



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

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When insanity of our addictive thinking strikes, the only thing that can restore us to sanity is our Higher Power. The Crazy Prayer is offered as a tool for asking our Higher Power to restore us to sanity.

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FRIENDS OF THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE (FOLC)

The Literature Committee is made up of elected representatives, an alternate from each region, up to three at-large representatives, and the Editor of the *PBR*. We want to involve more SAA members in literature-related work. Connect to the network of people helping to create and distribute recovery literature. Fill out the form below and send it to:

Friends of the Literature Committee,
c/o NSO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (____) _____ - _____ FAX: (____) _____ - _____
E-Mail Address: _____
Intergroup: _____
Do you have a computer? <input type="checkbox"/> MAC <input type="checkbox"/> PC <input type="checkbox"/> Modem?
Friends of the Literature Committee (FOLC)

Some projects we're working on:

- *Plain Brown Rapper*—increase the distribution of the *PBR* in local areas and intergroups, and finding local group or intergroup news contacts
- A booklet on sponsorship
- A short guide to working the 12 Steps
- A book on the 12 Steps (to be published in 1997)
- Translations of our literature into Spanish and French (we are looking for translators as well as reviewers of material already translated)
- Do you have any ideas for new literature?

Send us your ideas or literature you have published for use by your meeting or intergroup.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE *PLAIN BROWN RAPPER*

The *PBR* includes news of the worldwide fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, stories of recovery, the experience of the fellowship in working the 12 Steps, outreach, service work, and more. The *PBR* is our journal and a vehicle for communication. In its pages, through the shared experience, strength, and hope of our fellowship, we aim to provide gifts for your recovery and serenity. \$12/year (\$18/year outside the U.S.)

Name: _____
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Make check (or International money-order) payable to NSO.
Send payment to: <i>PBR</i> Subscriptions, NSO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Pictures From God

by Jim C.

But, I'm an atheist!" I exclaimed. "How do you expect *me* to find God?"

I had began SAA only two months before in all earnestness. I fully and painfully realized my life had become unmanageable. I had also absolutely proven to myself that I was powerless over this addiction. I sought SAA as my only, last ditch hope for life. I swore I would do anything to get well. I had to—there was literally no other option. I had heard a lot of God talk in SAA, but God talk goes around a lot among desperate souls; I dismissed it as trite platitudes and mere expressions of helplessness. "Sure, sure" I thought, my small amount of self-righteous patience wearing thin, "lets get on with the *real* stuff".

Then the devastating knowledge came. This *was* the real stuff. These people were serious. It seemed to work for them. But I knew it wouldn't for me. I was an atheist. I was doomed. New desperation and terror filled my soul. I knew that if there was a God, he wouldn't help me. I didn't have the faith—I *couldn't* have faith, at least not enough or the right kind. There were just too many reasons to doubt. There was no way I could have enough faith to qualify for God's mercy.

And then there was all this talk about seeking God's will and

the power to carry that out. No way. I didn't want God's will. I feared God, or at least the angry, abusive, and wrathful image of

One mentor told me simply "Shut up and listen. God talks through many people and evidences Himself in their stories."

God foisted on me by an abusive religion. I feared his will. His will would surely destroy me. I wanted an easier way. But there was none, and the pain of my life was too intense to bear. It had to change somehow. I reached out in a sincere, yet pessimistic plea plead to my SAA mentors. "How do I find God?!!!"

One mentor told me simply "Shut up and *listen*. God talks through many people and evidences Himself in their stories." Another told me "Sure you don't feel there is a higher power who can help you - yet. But start to act as if there is. That will help you *look* for God and *listen* to his message." Yet another told me "Act as if its real even when it doesn't feel real. Get into the habit of praying to the ceiling if that is all you can do. Mumble a few words if that's all you can do. When it seems most hopeless,

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Feature

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chant to yourself 'let go and let God.'" Still another told me "You can only do your part. God will find you. You will know him when you see him. You will understand his message."

I practiced these things. I also learned to recreate God as I understood him—not as I had been taught. This made the God concept less fearsome, more personal and understanding. Miraculously, many things begin to come together. I learned what the will of God was for me—it was simply that I be healed. That wasn't so fearsome either. Finally, I read the following story, adapted from Max Lucado's book "No Wonder They Call Him The Savior". In this story God found me. I had his picture. It didn't look anything like what I expected, but I knew it was God. I put it in my heart. I understood his message. It changed my life. I call the story "Pictures from God":

The small house was simple but adequate. It consisted of one large room on a dust street. Its red-tiled roof was one of many in this poor neighborhood on the outskirts of the Brazilian village. It was a comfortable home. Mirna and her daughter, Maria, had done what they could to add color to the gray walls and warmth to the hard dirt floor. The furnishings were modest; a pallet on either side of the room, a wash basin, and a wood-burning stove.

Mirna's husband had died when Maria was an infant. The young mother, stubbornly refusing opportunities to remarry, got a job and set out to raise her young daughter. And now, fifteen years latter, the worst years were over. Though Mirna's salary as a maid afforded few luxuries, it was reliable and it did provide food and clothes. And now Maria was old enough to get a job to help out.

Some said Maria got her independence from her mother. She recoiled at the traditional idea of marrying young and raising a family. Not that she couldn't have her pick of husbands. Her olive skin and brown eyes kept a steady stream of prospects at her door. She had an infectious way of throwing her head back and filling the room with laughter. She also had that rare magic some women have that makes every man feel like a king just by being near them. But it was her spirited curiosity that made her keep all the men at arm's length.

She spoke often of going to the city. She dreamed of trading her dusty neighborhood for exciting avenues and city life. Just the thought of this horrified her mother. Mirna was always quick to remind Maria of the harshness of the streets. "People don't know you there. Jobs are scarce and the life is cruel. And besides, if you went there, what would you do for a living?"

Mirna knew exactly what Maria would do, or would have to do for a living. That's why her heart broke one morning to find her daughter's bed empty. Mirna knew immediately where her daughter had gone.

She also knew immediately what she must do to find her. She quickly threw some clothes in a bag, gathered up all her money, and ran out of the house.

On her way to the bus stop she entered a drugstore to get one last thing. Pictures. She sat in the photograph booth, closed the curtain, and spent all she could on pictures of herself. With her purse full of small black-and-white photos, she boarded the next bus to Rio de Janeiro.

Mirna knew Maria had no way of earning money. She also knew that her daughter was too stubborn to give up. When pride meets hunger, a human will do things that were before unthinkable. Knowing this, Mirna began her search. Bars, hotels, night-clubs, any place with the reputation for street walkers or prostitutes. She went to them all. At each place she left her picture—taped on a bathroom mirror, tacked to a hotel bulletin board, fastened to a corner phone booth. And on the back of each photo she wrote a note.

It wasn't too long before both the money and the pictures ran out, and Mirna had to go home. The weary mother wept as the bus

began its long journey back to her small village.

In this story God found me. I had his picture. It didn't look anything like what I expected, but I knew it was God.

It was a few weeks later that young Maria descended the hotel stairs. Her young face was tired. Her brown eyes no longer danced with youth but spoke of pain and fear. Her laughter was broken. Her dream had become a nightmare. A thousand times over she had longed to trade these countless beds for her secure pallet. Yet the little village was, in too many ways, too far away.

As she reached the bottom of the stairs, her eyes noticed a familiar face. She saw a photograph of her mother attached to a column by the stairs. She removed the small photo. Written on the back was this compelling invitation.

"Whatever you have done, whatever you have become, it doesn't matter. Please come home."

She did.

Jim C.

Steps & Traditions

Step Two: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Dear Heavenly Father, I've always been aware of You by the schooling afforded me in my youth by my mother taking me to church. I've heard of Jesus, and what You sent him to do for the world; yet as a child, I had no ability to conceive the importance of the event. Church was actually boring to me because of so many unanswered questions about when to pray, kneel, make the sign of the cross, or why kiss these pictures of the old guys in the foyer of the church? As a result, I dropped out of church and never really made much of an attempt to acknowledge you from that time on.

Throughout life, I went my own way, and learned well the ways of the world which are so deeply ingrained, that I find it hard to rid myself of the bad habits and beliefs developed as a result of my lifestyle. I must be accountable for all the times I blamed You for the bad things that happened to me and for the bitterness I felt because You made me the way I am physically. In a way, by not accepting myself as You made me, I also was unable to accept You, or anyone else. I found myself relating to You as my mother did to my dad and her life; with bitterness, anger, and

feeling like the victim of a vicious trick You played on me by not giving me the things I wanted such as good looks, agility, popularity, fame, and fortune.

As I reflect on my life, I can see the many times You tried to come to me to let me know You were there. One time sticks out in particular. The night back in 1976 when some friends and myself were listening to a tape I had made of *The Exorcist*, and an interview with Mercedes McCambridge. I was so enthralled with that movie and voice at the time. Then a Bible salesman came to the door and tried to persuade us to have a family Bible in our home. I turned him away saying I didn't need that. I look back on that with shame now, because I wish I would have been sensitive enough to pay attention to You then. But You let me continue on with life. I think in your wisdom You let me exercise the free will You have given all Your children. I can just picture You shaking your head in disappointment because I was so lost.

As time went on, it seemed like I left a path of hurt behind me. To my ex-wife, my natural children, my stepchildren, and my present wife to name a few. My distorted beliefs and ways I learned to cope with life, have

Steps & Traditions

isolated me and kept me from intimacy. Also my fears played an important part in how I coped; not wanting to face problems or people either because of rejection, or confrontation. As You well know, I delved in behaviors such as sexual compulsivity, drugs, alcohol, and fantasy. I even began to believe my own lies.

Then something happened to me on December 3, 1992. I for some reason had the desire to begin to read the Bible. I was always so apprehensive about doing so, because it looked like such a long book, and I've never been much of a reader, but the desire at this time flourished. As I read, the words began to make sense to me. I was enthralled with the stories, and developed a new perception of You and your omnipotence. A few months went by, and I came across SAA because I became aware that I might have a problem. The twelve steps and a way of spirituality were introduced to me.

After being confronted about a shameful secret that I had hid for ten years, I felt I had nowhere else to turn. One day on February 26, 1993, I was lying in bed after a two day drug and compulsive sex bender; reflecting on all I had done in my life. It seemed the reality of my actions, and the ways I hurt others, became apparent; as though I was looking at myself at that very moment out of your eyes and from your point

of view. A feeling of remorse, sadness, and isolation overwhelmed me, along with a sense of self pity, and a feeling of intense shame and guilt.

My fears played an important part in how I coped; not wanting to face problems or people either because of rejection, or confrontation. I delved in behaviors such as sexual compulsivity, drugs, alcohol, and fantasy. I even began to believe my own lies.

I always heard that if a person would just ask Jesus to come into their life, that He would do so. So at that moment, I said, "Jesus, please come into my life, and make sense out of all this mess. Forgive me for my sins." From then on, my life has been changed. I thank You and praise You God for your gift of salvation. As I continued to read your Word, I found new hope and life in the precious gift that Jesus gave to me. Many old things did slip away, and I was relieved from many of the compulsions and distorted beliefs that plagued my life. That is how I came to believe that You could restore me to sanity. My walk hasn't been perfect, but life is definitely different than before.

Sincerely,
Your child, Philip

Steps & Traditions

Tradition Two: For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

My name is David and I'm a sex and co-sex addict.

Well, up at the convention, I volunteered to write an article on the second tradition. Right away, I could tell that the writing would be a growth experience—as the first thing that I wanted to do was write about other people's behavior. I've been in CoSA long enough to realize that down that path, lies co-addiction. So, I get to write about my experience and on my ideas on leading and governing in SAA.

I like to control my surroundings and other people. I am often hyper-alert to what is happening around me and wanting to react to minimize my hurt from any situation. I've been living in fear. I walked into this fellowship with a lot of fear. I was afraid of being heard and afraid of not being heard. I was afraid that people would hear when I had opened up a deep wound with my words and then they would walk all over it. I was afraid that people would hear what I had done in my acting out and send me away, send me to jail, or condemn me forever into my isolation. I was afraid. Yet, I know that I had to come. Something inside me said that I had to come. So, I came, again and again.

To my surprise, people heard my fear and pain and were gentle. Over and over, people affirmed that what I was going through was painful and that I was correct in having wounds all over my soul. I was heard and nurtured. After a number of times, I slowly came to believe that I was at a place that would hear my pain and nurture me through the pain. I had found people who accepted me and cared.

Well, as so many times in my life, I had put my trust in a bunch of addicts. The group started to have problems. People were disputing with each other over the way that the group was going. People were starting other SAA groups in other parts of town and vocally expressing their anger at what was happening in the original group. Once again, I feared losing something I valued - Valued is an understatement. I had come to believe that the group could keep me alive and out of prison. I wasn't valuing it, I was clinging to the group like a shipwrecked person clings to a life preserver. How dare someone put my recovery and my life at risk.

I was scared, but when my sponsor asked me to fill in for him on leading a group, I did. Then I moved into other positions of

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responsibility. I resented the rule that one had to have a year in the program before being in a trusted servant's position, so I tried to manipulate things from behind. I was out there trying to direct the fellowship and to rescue my recovery from those other addicts.

Guess what? It didn't work. The group splintered and shrank. There were major personalities conflicting with each other. The process was so rough that at one intergroup meeting, the then president suggested that we simply fold up their fellowship and join another "S" fellowship.

That option did not feel like a viable option to me. I had visited that other fellowship and gotten strong negative feedback when I shared about "level three" behavior. So, I hung in there with SAA - going to six meetings a week, leading several of those meetings, being on the intergroup, and getting the intergroup to start a newsletter. In short, I was still trying to be God for the group... and burning out.

Burning out was a gift. Like all spiritual gifts, it hurt. I would go to intergroup meetings and be hurting afterwards from being in a giving mode and not getting any of my needs met. I was still having resentments about the "others who were trying to control the groups" yet the intergroup was highly formal and appeared to be trying to tell groups what to do. I had encour-

aged new groups to form (to break the hold "those people" had over the original group) only to see that group go through some deep healing and recovery.

Trying to control and manage a bunch of addicts is like trying to herd a bunch of cats past a field of catnip. It can't be done and I sure look funny attempting to do the impossible.

Here I was, helping several groups get started on their own, doing a lot of other things for the groups and the funny thing was that the growth of the new groups didn't seem to have any correlation to my efforts. No matter how much energy I was putting into the new groups, they weren't growing. My concerns and efforts to make sure that that person over there heard the "right" things for her/his recovery didn't seem to make any difference to them. It certainly didn't help me in my recovery. Being God is not easy.

Letting go has not been real easy. Being "super responsible" was my job in my family of origin. It has only been while seeing how much trying to manage another person's recovery has hurt me that I've been able to let go of that addiction. Now I can see that making sure the right number of people show up for a meeting,

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how the meeting is run, whether or not someone else hears the right message, or even making sure that the group is using the "right" materials *is not my job!*

Those are the sure ways to lose sight of my recovery. My job is only to show up and to work the steps for me. God will take care of everything else. I don't have to.

So, I dropped out of the intergroup and saw it fall apart in a few months later. I dropped out of leading most of the groups I was leading. I pulled back on a lot of the groups I was going to and decided to focus on the new group that started just two miles from my house (as most of the other groups were 20+ miles away).

A year ago, we had a week-end retreat and got the intergroup started again with a totally different behavior. Now, all we do is to get together for supper and talk to each other about what's happening with the different groups and it is open to anybody who wants to show up. People keep expecting me to step in and run it, but I won't. It's a lot more fun this way and I'm getting my needs for sharing and fellowship met much better.

I've learned a few things from this growth experience:

1. The groups have higher powers that will lead the groups no matter what I do.

2. It is a whole lot easier on me to listen to the group's higher power and to walk in step with that higher power than to try to run the groups myself.

3. Timing of events is important. The "when" I may want something to happen may not be the "when" that the group's higher power may want it to happen. Again, it is easier on me to listen to the right "when".

4. Trying to control and manage a bunch of addicts is like trying to herd a bunch of cats past a field of catnip. It can't be done and I sure look funny attempting to do the impossible.

5. If I think that something ought to be done, my job is not to jump in and do it. I simply need to express my opinions and listen to what the group conscience is.

So, when I listen to the Second Tradition and how I don't have to govern the groups to preserve my recovery, I hear a message of freedom. No more do I have to run things. No more do I have to worry about the direction in which the group is going. No more do I have to worry about other people's recovery. That is God's job. I am free.

The Crazy Prayer by Anonymous

"It's not the drink, it's the think before the drink!" That's what my sponsor told me. He also said: "Hi, my name's Charlie and I have the problem, and the problem is me." I have found this to be true of me as well. You see, what happens is this—I get crazy on the inside, then I act crazy on the outside.

On the third day of my program I was driving to a meeting and my brain jumped into the obsessive mode. I could not stop the thoughts, and I was not enjoying them. Finally I just surrendered, and the next thing I heard in my head was a prayer. I can't say that I was saying a prayer in my head, it was more

like a prayer was being said in my head. At the end of the prayer, the obsession was lifted.

About six months later I made the connection between Step Two and what I call The Crazy Prayer. The program is very specific about what my Higher Power will do for me. My Higher Power will restore me to sanity.

Page 66 of The Big Book says that "...we have to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm ... may be the dubious luxury of normal men...." Oh yeah, then it uses the word poison. For me there are many dubious luxuries and poisons.

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STEP 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Self-pity, resentment, hatred, fear, loneliness, despair, shame, perfectionism, unworthiness, fantasy.

A sense of being fundamentally inadequate, a sense of being indomitable.

SLOTH, LUST, ANGER, ENVY, GREED, GLUTTONY, PRIDE

THE CRAZY PRAYER

God, my thinking is getting crAzy again, and I can't change it. If you don't come in and change my thinking, I will continue to suffer these thoughts, and maybe even act on them and cause more pain and trouble.

God, I don't want to suffer, and I'd better not cause any more pain and trouble, so would you please come in and change my thinking?

Thank you.

(NOW GET UP, GET MOVING, AND DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING)

