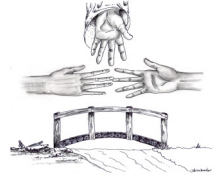
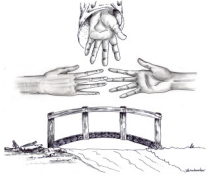


Cross Over the Bridge



*"I now strive for progress and not perfection.
I feel progress being made after every meeting I attend."*

I recently picked up a study book, "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" that was given to me on the day I checked into a treatment hospital for alcoholism. On the day I was discharged I had a number of fellow patients sign the book the same way we had our friends do when we graduated from High School. I remember being told that I would be up against great odds for a successful recovery because only 1 out of 10 usually makes it. All those that did sign my book, with a brief statement of support, were not from the Oconomowoc area, so I never saw any of them again. That was 27 years ago. I can still feel their love and support today as I read the messages they wrote. There are 24 signatures, so according to the odds I was given, at the very best, only 3 of us made it. The good news to share here is that many who do have slips come back. Unfortunately, many do not. So, why am I still sober today? What am I doing that those who have failed did not do?

When I was in the hospital I found out that I was dealing with a disease and not just a bad habit. I will never be able to go to a doctor and have him/her prescribe a pill to cure me from this incurable disease. The only medicine for this disease is the support meetings that are available wherever I may be. Every single person that has had a slip, but also had the courage to come back to these support meetings shared with me why they failed - and it was because they didn't think it was necessary to attend such meetings anymore. They never intended to grab that bottle again, but didn't want to be bothered with the meetings, so they stopped taking their "medicine" and quickly got sick again. At these meetings I am reminded that alcohol is cunning, baffling, powerful and infinitely patient. I am also reminded that I cannot continue a successful recovery on my own. The doctor I found 27 years ago to help me was God, whom I call on every day. The prescription he has written for me is the support meetings. Certainly alcoholism is on the top of my list that I need to deal with and keep under control every day, but by going to meetings I have discovered a number of other character defects I also need to work on. The Christians Sharing meetings on Tuesday evenings have been a big support to help me with these defects. Probably the first defect I had to work on was admitting that I even had a defect - and then the door opened. I now strive for progress and not perfection. I feel progress being made after every meeting I attend. God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

If you know of anyone in need, please contact the pastors who will lead you to the hand that will help you cross over the bridge