



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Alcoholics

One of my favorite people is Mickey Evans, half cowboy, half preacher, who runs Dunklin Memorial Camp near Indiantown — an alcoholic rehabilitation center. DMC is located on several hundred acres of isolated land near Lake Okeechobee where alcoholics come and voluntarily submit themselves to a three-month program of study and hard work on the ranch and farm.

There is something special about alcoholics. I admit I am not very effective in working with them, for I am not one. And as all therapists agree, it really does “take one to know one.”

Also, I am not effective in working with alcoholics, for, of all groups of people on earth, alcoholics drain. They have absolutely nothing to give. The very essence of the alcoholic is that he has thrown everything away. He has wasted everything. Alcohol has become

god, and eventually executioner. So all an alcoholic can do is take. They take your time. They take your money. They take your love. They take your possessions. They take everything and give absolutely nothing in return.

Yet I am genuinely drawn, attracted, to the alcoholic. I make regular trips down to Dunklin Memorial Camp to see Mickey and spend time working around his men in the program — who range all the way from poor cowboys to prominent professional people. And I love to be around them. For, unlike any other group of people, alcoholics have to publicly admit they are failures. All pride is washed away. Gone. When you fall into alcoholism, when you live with it for years, eventually everyone knows you are a failure. It's too obvious. You lose your health, your respect, your self-control. Many lose their families, their jobs, and wind up in prison.

Yet I love them. I love them because they are in a better position than all people on earth to be touched by God. The things that stand as barriers between most men and God are gone. Pride, that great barrier which prohibits God from breaking into the soul of a person, is destroyed by alcohol. So the alcoholic, with nothing to offer but a hulk, a shell, comes staggering to the throne of his creator mumbling “Here I am. Please help.” And God always answers a prayer like that.

I believe God has a special place in his heart for the alcoholic. I think he loves to touch and minister to them because they are helpless, ensnared, enslaved. But only God can help.

Maybe, if you're in this situation, and are ready for help, you'd like to meet my friend Mickey Evans. Or better, meet his friend, God. You don't have to go to Indiantown to find him, you know. He lives in Vero Beach also.