

Is A.A. a religious society?

A.A. is not a religious society, since it requires no definite religious belief as a condition of membership. Although it has been endorsed and approved by many religious leaders, it is not allied with any organization or sect. Included in its membership are Catholics, Protestants, Jews, members of other major religious bodies, agnostics, and atheists. The A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism is undeniably based on acceptance of certain spiritual values. The individual member is free to interpret those values as he or she thinks best, or not to think about them at all. Most members, before turning to A.A., had already admitted that they could not control their drinking. Alcohol had become a power greater than themselves, and it had been accepted on those terms. A.A. suggests that to achieve and maintain sobriety, alcoholics need to accept and depend upon another Power recognized as greater than themselves. Some alcoholics choose to consider the A.A. group itself as the power greater than themselves; for many others, this Power is God — as they, individually, understand Him; still others rely upon entirely different concepts of a Higher Power. Some alcoholics, when they first turn to A.A., have definite reservations about accepting any concept of a Power greater than themselves. Experience shows that, if they will keep an open mind on the subject and keep coming to A.A. meetings, they are not likely to have too difficult a time in working out an acceptable solution to this distinctly personal problem.