting in the rooms listening to actual people, it's not always language of the heart. It's often bullying.

It's often condescending. It's often demanding, controlling, narcissistic, and a total fucking shit show. Just saying. But even so, even with all of that, there is, honesty, and connection that can be had. Myself, I don't find it in traditional AA anymore. I only find it, in, agnostic meetings. But you do, you do you find it where you can find it.



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Point is, at the core of a is the simplicity of just two people speaking honestly about their difficulty with drinking and not drinking.

So that's all I have. The forward to the third and the fourth edition. Next up, we'll do the doctor's opinion. If you have any comments, please do leave. Then be sure to like and subscribe and see you next time.