

The Waller Mason Lodge #808 Online Newsletter



The Waller Masonic Lodge Buildings From December 30, 1897 To The Present

Worshipful Master Matt Gass - Editor John "Corky" Daut
The January 2016 Issue

Waller Masonic Lodge News

No one has offered anything to print this month. And nothing has been set to worry about yet. (That I can remember) They say that no news is good news, so it appears that Waller Lodge is starting the new year with a clean slate. We are still planning on a garage sale for March. Oh yes, The Waller Lodge Birthday December 30, 1898 and Christmas Party was a big success.

Masonry Teaches Toleration

By John "Corky" Daut P.M.

One of the fanatic anti-Masonic writers claims that this toleration is the blackest sin of Masonry., he says, " toleration springs from the pits of hell and from the father of lies, Lucifer."

Well, the writer is partially right, Freemasonry really does believe in toleration. Freemasonry does not condemn anyone for their beliefs, even fanatic anti-Masons. When we consider what intolerance has produced in this world -- the Inquisition, the massacre of the inhabitants of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, the burning of Protestants at the stake, the horrors of Hitler, the mass murders of Stalin, the "killing fields" of Cambodia, The 200,000 people shot and gassed by Saddam Hussein -- it is hard to believe that toleration springs from the devil.

As all good Masons have been taught, our Masonic Light comes from the Holy Book on the alter, which is where I will go for the answers.

Bible Verses that anti-Masons never read or never understood or purposely ignored so they can sell their own versions of hatred for profit or to control their followers;

Mark Left A Message Anti-Masons Should Heed;

Mar 12:31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And Paul Added;

(Gal 5:15) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Christ did not say, "Only love your fellow Christians." or "Only love your fellow Baptists." He said **"A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you."** It does appear that Christ said Love Freemasons and Jews and Arabs and the rest of mankind.

But Luke Said It Best;

In Luk 6:37 "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:"

And Paul also advised the Romans,

In Romans 13: 8 -10 Jesus said "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

In Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

1Ki 6:38 And in the eleventh year, in the month BUL, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

Rev 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

So, with the Bible full of rules that men must tolerate each other and Christ's own words say "Love your neighbor." it is very hard to understand how a so called "Christian" minister can completely ignore parts of the Holy Bible and Christ's teachings.

Oh yes, I almost forgot, They can't make money. Selling their twisted hate filled books, booklets, tapes and CDs by revealing the truth.

Freemasonry is spreading the Light as taught by the Holy Bible.

Boy, Was I Surprised

I woke up to go to the toilet in the middle of the night and I noticed a terrorist with a very big knife, sneaking through my next door neighbor's garden .

Suddenly my neighbor came from nowhere and smacked him over the head with a shovel, killing him instantly.

He then dug up the flowers, dug a grave, put the body in it, covered it up, and replanted the flowers. I couldn't even tell it was a grave.

Astonished, and shook up, I got back into bed.

My wife said, "You're upset, what is it?"

"You'll never believe what I've just seen," I said,

"Bob still has my shovel."

No Mason Left Behind Part One

By Midnight Freemason Contributor Bro. "Doc" Gentry

Ok everyone repeat after me, "No man takes a step in Freemasonry alone." Say it again. Come on louder! Like you mean it! LET ME SEE YOUR WAR FACE!

Sorry, I got carried away. Now, what does that mean? The saying, not being carried away. It's simple, oh so simple.

From the point where a man says, "I need to talk to a Mason about this Mason thing." he is not left alone in his steps. He is guided, step by step, and only by taking our time and doing it right, do we see the wisdom in this action. A man comes to your lodge and says, "I want to be a mason." I encourage you NOT to throw a petition in his face. Take the time necessary to get to know him and his life. In fact, two or three brothers should take somewhere between 6 months to 2 years (whatever your Grand Lodge says to do on the petition ironical-

ly) to get to know your potential candidate.

"But Brother Doc, he might leave if we don't push him through."

Well then brothers, who's to say that he would actually come to lodge then? Besides, we are Masons, our word is our bond, so don't start the potential brother off on the wrong foot by lying on his petition. Please don't get him started off wrong by pushing it through either. I know, I know, Grand Lodges are freaking out about numbers and attendance and this reason alone should be the basis of you vetting potential brethren more thoroughly. Besides that, how will this potential brother get work and receive instruction if you don't know where his passions are to give him work?

Ok step one, get to know the potential brother, check. Step two, get to know his family as well. Don't leave that poor man to try and explain Freemasonry to his family all by himself, he has no idea what Freemasonry is... in fact, I still don't know all of what Freemasonry is, so don't send me in alone either! Invite the family to functions and events. If you don't know what you can and can't tell families, and there are things you can tell them I assure you, go back and read my mentoring piece. Copy and paste the link below...

<http://www.midnightfreemasons.org/2015/09/mentoring.html>

Once the allotted time has passed and he still wants to join you crazy kids, oh and you all still want him to become a brother, then have him fill out the petition. Once he has filled it out and way before you initiate him, assign him a mentor. Do not wait, you will miss valuable opportunities for him to grow, even before he is voted on. What's the worst thing that happens? He doesn't join but is a better person for the experience? No Mason Left Behind is not just some cute catch phrase that Brother Robert Johnson branded me with, it is a creed all Brethren should live by. No matter what you do, no one takes a step in Freemasonry alone!

Countdown To Destruction On New Year's Eve.

A lady stood up at the local pub and said that it was time to get ready for the celebrations. At the stroke of midnight, she wanted every husband to be standing next to the one person who made his life worth living.

Well, it was kind of embarrassing. The bartender was almost crushed to death.

A Blast From The Past

From the March 2007 Newsletter

Editor's Note; Every time I walk through the Lodge's front door I am so proud of the lobby's appearance and remember what it looked like 9 years ago. Thanks Brothers. So, this is for all the members that don't remember those "Good Old Days". *Corky*

By Corky

By As those who attended Lodge lately may remember, we had started a remodeling project when W.M. "Wes" built a huge new storage closet in the back end of the dining room. The new one was built to hold all of the items stored in the 2 closets in the front lobby area, (where display cabinets are now), so they could be demolished. At the last stated meeting, W. M. Wes Mersiovsky declared Saturday Feb. 17, 2007 as a work day so we could demolish them and the wall between the closets. W. Bro. Wes and wife Liz had already started working Thursday and Friday afternoons and made a good start. When I showed up Saturday morning, Brother Calvin had already removed all the old plumbing pipes. (Older Brothers will remember when those closets were the Lodge's rest rooms) The rest of the morning

was spent with us 3 tearing out the rest of the sheetrock and the 2X4 framing, While Liz painted in the preparation room closet that will be used to store the Eastern Star's equipment.

About noon we took a break to enjoy the delicious beef stew and peach cobbler that Shirley, Calvin's wife, made for the workers. By then my knees were sending urgent messages that it was time to get off of them. Brother Regan Rape had gotten off work by then and was pulling up. He joined the others and they cleaned up the mess. Brother Rape hauled off all of the old sheet rock and other demolition materials that were left.

In the last couple of weeks, a new tile floor has been laid. All of the walls have been cleaned up and painted. The lighting has been revised and a new phone line to the hall was installed. The new ceiling has been installed and the trophy cabinets and pictures have been displayed in the new setting. Now with the old ratty front door and glass blocks replaced and new double doors up, we'll have a spacious new lobby and entrance we can really be proud of.

Who Are Freemasons?

Freemasons are men who voluntarily seek admission to a lodge, accepted because they were tested and found to be of good character, who believe in a divine presence and uphold high moral, personal, and ethical standards.

They participate and desire to participate with like minded men in learning what Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth mean, practicing these tenants within and without lodge in their various social and professional communities.

There are no secrets in Freemasonry, except for the initiatory rituals and even those are not secret in their activity, but rather in their deeper meanings.

The lessons learned in Freemasonry are openly shared with wives, friends, co-workers and to anyone who desires to understand their meaning. The most profound secret is the depth of fraternal association that comes with BEING a Freemason.

Freemasons are not typically boastful or indolent about its virtues and seldom squander the opportunity to impart the wisdom of the fraternity whenever possible. Practical duties of charity are planned for and carried out, personally and within a lodge. Most importantly, the bonds of fidelity and brotherly love are practiced within the lodge and without towards all brothers and non brothers alike, but with special consideration to brother master masons, where ever they may be.

Freemasonry is about building meaningful relationships with like minded individuals who have a spiritual connection without a religious dogma. In most instances, those bonds last a lifetime in person, at a distance, both on-line and on the street.

Light Reflected

An "Opinion" offered by Brother Bradley Kohanke, PM

From the January Davy Crockett Lodge #1225 Newsletter in San Antonio, Texas.

Let me begin this month's article by saying that I am very disappointed. I hope that grabs your attention because this has been gnawing at me since the end of our Grand Communication this December. Last year, the Grand West voted in favor of establishing a committee to research viable options for preserving and protecting "our" Grand Lodge building in Waco. This was a compromise vote that came after lengthy discussion about what we could do to save the building. The Grand West had voted in favor of doing "something," but voted against paying for it...which is why this committee was proposed. At the time, I was worried

that his was just another example of “kicking the can down the road” in the hope that someone else would do something. As it turns out, I was correct.

This committee worked very hard for nearly twelve months, trying to come up with viable options that would help not only in preserving the building for us and future generations, but also in raising the very funds needed to make the necessary repairs and improvements. They were allowed to present a slide-show of some of the ideas they came up with, all of which looked very professional and well thought out to me. However, because it was such a huge task to have something ready by this Grand Communication, they did not meet the deadline for filing a resolution for consideration. Never fear though, because the law book allows for discussion of the ideas if the Grand West votes at least four to one in favor. So, after working hard all year, doing cost/benefit analysis, determining that this was in fact the best viable option, and finally showing us pictures of what they had in mind...the idea of merely discussing it was put to a vote. Not only did they not receive the necessary 4/5 vote to just talk about it, the majority of those present voted against even discussing it. Let me say that again so it sinks in...over 50% of those present did not even want to talk about it.

Most of my business experience has been working for large corporations. A large part of that was spent working out of the corporate office, but a significant part was also spent working in the field or satellite locations. So I understand the “us versus them” mentality that sometimes occurs in the business world. Honestly, not only do I understand it, I can sometimes even sympathize. After all, the decisions coming out of “corporate” are not always in the best interest of certain locations. This happens for a variety of reasons, one being consistency requires that regulatory compliance in some areas makes it necessary to make changes everywhere, even where it isn’t needed or wanted. In addition to that, a lot of the time high-level corporate staffers are recruited from other companies and the lower levels are recruited from the geographic area of headquarters. Sometimes corporate even sends one of their own down to run local operations when there is a perceived problem. But I have to tell you, the “us versus them” mentality that exists in our own Fraternity, in our own State, boggles my mind. After all, Grand Lodge is the exact opposite! It is made up of us! Individuals from all over the State, who have a love for Masonry and their brethren, who freely give of their time (and money) to serve this Grand Jurisdiction without the expectation of any type of reward beyond doing what they hope is best for all of us. So for Lodges around the State to view Grand Lodge as something separate, or something that is only there to figure out further ways to screw us over, is the most ridiculous thing imaginable. Yet there it is, and frankly I’m tired of it.

Now, I’m not saying we should just give carte blanche to Grand Lodge to do whatever they want, that’s not right either. But by God, if the Grand West votes that they want a committee formed to come up with ideas on how to save our building, they ought to at least be willing to listen the committee’s conclusions. It’s time to stop kicking the can down the road. If we don’t figure out something quick, another beautiful monument to Freemasonry will be lost. As the representative from the Grand Lodge of Nebraska put it in his remarks in Waco, “You guys don’t know what a treasure you have here. Believe me, holding your Grand Annual Communication in the ballroom at Holiday Inn doesn’t even compare. I hope you find a way to save this building.”

That’s all, end of rant.

A Matter of Balance

By R.W. Bro. Wayne D. Anderson, DDGM Frontenac District 2015-16 - Delivered at the Official Visit to Templum Fidelis No. 746 GRC

Approximately 30 years ago, Hollywood produced a movie about a young man, new to his community and trying to find his way, was put upon, bullied and beaten by a group of young upper class thugs. At the moment of great physical peril to this young man, a much older and culturally different man interceded on what was to be a terrific beating...and put the young thugs to flight.

As the young man healed from his physical altercation, he pleaded with the older man to teach him, to instruct him on what the older man did to save him, and chase of those thugs who would do him more harm in the future.

No doubt by now you have concluded that I speak of Mr. Miyagi, or Noriyuki "Pat" Morita, whom some of you may not know was a Brother among us. He was a Mason, but sadly has passed to the Grand Lodge Above. The young man is Daniel played by Ralph Macchio. I am sure you all remember the famous "wax on, wax off" But, what I want to speak about is some of the best advise Mr. Miyagi gave to Daniel-san – when he said "Daniel-san, everything in life need Balance, you must find your balance, not balance in your stance for fighting, but life balance, find your Balance, Daniel-san."

Each and every one of us, at one time or another has felt like they are being pulled in two, three, sometimes four different directions. This is stressful on you, your significant other, your family, your co-workers and yes your Lodge Brothers.

Balance. My credo for freemasonry as I see it, was brought out by a realization about the purpose of freemasonry, one that is illustrated by the following short story by Bro. A. Peterson:

It was an exciting time at the building of King Solomon's temple for two fellows of the craft. Jethro and Saul, brothers from the land of Tyre had been selected to prove their proficiency to advance to the degree of Master Mason!

The task laid out to them was simple enough. The Chief Architect presented them each with a rough Ashlar, the tools of the craft, and a trestle board with the design they were to make. They were each given 6 days to complete their Ashlar.

The brothers set to the task each toiling the best their skill would allow. On the third day Saul had made great progress. Jethro however, had made minimal. Saul with the best of intentions, insisted that Jethro allow him to assist. Jethro refused insisting that he was doing just fine in his labors.

On the fifth day Saul was close to being complete with his Ashlar. Jethro was still far off, but working diligently.

That night Saul hardly slept. He wanted his brother to advance with him, but he would not accept any assistance. Saul had to find a way to help his brother.

On the sixth and final day Saul quickly checked his Ashlar and, finding it complete sped away to try one more time to assist his brother.

He found Jethro slowly chipping away at his Ashlar and begged him to let him assist. Jethro staunchly refused yet again. Saul walked away vowing in his mind to help his brother whether he liked it or not.

That night as Jethro slept, Saul slipped away to the quarry and finished Jethro's Ashlar.

The seventh day the Chief Architect went to the quarry to judge the brothers work.

The first Ashlar he judged was Jethro's. The Chief Architect was quite impressed with work. It was finished exactly to the specifications laid out on the trestle board. The Masters

eye was keen though, and he noticed something was amiss. Some of the chisel marks were different in character than the majority. He said nothing and went to Saul's Ashlar.

Saul's ashlar was perfect in virtually every respects. There was one crucial flaw that should not have been missed by a Master Mason who did a thorough inspection of his work. The Chief Architect also noticed something that made both works make sense. The odd chisel marks on Jethro's ashlar were the same as the one's found on Saul's

The Chief Architect summoned the brothers to the lodge to hear his judgment.

Jethro, he said, your work indicates that you understand the fundamentals of Masonry, yet you have trouble applying them to our work efficiently.

Saul, your work indicates that you have much skill as a mason. Yet your focus on the imperfections of others work, causes you to miss the flaws in your own.

I therefore order you both to the quarry for another year's time as fellows of the craft. Take with you the lessons of this trial, and perhaps you will indeed become Master Masons.

Saul was more interested in making his brother succeed when he was not ready than in focusing on his own work, and therefore missed the point, and was sent back to think about it for another year. It's about balance, and it's about self improvement. You cannot force a man to be something he is not; though you can share with him things that can help him along the way... you cannot do the work FOR him.

Freemasonry teaches us, when speaking of the 24" gauge: The Rule — directs the undeviating discharge of all our duties; that we should press forward in the straight path of right and truth without inclining to the one hand or the other; in all our doings having Eternity in view.

The 24 inch gauge teaches time management, the point within a circle that tells us how to centre ourselves. These are reminders in Masonry to have balance. You are taught early on that the Entered Apprentice degree is the foundation that you are going to build on, it is no mistake that you have to start with balance, so that you can understand and acquire the knowledge in the progressive degrees, including all the degrees and orders in the appendant bodies. Time management is a tool in your toolkit to work toward Balance.

We are also directed to daily employ the compasses in our daily lives, circumscribing our desires and keeping our passions within due bounds toward all mankind, particularly our brethren in freemasonry. Of course, we are also taught to use the square to square our actions by the square of virtue.

Karl Wallenda – the renown high wire walker and also a Brother Mason used a long pole to balance himself on the wire many stories above the ground. This long pole was in motion to keep him Balanced, as you keep your life balanced, this pole is moving all the time in and out up and down trying to find that elusive balance point. Balance is not static it moves changes and flows. Like Brother Wallenda's pole we have to be dynamic and moving and seeking to find that balance. When you are at work, give your whole attention to that work, do not let yourself be distracted, same in your family, and same at lodge, give your focus do not be distracted and you will find success.

One of my early, balanced life, role models was my Dominion Grocery Store manager I worked for while I was in junior and senior high school. I worked for him for four years and learned a lot about balancing work, family and personal interests. He didn't ever appear to focus on his balance, but naturally modeled it every day.

He loved what he did for a living, always spoke about his family life, was heavily involved in his children's sporting activities and took every occasion he could to engage in his hobby tying flies and going salmon fishing with his sons. He was always smiling, happy and relaxed. I could not think of a better wish for my life.

When my family would travel during the summer months, he would always encourage me to go with them. "Your job will be waiting for you when you return," he would reassure me, "Enjoy your summer." He inspired me to relish and experience life.

Find people in your life or industry with a similar livelihood that successfully live healthy, happy and balanced life. Watch them. Follow them online. Speak to them to discover what they are doing right. Emulate areas of their behavior which work for you and help you achieve your own goals.

Balance in work, in family, in church, and your Masonic life is not an easy thing, like Brother Wellenda moving that pole in and out up and down to keep his balance so must each of us work hard to find out where that "sweet spot" is, and it is elusive my Brothers.

For my Balance is very different from that of a younger (in years) brother, where my wife and I are both retired, and we are empty nesters. Where as a younger Brother who has small children and he and his wife both work outside the home, then there is a different set of issues to find balance. This young man must give his children the love, the guidance, and be the father they want him to be. How does this young Brother strike that balance?

Though my wife and I have no children at home, we do have our grand kids, and our niece and nephew live near and we love to spend time with them and their wee folks, and we have to work to find that balance where we have time to spend with them. To free ourselves from other distractions so that we can be focused on them, to give them that much needed attention.

At times this can be very delicate, there are nights, I am sure, when Dad arrives home, the kids already know he has to leave either before or just after supper for a meeting. To them it matters not that there is a Fellowcraft Degree tonight to them, their dad is not home, and this can and more often than not weighs on our younger Brothers.

It does get tough, pressures at work, pressures at home and the work that has to be learned at lodge. The work increases and it gets busier and busier as you progress through the line of officers.

It comes down to how much you are willing to sacrifice, however, if you are willing to invest time and effort in the Lodge and you discuss this with your spouse, with your lodge brethren, and yourself, it can cease to be a sacrifice and becomes an investment.

One of the things that all of us, new mason, experienced mason no matter how long you have been a member you have to learn to prioritize. This is one of the tools that you can use to move toward finding the balance. Prioritize what is important to you, your spouse, your kids, your work, your church and your Lodge. For example, 1st Birthday or Lodge Night – First Birthday; Wedding Anniversary or a Committee of General Purpose – Anniversary; After work Social Function or Third Degree at Lodge – Third Degree. I cannot assume to stand here in my patent leather shoes and tell you what will work for you. You know your path to balance better than anyone.

A great deal of communication is required, Brethren before I agreed to let my name stand to receive the honour of being elected District Deputy Grand Master for Frontenac District, my wife, Patty, and I had many long and detailed discussions. For without her steadfast support and love, and a lot of understanding, I could not have accepted this honour to be the DDGM.

If you have an honest discussion with your spouse or significant other, and let them know your feelings, if you are honest from the beginning and let these people close to you know what Masonry means to you, what you want to do in the Craft and where you want to take it, this too will assist you in your effort to find balance. Mutual respect for how each in the part-

nership uses there time is extremely valuable. With respect comes understanding and love and another step toward this elusive balance.

Communications is key – whether it be at home, at the office or at Lodge, for without good clear lines of communication nothing could be accomplished. Communication is essential; it insures that the Lodge is getting the attention it needs to grow, your family is getting the attention it requires and as well your success at your avocation; all of this requires good communication skills. Open, clear and honest communication is another tool in the tool box to be used to find your Balance.

Non-active members of the lodge, the search for Balance does not apply, they have already made their choice, so the non-active member has chosen his balance to be away from the lodge in other activities.

Brethren you also need time for yourself. Remember to choose the life balance right for you. Don't adopt someone else's definition unless it fits comfortably with you. When it comes to life balance, one size does not fit all.

In the Disney movie Muppets Most Wanted, the lead female character has a “me” party. A line in the song proclaims “tonight I'm gonna celebrate for just the one of us.” Incorporating this into reality is easier done than you think.

Do something you enjoy which focuses entirely on you: self-improvement, classes, sports, charity work or simply reading a book, listening to music, going to the movies, a concert or theatre performance.

Shut off your phone, computer and any devices diverting your focus away from time to think, relax, recharge and have fun.

Your family, friends and co-workers will benefit from these changes, too. They'll appreciate your lower stress levels and renewed focus “small things make a big difference.”

When you live a balanced life you dwell in a place where Anastasiya Goers, author of 5 Essential Zen Habits for Balanced Living says, “you can always offset any negative events in your life with positive ones . . . when you are happy working and playing equally.”

Freemasonry states that its goal is to take good men and make them better men. This is good, because these good men live in society, and by the very act of improving them, society improves. This is the balance that freemasonry teaches. It is not about me changing them, it's about me changing ME. At first blush, this sounds rather arrogant and self focused, but it seems to be the core of freemasonry. No one can change another fundamentally.

Oh, you can pass laws, and like pointing a gun at someone's head, you can force them to ACT like they are something they are not, but the core remains the same. Freemasonry teaches, to each according to his willingness and ability, and of course, that is the beauty and glory of the craft. It is A Peculiar System of Morality, taught by allegory, illustrated by symbols. As freemasons, we inculcate the teachings of the craft in our private life, and then implement them in our public life.

We are Freemasons always, and that is how we should live our lives, never doing or saying anything that would cast a negative light on our ancient and honorable fraternity. The Peculiar System of Morality that the craft teaches us is freedom, circumscribed by the boundary of what is right. With great freedom comes greater responsibility.

The responsibility for our actions is truly on our shoulders, for there is no one to blame but ourselves for the manner in which we employ our freedom. Never lose sight of the use of that valuable instrument by which we are taught to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds toward all mankind, particularly our brethren in Freemasonry.

Remember “wax on wax off” polished Mr. Miyagi's car and helped Daniel win over the bad guys, but did it help him find Balance. Remember Brethren, just when you have it fig-

ured out, it will change, the priorities change, event arise where what you have planned have to be altered or cancelled. It is a lifelong process finding balance and like the wire walkers pole it is constantly in motion, every step you take, there is a change, and you must learn to move, adjust to change and to adapt to find your own balance.

Brethren, I do not have the golden ring, or the magic solution to finding Balance, it is a search and a journey we must all take alone, you must seek it, work toward finding that peace and balance in your own life.

Fulfilling your purpose is your destiny. Finding your balance in life is essential to unleashing your true potential. Take your first, small step today. Tomorrow take the next. I challenge you to travel a step at a time towards a life of balance, success and happiness. It's all about balance.

Wayne D. Anderson, FCF, MPS - D.D.G.M. Frontenac District, G.R.C. 2015-16
Alle Menschen werden Brueder - 2B1 ASK1

Where Angels Fear To Tread:

Posted on September 10, 2011 by rogereolson At <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/>

One of my biggest culture shocks in moving to the South has been seeing all the enormous Masonic lodges and discovering that many, if not most, older Baptist (and other) men are members. Where I come from originally (upper midwest), evangelical Christianity (including the majority of Baptists) and Freemasonry don't mix. They're like oil and water. In fact, some denominations divided over whether members could be Freemasons; the conservatives considered the drift toward allowing it a sign of liberal theology or worse (nominal Christianity).

A friend of mine was in line to succeed the retiring Fire Chief in his town of about 100,000. Some city council members came to him and told him he would be Fire Chief if he joined the Masonic Lodge. It was against his evangelical convictions, so he never became the city's Fire Chief.

As I was growing up in the thick of evangelicalism (my uncle was on the national board of the National Association of Evangelicals) somehow I just knew one could not be both evangelical and a Mason. None of my relatives were Masons; nobody in our church or denomination was a Mason.

The reasons given when I asked (probably in my late teens when I became aware of Masons through my high school friends who were joining DeMolay—the boys' branch of Freemasonry) were that (1) Christians should not belong to secret societies and should devote their free time to the church and its mission rather than to an organization that is not specifically Christian, and (2) Freemasonry's deep background, if not present reality, is inconsistent with evangelical Christianity.

I didn't really think that much about it for quite a few years. After all, there were no Masons in the evangelical circles I moved in (even after becoming a Baptist while attending an evangelical Baptist seminary). The issue really first came to concern me when we made our first move to the South for me to pursue my Ph.D. at a major Southern secular research university. I became youth pastor and Christian education director at a Presbyterian church and discovered that most of the older men of the congregation were Masons and were inviting the boys of the youth group to join DeMolay by suggesting they would get college scholarships. They started attending DeMolay meetings INSTEAD of youth group meetings. It was a struggle to hold on to them for the youth group and church. I gradually realized that some of the men of the congregation were more invested in their Masonic relationships and activities than in the church.

One elder of the church invited me to lunch to discuss this problem. I had made a little noise about it—mostly just by asking questions such as “Why are our men drawing our boys away from church to Masonry?”

And I asked some questions about Masonic beliefs and practices—most of which never received answers. The elder, who was a 32nd degree Mason, took me to lunch and said (direct quote seared into my mind): “If there is a conflict between Masonry and the Bible I’ll go with Masonry any day.”

Curious, I decided to do some reading about the history, dogma and rituals of Masonry. Of course, that’s not easy. So I looked for a book by a current (not former) Mason that would explain its basic beliefs. What I found was *The Meaning of Masonry* by W. L. Wilmshurst, a Grand Master over a group of Masonic Lodges in Great Britain. Wilmshurst was clearly NOT talking about his own branch of Masonry (whether York Rite or Scottish Rite or whatever); he was talking about the deep roots of Masonry in general. According to Wilmshurst, an acknowledged authority on Masonic history and beliefs, Masonry necessarily has an esoteric side.

As he described it I recognized it as modern Gnosticism.

What am I saying? That all Masons are Gnostics? No. Of course not. But, if Wilmshurst (and many knowledgeable critics of Masonry) is right, even in the 20th century Freemasonry is rooted in a basically esoteric quasi-religious belief system that is incompatible with orthodox Christianity. Do most Masons know that? I don’t know. But why would anyone join a group without knowing as much as possible about its history and beliefs—especially if that group requires an oath of secrecy and loyalty?

A few years ago an influential fundamentalist Southern Baptist “anti-cult” watcher led a crusade against Freemasonry especially among Southern Baptists and evangelical Christians in general. He produced a book *Christianity and Freemasonry* and a video attempting to expose Freemasonry as incompatible with Christianity. He and some of his friends brought a resolution to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention that, if passed, would have asked Southern Baptists to avoid membership in Masonic Lodges. It would probably also have made it unlikely that Southern Baptist churches allow Masonic ceremonies in them and at Southern Baptist led funerals.

(Masonic members who die are given a special ritual by their Masonic brothers. One explanation I was given by a Mason is that they do not believe in the resurrection of the body but only in the immortality of the soul.)

The resolution was soundly defeated.

I came to the South again 12 years ago and right away noticed the presence of enormous Masonic Lodges in this relatively small city with over 100 Baptist churches. I discovered that many, if not most, older Baptist men have at one time or another been inducted into Masonry. I have been told that all but the most recent presidents of the university where I teach were Masons. I haven’t asked, but I’m sure many of the older men in the congregation to which I belong are Masons. It’s part of the fabric of Southern culture including Southern Baptist culture.

Now, let me make clear I am not “against Masonry.” I know too little about it to be against it. Rather, I’m perplexed. First, I was raised to believe that the church is one’s extended family, the family of God, and that one’s energy should be devoted to its ministry and mission first and foremost. Second, I was raised to believe that membership in secret societies is not compatible with biblical Christianity. It would be like an early Christian belonging also to a mystery religion; it wasn’t encouraged (to say the least). Third, I was raised to believe that

Masonic Lodges were competitors with the churches even if many Masons also belonged to churches.

Whether all that is true, I'm not sure. But I continue to be perplexed about it. How many Masons know that the first modern Masonic Lodges grew out of Rosicrucianism (an esoteric sect on the fringes of Christianity)?

How many know about the esoteric meanings of Masonic rituals? How many are aware that, historically, Freemasonry denies the resurrection of the body and emphasizes the immortality of the soul instead? Why would a Christian devote a hearty portion of his free time and energy to a secret society when that time and energy could be devoted to the work of Christ through the church?

These are questions I struggle with. I'd love to hear real answers that carry some authority and weight from a knowledgeable Mason. In the meantime I continue to suffer a bit of culture shock every time I drive by one of the several large Masonic Lodges in this region and realize that most of the members are probably Baptists.

The Old Tiler Talks - Democracy In Lodge

By Carl Claudy

"Before I became a Mason," announced the New Brother, "I was under the impression it was an institution of the greatest democracy. I have gathered the idea that it was simple, unassuming; that it inculcated the principles of our government and that in it all men were equal. I am very fond of my lodge and the fellows, but I have been disappointed in that respect."

"Why, son, do you find Masonry undemocratic?" inquired the Old Tiler. "I have heard Masonry called a lot of funny names, but never that!"

"Why, yes, I do!" answered the New Brother. "Seems to me we have a lot of unwritten laws and customs which are autocratic."

"You might mention a few. I am not too old to learn!" answered the Old Tiler. "This is evidently going to be good!" he finished.

"Take this idea of not passing between the Altar and the East," began the New Brother. "It's a free country, yet here is a restriction without rhyme or reason. We salute the Master. He's just a Mason like the rest of us. We have put him into power. He is our servant, although he has the title of Master. Take the custom of the officers retiring in favor of the Grand Officers when they visit; why should we give up our authority and our seats to others no better men than we are?"

"Is that all?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Oh, there are a few more, but those will do. Explain to me where the democracy is in them!"

"When you go to church," countered the Old Tiler, "do you keep your hat on? Does your wife keep her hat on?"

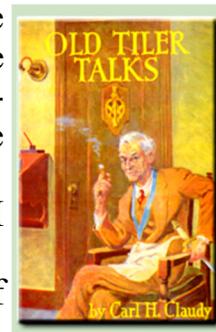
"Of course she does and I don't," responded the New Brother.

"Why?"

"I take my hat off as a mark of respect to the House of God, of course. She keeps hers on because...well, er...Oh, it's the custom!"

"It's a free country," responded the Old Tiler. "The minister is just a man like the rest of us. Why not wear your hat? Why not have your wife take hers off?"

"But I don't take my hat off to the minister, but to God!" was the puzzled answer.



"And your wife keeps hers on because it is the custom for women to remain covered in church," responded the Old Tiler. "In lodge you don't fail to salute the Master because it is the custom, and because you are saluting, not the man who happens to be in the East by the votes of the lodge, but the exalted station he occupies. You pay respect to religion when you remove your hat in a church."

"How about passing between Altar and East?" asked the New Brother.

"That pretty custom is founded on a very happy idea," explained the Old Tiler. "The Altar is the foundation seat of Masonic light and wisdom. Upon it lie the Great Lights of Masonry. Before it rests the charter by means of which a continuously unobstructed view of the source of all Masonic wisdom, so that the lodge may never be without a direct connection with the Great Lights. It is the custom to leave the charter always in his sight, that by no chance may he fail to be responsible for its safekeeping. Nothing happens to a brother who passes between the Altar and the East any more than would happen to a man who walked up the aisle of the church and perambulated about the lectern. But it wouldn't be polite, or respectful, or in keeping with the custom. Your respect is paid to religion or Masonry, not necessarily to the men who expound either."

"But I still don't see why a sovereign lodge must abdicate authority for any old Deputy Grand Master who comes along!"

"Then you are very obtuse!" answered the Old Tiler.

"The Deputy Grand Master represents the Grand Master, the supreme Masonic head. In him is, theoretically, all Masonic wisdom. Why should a Master not offer his gavel to such knowledge? He merely says, in effect, 'you know more than I do; your years of service and experience in the craft entitle you to supreme authority. I have less knowledge, therefore am less fit to preside than you. You have more power and authority than I, therefore I offer you its symbol while you are with us.' But note the Master says this to the 'position', not the 'man'. Grand Masters do 'not' always know all there is to know any more than kings or presidents do. But we pay that sovereign respect to the office they hold, while it is held by them, because of the office."

"My brother, democracy does not mean bolshevism! It does not mean socialism. It means democracy, in which men are created equal, have equal opportunity, but reverence to the power they give to those to whom they give it. The United States is a republic founded on the principles of democracy, and we are proud of our freedom and our independence, yet we remove our hats to our President and governors, and pay respect to our courts and our lawgivers, even though they be but men like ourselves. So it is in Masonry...a simple and unassuming democracy of brotherhood, in which no man loses his independence because he pays respect to authority."

"Well, of course, you are right, and I am wrong, as usual. It wasn't so good, after all, was it?"

"Not so good!" responded the Old Tiler. "But Masonic youth, like any other kind, can be forgiven much if only it is willing to learn."

Dropping Masonic Titles

Editor's Note; I first saw the title of this article listed in The Ashler, the magazine of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the title fascinated me, so I looked it up. In reading the readers' comments they seem to be pretty equally split. In my own opinion, I have to agree with **Brother Pete Normand's** comment which said, *"I was recently informed that, in Scotland, the practice is to attach the honorific (Right Worshipful, etc.) to the office, but not to the man's name. So, you might say "Right Worshipful Senior Grand Warden," but when addressing the man, you would only say "Brother MacKenzie." I rather like that, and it says a lot about the*

egalitarian manner of the Scots.”

So, it pretty well looks like we agree with Bro. Bryce. **However**, in our Masonic world I cannot see it ever happening. **W. Bro. Corky.** 😊

By Bro. Tim Bryce from the Freemasonry Information website.

Can such a change defuse Masonic politics?

BRYCE ON FREEMASONRY

Harmony is an essential ingredient to any Masonic Lodge. It is one of the main reasons men gravitate to Lodge; to escape the harsh realities of the world and sit among men who enjoy the company of others and respect the dignity of each other. To this end, it is forbidden to discuss religion and politics, be it related to government or the fraternity. Even during Masonic elections, campaigning is rebuked as it may offend someone. Despite our best intentions though, politics creeps into Masonry, particularly at election time.

It is not uncommon to have Masons whisper behind the scenes to garner votes, to seek endorsements, and run a political machine to maintain control. Far too often we have seen people elevated to a level of responsibility, yet accomplish nothing of substance during their tenure, whether it is a Worshipful Master of a Lodge, a District Deputy Grand Master, or a Grand Master. In such cases, people are looking for nothing more than recognition to feed their ego. This is why such things as aprons and titles are coveted, thereby representing badges of recognition.

It has become customary to recognize Masons as “Worshipful,” “Right Worshipful,” “Very Worshipful,” or “Most Worshipful.” Further, in correspondence we recognize ourselves as PM, PDDGM, PDI, PGM, etc. I have been guilty of this myself, but have been having second thoughts about such pompous titles. It is my belief Masons meet upon the level; that equality is of paramount importance in a Masonic Lodge; that each member’s voice weighs no more than another. Unfortunately, this is no longer true and we bow to men of title instead.

Wouldn’t it be an interesting experiment to drop the titles completely, particularly those no longer in office? Instead, we just refer to each other as “Brother” such as, “Bro. Bryce,” “Bro. Smith,” “Bro. Jones,” etc. Allow sitting officers to carry the title of their office, but when finished, revert back to the “Brother” moniker.

Some might resist and complain, “But I worked too hard for that title!” For whom did you work? A fraternity that promotes meeting upon the level or for your personal glory? Eliminating such titles could very well help defuse the politics of Masonry and encourage those people who truly have the best interests of the fraternity in mind.



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"Masonry is one of the most sublime and perfect institutions that ever was formed for the advancement of happiness and general good of mankind; creating, in all its varieties, universal benevolence and brotherly love. It holds out allurements so captivating as to inspire the Brotherhood with emulation to deeds of glory, such as must command, throughout the world, veneration and applause, and such as must entitle those who perform them to dignity and respect. It teaches us those useful, wise and instructive doctrines upon which alone true happiness is founded; and at the same time affords those easy paths by which we attain the rewards of virtue; it teaches us the duties which we owe to our neighbor, never to injure him in any one situation, but to conduct ourselves with justice and impartiality; it bids us not to divulge the mystery to the public, and it orders us to be true to our trust, and above all meanness and dissimulation, and in all our vocations to perform religiously that which we ought to do.[DUKE OF SUSSEX]",