A Collection of Speeches and Writings of Right Worshipful Brother Hugo Thomas
Volume I

Past Masters Research Lodge No. 950
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Within
The United Grand Lodges of Germany

Proudly presents this compilation of addresses presented over many years by a distinguished member of this Lodge who, through his love for our great fraternity together with serious study and personal application, offered his "Reflections" to many spellbound audiences.

The Lodge again offers these "Reflections" in the sincere hope these will instill in many a greater love and understanding of many of the basic principles of our Fraternity.

To Right Worshipful Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas;
we offer our sincere thanks and heart felt appreciation for sharing "the Light herein contained" with all of your Brethren.
Credit for the original idea and permission to reprint and publish these speeches by Right Worshipful Brother (Dr.) Hugo Thomas belongs to Very Worshipful Brother Derek J. Simpson, Past Master, Past Masters Research Lodge No.950, (1991-1992)


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FOREWORD

On February 3rd, 1969, Dr. Hugo Thomas was rejected when his first petition for the degrees of Masonry was placed for ballot. The motivation behind that rejection will never be known. The following day his recommender, in what turned out to be a futile attempt to have the 12-month waiting period before repetitioning waived, called me to arrange a meeting with Dr. Thomas. February is an extremely busy time of the year in our Grand lodge office, and although I rarely take lunch and was very reluctant about getting involved in the matter, I relented, and subsequently met Dr. Thomas for lunch in a quiet restaurant in downtown Frankfurt.

At about the time the dinner crowd started arriving, we both realized it was long past the time to take our leave. We had been thoroughly engrossed in non-stop conversation, oblivious to everything around us, for approximately six hours. It was a fascinating encounter I will never forget. Thirteen months later, Dr. Thomas’ second petition to Frankfurt on the Main Lodge No. 861 was accepted, and he was initiated on March 23rd, 1970.

R.W. Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas’ subsequent service in the various stations in our Lodge, and later in our Grand Lodge, culminating in his serving as Grand Master during 1976-77, are well documented. To even attempt a summary of those years or to expound on his continuing intense dedication and love for Freemasonry, or comment on what evolved into a lifelong friendship, in the Foreword to this edition of some of his writings, would be foolhardy. His works and words speak for themselves.

With unabated enthusiasm for his works, copies of his various papers have been requested by many Brethren over the years. His consummate ability to project and convey his ideas and thoughts in a language other than German, his mother tongue, is remarkable in itself. Of even greater significance, evident in all his writings, is his humanity, his humility, and undying love for Freemasonry and its principles. Read on, dear reader, and join R.W. Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas as he takes you by the hand on an enlightening experience through the realm of what the essence of Freemasonry is all about ...

Frankfurt, Germany
April 4th, 1994

Fraternally,

Jess Minton, PGM
Grand Secretary
Right Worshipful Brother Hugo Thomas

Past Master, Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861
Past Grand Master, American Canadian Grand Lodge
Past Deputy Grand Master, United Grand Lodges of Germany

A True Mason Among All Mankind
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What do Masons Believe

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at "Pyramid Lodge No. 896"
on 4th December 1975)
What do Masons Believe?

"Not to know is no disgrace,
not to want to know is a pity,
but to want to know,
and not know how to find out,
is almost a tragedy."

Our Masonic Creed or in what do Masons Believe.

People frequently ask, "Why are you a Mason?". "What makes it last through the centuries?" or "What does a Mason believe?"

These individuals, in asking these questions, are curious, not about Freemasonry's ritual or so-called secrets. They merely want to know what it is about it that has attracted millions of men to it over hundreds of years. They want to know why so many fine men of integrity and character are a part of it. These individuals ask reasonable questions, and they can be answered in a simple, clear, easily understood response.

Freemasonry consists of a body of men banded together for the purpose of mutual, intellectual, social and moral improvement. It endeavours to cultivate and exhibit Brotherly Love, Charity and Truth, not only to one another, but also to the world at large. Of all descriptions pertaining to Masons, one of the most applicable is that of developing "good character". The meaning of character, generally speaking, is a distinguishing mark, and when applied to human beings it denotes those qualities or traits that
distinguish them from other human beings. We might even go further and say that good character connotes being honest, truthful, devout, charitable, benevolent, thoughtful, loyal and respectful of others and of ones-self.

No one is born with character. Moral concepts and moral behaviour must be learned, and this is a gradual affair extending from the earliest years through adulthood. Hence, the character of an individual is moulded at an early age through training and self-discipline. By the time he has reached the age of manhood and is eligible to receive the degrees that Masonry can confer upon him, one's character will either be an asset or a liability to the Craft.

You cannot buy good character, or take a course in it. It is a way of life, just as Masonry is a way of life, and there is the connection.

We believe that a man becomes a Freemason through his own decision. We believe that no one should be asked to join our ranks and that when a man seeks admission to a Masonic Lodge, it should be of his own free will and accord. The choices should be his. One of the laws of Freemasonry is not to solicit members to its Lodges.

Masonry has been content to build its testimony upon deeds well done, character well formed. It has not knowingly received into its Fraternal bonds any, save those of good character, mental and physical competence, who have sought to petition it, of one's own free will and accord, through a favorable opinion held of it, who desire knowledge, and possess a deep and abiding faith in the existence of a Supreme Being.

It is therefore, inappropriate for a Mason to sponsor a man for membership in our Fraternity merely because he knows of nothing against him. He should know him well enough to know his philosophy of life, the organizations he belongs to, his interests and his family life. He should be
reasonably assured that he would adhere to the teachings of Masonry and add honor to our ancient institution. Masonry will judge by the quality and character of the candidates we admit into the Fraternity. It is here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative theory of Masonry should be put into practice.

Freemasonry expounds a philosophy having to do with ethics and human behavior. Its teachings are largely imparted through symbols and allegory. This instruction is not the end but the beginning. Comprehension of the principles suggested by symbolism leads down a never-ending path of understanding. One life is not long enough to travel very far down this trail to Light and Truth. The unique character of our philosophy is that no one can tell it to you or impart it to you. A Mason must discover it for himself. The great secret of the Craft must be found and learned by each individual. Masonic work assists in this pilgrimage in search of Truth. Therefore we may never cease to make more Freemasons out of merely members. My Brethren, the choice is ours!

We believe in the Fatherhood of God requiring that His will be done and that He guides our life. It is apparent to us that the Supreme Architect has set out the duties each of us has to perform and we all have trusted in His will with the knowledge that our faith is well founded.

Baruch Spinoza, one of our greatest philosophers, who could have been most comfortable in a Masonic Lodge, wrote in his treatise on religion and the state: "We ourselves believe GOD IS, because we experience the control of a "power" which is stronger than we, and our instincts teach us so much of the nature of that power, as our own relation to it, requires us to know."

God is the Being to whom our obedience is due and the perfections which we attribute to Him are those
perfections which are the proper objects of our reverence; and for men to speak of the Justice of GOD is but to see HIM a reflection of themselves. As Freemasons we believe and acknowledge without reservation that "the universal laws of nature and the eternal degrees of GOD are one and the same thing". That is to say that GOD permeates and infuses nature, and men only sometimes do not conceive it. This is one of our Masonic fundamentals.

We believe in the great worth of the individual. Great worth not relating to wealth, position or power, but recognizing that each individual is a human being, a creation of GOD, a person of value. We believe that each individual is under the Fatherhood of GOD. History has shown clearly that whenever a Totalitarian government has gained power, it has sought to destroy two groups within its society: religious houses of worship, and Masonic Lodges. Both have stood pre-eminently for the worth of the individual.

A Freemason's conception formed by him of Deity is always in exact relation to his moral, spiritual and intellectual attainments. This one is the index and the measure of the other. With this in mind, we will be enabled to obtain a perfect association with GOD as living members of our Fraternity and undoubtedly being granted a reunion with HIM at the end of our toilsome journey, when from our grasp shall fall forever the working tools of life.

Then even death is not atrocious and dark, because he is defeated by more and further Light in Masonry. The world is affected by Masonic ideals. From time immemorial, Masonry has stood for the highest ideals of civilization; and wherever Masonry has flourished these ideals have come nearest to realization and the highest standards of living have been obtained. Wherever Masonry has been cast out, the standards of living have immediately gone down, civilization has deteriorated, and the freedom of the people abolished.
The organization of Masonry deserves the support of every man who is interested in the welfare of the Nation, the State, the Community in which he lives, and his own family. Every Masonic Lodge by its influence for good makes the Community in which it is located, a better place in which to live.

Do not expect perfection in a man just because he is a Mason. If you do, you will be disappointed. Masonry makes men better, but no human agency makes them perfect. If he is a Mason, you have a right to presume he is a fairly good man, but do not condemn Masonry even if a few Masons turn out bad. Even the great Teacher himself had a Judas. The aim and purpose of Masonry is to receive none but good men; keep them good, and make them better. Judge the institution not by a few failures but by the average of its successes. The average is high and it consequently gives standards to its members, but it cannot be an infallible guide.

They are all simply "Brothers", be they Bankers, Doctors, Farmers, Lawyers, Industrialists, Mechanics, Educators, Soldiers, and Laborers of high ranking military officers. We believe in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of GOD.

With all members on the same level, then there are no barriers when they meet; they are all Brothers, and treat each other as such. When Harry S. Truman, a Past Grand Master of Missouri, was President of the United States, he visited a Masonic Lodge in the District of Columbia. When someone immediately recognized him and addressed him as "Mr. President", Truman immediately stopped him and said kindly but firmly, "My Brother, when I entered the door of this Lodge, I became "Brother Truman". When I leave through that door I will again be "Mr. President". A Mason believes in Brotherhood not based upon wealth, position or power, but based upon Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.
The way to build a better world is to first build better men. In this vital work Freemasonry is our guideline. Every Mason gains from attending a Masonic Lodge. Let us remember always that it is not what we profess, but what we practice, that makes us Masons. Unfortunately, some brethren think of Masonry as a vast beneficent society, helping only each other, but actually the real theme of Masonry is Brotherhood, education, service and humility.

The taking of degrees, no matter how many, does not make a man a Mason. A fully fledged Mason is in a position to take advantage of all the rights and privileges of Masonry, but the taking of degrees alone merely places him in the path of becoming a worthy Brother.

Masonic character is not received ready-made at initiation, but is acquired through years with a combination of harmony, beauty, order and strength, in accord with Masonic principles.

Let us bring into play some cardinal virtues; temperance to aid us in tempering violent passions; fortitude to strengthen our weaker qualities; prudence to exercise wise judgment; and justice to make commendable use of the material at our disposal. This will result in the honor of calling ourselves truly Masons ... for the more noble and glorious purposes!

We believe in Charity. Freemasonry is not in any sense a beneficent society, nor is it based upon calculations, which could render this possible. A Mason's charities are solely for those who have been overtaken by fortune and adversity. We believe that Charity has a much wider context than that of the giving of alms. To him, it includes the charity of thought which overlooks the faults and defects of his fellow man.

We all have weaknesses and shortcomings. But I have figured that my Brothers have put up with mine so tolerably, that I would be much less than fair, not to make a reasonable
discount for theirs. There is a destiny that makes us Brothers, none goes his way alone; all that we send into the lives of others, comes back into our own! Let us so live, that when our time to leave this earth comes upon us, the kindest eulogy that may be pronounced over us is: "He lived righteously and loved his BROTHERS

If we hear a kind word spoken of some worthy Brother we know, it may fill his heart with sunshine if we only tell him so. If a deed, however humble, helps us on our way to go. Seek the one, whose hand has helped us, Seek him out and tell him so.

We believe in Love of Country. We love our country and believe in its greatness among the world's nations. Masonic ideals and principles are carefully and strongly woven into our Country's Constitution, and that many of our leaders were Masons. We know that a Mason wrote the Pledge of Allegiance. We cheerfully obey our Country's laws and support our leaders.

We believe in a just and righteous Deity, be he known as Brahma, Allah, Jehovah or Jesus. We know that when we visit a Masonic Lodge, we will always find the Scriptures known to Masons as the Volume of Sacred Law - prominently displayed. Depending upon what land we may be in, it may be the Bible of the Christian, the Talmud of the Jew, the Koran of the Mohammed and or the Veda of the Hindu. Thus, in Masonry, there are Christians, Jews, Moslems and Hindus who meet together and pay homage to the Divine Creator whom we address as the Great Architect of the Universe.

We believe in being profoundly fraternal. We know that Freemasonry is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternal organization on earth. We know that Masonry survives and grows among men around the world because it
seeks friendship, true manhood, mutual assistance, Brotherly Love and affection. It espouses the Golden Rule: "Always treat others as you would like them, to treat you".

We believe in Truth and in the constant search for it. Masonry teaches its Brethren to lay the cornerstone and place the foundation of their Masonic Temple upon the rock of Truth. One, thus building, realizes that he builds for eternity. He will carry the materials of such a moral and virtuous Temple through infinity.

Masonry, consequently, presents a formulation of moral principles, acceptable to all religions, vital for man's just fulfillment. This is why it has lasted through the centuries, and this is why men are Masons.

As Masons we believe in our duly elected and installed Masters and Grand Masters and we have full confidence in their work. Such power of social influence, as Freemasonry itself is ever teaching to each of its votaries, is something that must be thoroughly understood, sagaciously managed and wisely applied. The energy tied up in the brain and muscles of the builders, must not be left without direction; there must be a design upon the Trestle Board; there must be a Master to oversee and to direct.

And the Grand Master occupies such an office. He is expected to be a firm, a wise, an enthusiastic and humble leader, who understands how to direct, motivate and shape the builders at work. The will to success and not the hope of reward must be his sustaining power. Our object, the reputation of the Fraternity, must be his inspiring guidelines, and he must know when, how and where to apply the force of our sublime profession of which he is the custodian and the first servant, the conscience and the memory bank.

His daily work in Freemasonry should be distinguished by enthusiasm and excellence. He is obligated to minister each according to the best of his ability; while he "volunteers"
his daily services; he is simultaneously "drafted" by those same obligations and solemnly charged, to preserve the purity of the Fraternity unsullied. He is forever reminded and encouraged in doing so by the writings of Ecclesiastes: "Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might. Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

This is particularly true of all tasks assigned to him, minor or important: that he be true and humble custodian of our Masonic heritage. He must combine fidelity with faith, and be convinced he shall succeed; and only then can he truly hope the LORD will bless his decisions and actions. In this spirit we jointly invoke the aid of Deity, and enshrine gratitude in our heart for the opportunity of working together with our Brothers to an end, to build at the holy Empire of Freemasonry in a better world; of demonstrating the solidarity of the Mystic Tie; thereby convincing our Brothers, that the solution to the world's and Freemasonry's problems is FREEMASONRY; of following the call of the Fraternity which is: make us men of Brotherly Love in an unbrotherly world; give us gentle and skillful hands in the practice of relief, help and benevolence; keep us faithful to the vows of chastity and charity we have taken upon the Three Great Lights in Masonry at the sacred altar of obligation.

Lead our minds in the quest of TRUTH - even the truth of Eternal Life in the midst of our fleeting days.

Let us incorporate the richness of a Masonic spirit, the blessings of a dream, and the strength to make it real. In the pure principles of our Fraternity may youth find its consecration, and age its consolation.

Let Freemasonry induce men to seek until they find that Light, More Light, Further Light, and guide them to properly pronounce that word and to incorporate it into their working vocabulary.
Crown us with deeper sympathy, warmer love, stronger faith, and more earnest purpose, that when we are summoned hence, we may hear the words:

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

and so mote it ever be!

/s/Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Deputy Grand Master
American Canadian Land Grand Lodge
We are Builders

Our Work is not Secret

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 29 April 1975
at 'Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben" Lodge No. 837)
WE ARE BUILDERS
OUR WORK IS NOT SECRET

(Presented on 29 April 1975 at 'Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben' Lodge No. 837)

Worshipful Master and Brethren all:

I thank you again for your fraternal invitation, and I gratefully acknowledge the honor to communicate with you at this LODGE OF INSTRUCTION with the topic:

"We are Builders and our Work is Not Secret"

At this time, I'd like to preface our work with some remarks of general interest.

In the beginning a candidate must indicate his willingness to absorb all the lessons taught in the Degree. He must acquire and cultivate the spirit of Brotherhood. He must offer his particular gifts to speculative or Freemasonry for any task a Lodge may require of him. Encompassed in such a favorable climate he ought to grow Masonically.

By the same token Brothers of longer standing membership will grow in stature, provided they make the required efforts. However, Brothers who freely admit personal shortcomings in measuring up to the high standards of Freemasonry are numerous. These searching's of the conscience should or rather must consequently lead to higher levels of life and conduct.

One Brother will go back to the phraseology of the petition he signed, questioning whether he has done all he
could do, to help his fellowmen, or whether he has shirked his duties often.

Another Brother is somewhat awed by the thought that he owes an immeasurable debt to the two recommenders and avouchers who signed his petition. Such a Brother states quite definitely that he must try to live up to the high opinion they had of his character.

Still another Brother will consider his Lodge's good opinion of him must be sustained, because he was honored with a unanimous ballot. He might wonder whether an Investigating Committee would recommend him again should he petition anew.

These mental interrogations indicate, the Brother is drawing to make sacrifices and perform duties that he may have previously shunned. To the Brother with regrets because he has been a passive, inactive member, one can order the antidote of steering the opposite course. There is always room in the Lodge setup for Brothers, who are constructive with their suggestions, who are desirous of having and receiving Light,. More Light; who promote peace and harmony, and who are willing to go far beyond the line of duty to repay in part their voluntary assumed duty to Freemasonry.

Brethren: You did not honor Freemasonry when you were admitted into the Temple for the first time. Masonry honored you and you are indebted to the Fraternity for this honor, it can never be repaid in full. The will to work, act and participate outlines a principle, which is especially applicable to the endeavors of a Freemason. Responsibility is the obligation one is accountable for and the fulfillment of which we must squarely accept. To respect and honor this educational process is to be mature, to implement and fulfill it, is to be a true Mason, and for each Brother to do more than his share is to be noble.
I have been much impressed by the definition of Brother George Washington who stated, "I conceive the organization of Free Masonry to be an institution of the human race."

I have always sought to dispel some misconceptions of people generally who are not fully cognizant of the principles of Freemasonry. We endeavor to receive in our fraternity men of honor and good report. We require that they follow a path of rectitude. We help those who are worthy, but we help none which would in any way imply approbation of misconduct or failure to observe the whole law of God, Country and State. Assistance to a member is not different than that accorded members of a church, other fraternal organizations, college fraternities, luncheon clubs and social groups.

Secondly, I have continuously stressed the fact that we are not a "Secret order" since an annual communication is held each year and we publish the Annual Proceedings consisting of all business and financial affairs, charities provided for, and the names of all officers of the Grand Lodge, all officers of the subordinate lodges and a roster of all members. A secret order implies an organization whose officers and members are unknown.

Masonic Secrets constitute one of the most thought provoking subjects I know, since what is known by the Craft is also quite well known by non-Masons. The dominant thread throughout is that all the "known secrets" - an oddly contradictory description are available to our Brethren and non-members alike through many publications of Masonry.

Our Masonic ritual has been almost from the start of the Grand Lodge of Masonry, as we now know it, and hundreds of books have been written on the subject of Freemasonry.

If we have "known secrets do we, by contrast have "unknown secrets" as well? But if we have secrets that no
one knows, how do we know if there are and what they are? That could be a secret in itself!

What some have considered to be secrets really are not. This apparent privity is not something of a Mason's own creation. It was instilled by the very nature of our ritual.

It is no secret that the Third Degree teaches us the lesson of the immortality of the soul; it is no secret that the letter "G" in the Masonic emblem represents God and geometry; it is no secret that the three Great Lights of Masonry are the Holy Bible, the Square and the Compasses; it is no secret that the three principal tenets of Masonry are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; it is no secret that the four cardinal virtues of a Mason are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. And for many more of our "Secrets", I refer any and all to our Holy Bible, I Kings, starting with Chapter 5, and II Chronicles, starting with Chapter 2, which contain the Biblical history of King Solomon's Temple and the legendary connection with the fraternity.

Let us content ourselves with the principle that all men are created equal, meet upon the same level and are entitled to an equal position on the starting line in the race for personal achievement, but no man is to be guaranteed a preferred position at the finish line.

One of the great secrets of Masonry is, however, that it makes a man aware of the divinity within him, where from his whole life takes its beauty and meaning, and inspires him to follow and obey it. It is the new inner attitude and habit of thought with regard to the worth and use of life. Every man has a train of thought on which he rides when he is alone; and the worth of his life to himself and others, as well as its happiness, depends upon the direction in which that train is going and the baggage it carries. Masonry puts that inner train on the right track, freights it with precious
treasure, and starts it to the Grand Lodge Above. What other or higher ministry can it render to a Brother?

Adhering to the example of Grand Master Hiram Abif, such is the ideal of Masonry, and fidelity to all that it demands, that we give ourselves to it, trusting the power of truth, the reality of Brotherly Love, and the sovereign worth of character. For only as we incarnate that idea in actual life and activity, does it become real, tangible and effective.

God works for man through man and seldom, if at all, in any other way. He asks for our voices to speak, for our hands to work and act here below, with persuasive power and enthusiasm, with clean hands and charitable hearts. I am neither learned nor famous, but we all together are summoned to be loyal and true of heart undefiled by evil, faithful and helpful to our Brethren. Then our life will be a capacity for the highest thoughts, the noblest deeds.

Let us make it a pursuit of the highest - an eager, incessant quest of truth; a noble utility, a lofty honor, a wise freedom, a genuine service. Through us the Spirit of Masonry may grow and be magnified and glorified.

Only thereby no voice of distress reaches our ears in vain and no hand seeks our aid without response. We readily admit that the message of Masonry cannot be stated in a few words. Nor can a single interpretation be expressed which will be acceptable to all Masons.

However, it seems that throughout the many paths of Masonry in its ritual, in the lectures, and in the symbols of Masonry, there is a fundamental message directed to the heart and mind of every Brother. That message is that as Masons we must strive to become what we are capable of being that the struggle of life never ceases and our chief task is to keep watch over our own conduct. In the language of symbolism we are taught that we cannot grow strong in
the practice of anything less than our best and that we fail at the beginning if we fail to establish the highest standards.

I believe that Masonry cannot continue to live only because of the esteemed place which it has held in bygone days, but must gain new life by virtue of its contribution to the present generation and the plans it makes for the next.

I believe that opportunity for putting into practice Masonic teachings has never been greater and that telling the world what we have been is not nearly as important as promoting excellence of purpose in a revolutionary world that needs guidelines for stability.

I believe that true men will continue to make application to our honored fraternity if traditional Masonic philosophy, based on belief in God, Country and the Brotherhood of man, is made visible in the lives of our present members.

There is one supreme victory for each Mason. It is the satisfaction which he must feel when he has taken the message of Masonry to his heart, when he banishes all the evil from his life, when he is free of guile and jealousy and when he recognizes in his Brothers, men who are striving as he is, to faithfully discharge their obligations to God, to Country and to all mankind., within the length of our Cable-Tow.

In evaluating the business in which we are engaged, it appears to some perhaps that the Freemason today is more speculating than speculative; that he has reached a point in his evolution that he has so progressed in his profession from the operative Mason to the speculative one. It is reasonable for him, in view of the great number of men similarly occupied, to merely make others do all the necessary work, and hope that all things will turn out well.
While we have thousands upon thousands of men employed in our Craft, there are signs, no obvious signs, of construction of worthwhile human structures. The greatest number of our Craftsmen stand ready and willing at all times to expand their greatest effort in doing whatever may be necessary of them to insure that the structures, the foundations of which their ancient Brothers built, remain strong and sound at all times. Some Craftsmen, of course, may be more technically skilled than others but each is capable of doing his part and his share of the necessary work. We must agree that the edifices our ancient Brethren reared, while they stand as beautiful and sturdy as when first erected, they are today in need of some repair. Such a structure, no matter where built, is built to serve the world and the building cannot be restored to its entire beauty and glory if there is no need of repair any place in the world.

We say that Masonry is universal and that in every age and every clime are Masons to be found. Masons, yes, but Masonry, no. We see in our own time the disbanding of Masonry by governmental decree, but we need only to look at the form of the government to understand the true basis for this infamous action. They would have their people believe that such action is necessary because Free Masonry is a secret organization and as such is a threat to their government. How powerful we would believe we were, to be able to keep hidden any secrets whatever they may be, when these same forces are able to acquire some of the most closely guarded security information of a nation. If then there is work to be done, and at the same time there is no apparent activity, if this were true, then in evaluating the business in which we are engaged we must endeavor to learn the reasons.

Can it be, my Brethren, that our Craftsmen, to some extent, are not working today because they have no knowledge of what is expected of them beyond attaining their certificate, or that they are unaware as to where their
efforts and energies might be usefully employed? Have we so impressed our craftsmen at the outset of their membership that they believe all Masonic things are secret and confidential; or if this be not so, they do not even know what is to be and should be revealed, and that which should not be revealed.

What a shame it is for any Mason when asked by a non-Mason, "What is this Masonry to which you belong? What does it do? What does it stand for? And that Mason replies "I cannot tell you because it is a secret."

What a pity it is for any Mason who has just been initiated, when on returning home, his family is patiently waiting for him and asks, "What kind of organization did you join? And "What is Masonry all about? And he replies, "Don't ask me because I cannot tell you." What a tragedy it is that we do not draw clear, plain and understandable designs upon the Trestleboard so that our Craftsmen may know what is expected of them and where and when and how it is to be performed.

It is not that we are unable to draw these proper designs but perhaps it is that we have become so fussy in bringing the workman through positions as Master Craftsmen, we have little time left, to then set the Master Craftsmen to work. What the Craftsmen have been taught they have been taught well, and all that a Mason should know is contained within his training while becoming a Master Mason; but though he has been found proficient, it appears in some instances that he has not learned that which he has been taught.

This situation, however, is not of recent origin. It has existed for many years. The only observation, which is worthy, however, is that we have been derelict over the years in making the necessary and proper adjustments, and have been content to let business go on as usual. "Every well informed Mason will agree with
us in the assertion, that there is a strange lack of Masonic Knowledge in Lodges, and among Masons in general." This ignorance even extends to the Officers of the Lodges, who ought, at least, to be posted in the ordinary government of a Lodge, if not in Masonic jurisprudence. We make Masons of good men and true, but when thus made, the work has just commenced. That was said in October 1869.

It has been said with some degree of sincerity, that we raise a brother and then bury him, and very little if anything occurs in between. We are concerned, and rightfully so, in learning about our so-called public image. What does the community think of us: What does anyone know of us; how are we regarded individually and collectively? We can have no public image, nor can we merit the respect of the uninformed community so long as so many of our Brethren are unable to give any account or even an excuse, for the existence of the organization itself or of the purpose for which they have banded themselves together by an indissoluble chain. We are concerned when others fear us, we are disturbed when others are suspicious of us, and we are confused when others distrust us; but is it really their fault? We have no right to the respect of anyone when all they can learn about, even those who are interested, is nothing except that all we stand for and all we hope to do is not for them to know. It is perfectly natural to fear the darkness, but what we actually fear, is not the absence of light, but the insecurity in not knowing what might be lurking there.

How ridiculous we must appear when we expect worthy men to join with us without any knowledge of what their application might be leading them into. We have been instructed and properly so, that the ritualistic work of our ceremonies is confidential, known only to Masons, and is the means by which we may identify one
another. Therefore, the Mason who says that Masonry is a secret organization is in fact saying that there is nothing more to Masonry than ritual. Perhaps he is right. Is he?

We say that Masonry is a progressive moral science, but our progress instead of being forward as progress should be, appears to be circular, going round and round from one degree to another and then back to the beginning again. What a shock it must have been to some, to see a four page spread in a nationally distributed magazine on "Free and Accepted Mason", including pictures and symbols. There were many I know who resented this article because they felt it was too revealing, however, the article concluded with this paragraph:

"While the ritual of Free Masonry remains secret from the world, the fraternity has for hundreds of years taught its members that Masons must share in the construction of the temple of brotherhood for all races, religions, tongues and nationalities."

There for ten cents, my Brethren, more good was done in explaining Masonry for all to know, than it appears we have been able to do regardless of the amount of our investment.

When questions about Freemasonry arise, and they often do, our response will undoubtedly influence the mental attitude of our friends toward the Craft and ourselves in general. We should not take a timid approach to our answers. We should not indicate a desire to "change the subject". We should not reflect a "mum's-the word" attitude. Instead we should be prepared to speak with ease, pride, and authority.

What do we have to hide? Make it known that Freemasonry is a way of life. Freemasonry is fraternal in organization, religious in character, based on the belief in the Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man, and the
Immortality of the Soul. Be prompt to make it known that Freemasonry is not a "Secret society" as many surmise. Freemasonry is a voluntary association wherein the interested one comes of his own free will and accord. Indicate also that Freemasonry is not a religion as many claim it is. Discussions on religion or politics have no place in our proceedings. Proclaim that Freemasonry, in its every effort and purpose, strives to do charitable work within its membership and for society, and through its teachings, seeks to make good men better men. You can proudly state that the basic ethical principles as exemplified in our Ritual, and Lodge Work are such as are most acceptable to all good men; they are lessons based on the golden rule, tolerance toward all men, respect for one's family, charity toward all, and being true to God for His gracious and numerous blessings.

We repeat with great and justifiable pride at every opportunity the history of our ancient Brethren and the important facts, which they accomplished. We are proud of these accomplishments and we are proud of these Masons because they portray Masons in action. As we review our organization one hundred years later, I believe it is fair for each of us to ask ourselves "What have I done - what am I doing?" How many times since becoming a Mason have we reminded ourselves and proved to others by our actions that, in us as Masons, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown, that we, as Masons, are distinguished by our sincerity and plain dealing, and that with heart and tongues as Masons, we join in promoting the welfare and happiness of others?

By our actions outside the Lodge shall we be judged, by your actions outside the Lodge shall Masonry be judged; thus shall the image of Free Masonry be born. On that day every Mason shall stand in the pathway or at his doorway and all who pass him shall know, that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour its sorrows, one to whom distress may prefer its suit, one whose hand is guided by justice and
whose heart is expanded by benevolence. We are builders, yet. On that day, all Masons will say to all who are in need, to all who are in fear, to all who are enslaved and to all who are not free:

I am a Mason, try me.

/s/Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Deputy Land Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Talk Publically about Freemasonry

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at Lebanon Lodge No. 831 on 29 March 1976)
(Presented at Triangle Lodge No. 834 on 30 March 1976)
TALK PUBLICLY ABOUT FREEMASONRY

(Submitted at Lebanon Lodge No. 831 on 29 March 1976)
(Submitted at Triangle Lodge No. 834 on 30 March 1976)

I welcome the opportunity to speak to you on a most important subject, a vital topic, long overdue, of common interest and relevant to all Brothers the world over. In order that we may be on common ground, we must consider and evaluate what Masons mean by "publicly" and "Public relations".

The definition in The Encyclopaedia Britannica's World Language Dictionary states for publicly all those persons who may be grouped together for any given purpose; and public relations inculcate the activities and techniques utilized by an organization to establish favorable attitudes and responses on its behalf; included are analysis of attitudes, appraisal of procedures and policies, recommendations for internal change, and effective presentation of its purposes and objectives, and to interpret itself to society and the world at large.

Keep in mind: to interpret ourselves to our Society of Friends and Brothers is perhaps one of our most important objectives. And Mark well: Masonic public relations are formed and moulded through our thinking, our words which over a period of time establish and maintain a Brother's and a Lodge's reputation for good and evil; ever bearing in mind that challenging theme of the year of our Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Gunter Gall: "Let us think, speak and act Masonically". Our Masonic publicity or public relations are the things we do, to build an image of our Lodge in the public mind, among men and Masons.
For many centuries Masonry has rightfully enjoyed a position of great respect in the public eye, primarily, because of favorable activities on the part of individual members or Lodges. But are we as important and influential in each of our communities as we should be? While there is some mystery surrounding the function of a Masonic Lodge in a community there is very little misunderstanding as to what Masonry represents. But is Masonry the same in every part of our jurisdiction? And if we are regarded as the finest fraternal Order, what have we done to justify this position.

I realize, in some small places the Masonic Lodge is of relative greater stature and general importance than in larger cities, simply because a greater proportion of the population is aware of the existence of Masonry and what it stands for. This can be a reasonably valid assumption. If this is correct, and it would be deplorable if it were not true, then perhaps we are declining in importance in the larger communities. I am quite certain that we have not gained in membership in proportion to our economic prosperity. Perhaps too few people know what we stand for and what we do.

I, therefore, strongly believe that we must talk about Freemasonry publicly. Avoid Lodge Communications without anything to communicate. Sometimes Lodges in this or any other country do not permit any publicity or any information to leak out concerning the teachings and objectives of Freemasonry and thus never give fine profane men even an opportunity to learn anything about the Craft, who will, therefore, "remain perpetually in the darkness. Although we were charged at our Initiation be particularly careful not to recommend him, unless you are convinced that he will conform to our rules:... there is seldom an incentive for a non-Mason to petition for the degrees because he knows nothing about our purposes and objectives. When a Lodge gets enough ambition and vision and begins to carefully, program, something and to do something for the community,
there is quite often immediate response in new petitions and, even more gratifying -, in the reinstatement of those who suffered the severe Masonic punishment of Suspension for non-payment of dues.

We need to let the world know, in a proper and discreet manner, just what Freemasonry teaches, what it stands for and what it can do for and achieve in the world. Sometimes we don't have enough activity to keep the public informed as to what we are doing and in what Masons believe.

Our fathers and grandfathers were always doing something for their neighbors and gave Masonry the credit. They waited on the ill, buried the dead, cared for the destitute. Today, we don't get that publicity too often. In fact, we have just about quit doing anything or anyone individually and publicly, and then wonder why the public does not recognize our great vision and noble objectives... Free-masonry is good, therefore, let us talk about it and advise our friends, and membership will continue to increase.

We need to tell the world about us. We must build-up an image in the mind of the public that Freemasonry is a great institution, a most valuable asset for the community, and above all, an association of dignity, quality and substance. These three words are most appropriate as designations of what we want our image to be to the world at large. By our words and actions inside and outside of the Lodge we help build this reputation. I am not advocating a flashy approach; but the willingness to tell the world about ourselves in a dignified, quality-like manner. Masons transmit their message in three ways: by the individual Brother, through Lodge activities, by our physical image. The individual Brother will always be ready to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied, and to stress the quality and dignity of our Order and his own persona in being a Mason. He should not hesitate to talk about Freemasonry.
When somebody asks, - what do you do at the Masonic Lodge? Each Brother should be prepared to tell of some of the things that are done. We should not imply that all is secret... "our work is not secret". He can say that we participate in serious ritualistic work designed to portray in a very graphic manner many fundamental precepts of ethical, good moral conduct of our lives. He can say that the fraternal meetings provide an opportunity for friendly, sincere conversations with fellow members concerning many, many things. He can say with pride that his Lodge provides an, inspirational thrust to its members to be thoughtful, conscientious, participating citizens. There are many things he can say, any one of which helps build our image. This, too, is public relation. And remember there is no prouder Mason than the new Brother, and most newly made Masons, in their natural, human way, are anxious to talk to somebody about their new status. Let's give them the chance, and instruct and help them to do it in a manner to bring real credit to the Fraternity.

I discourage, however, the individual Mason who tells the world with large signs, brilliant emblems, and bright lights, that he is a Mason; it does not add dignity. There is a right and discreet way to display Masonic Jewellery and I am sure that most Brothers will recognize what is in good taste and has dignity.

Consider your Lodge's activities and our public appearances as a group of Masons, making up a Lodge. There are several natural Masonic functions that give the public an opportunity to watch us in action: i.e. at open installations, a Lodge of Sorrow or a Masonic funeral. At these functions, perhaps more than at any other time, many of the precepts of Masonry are presented to an attentive public, when the work is done with dignity and the wealth of substance is impressively portrayed with proper decorum. Annually, too, there is the opportunity in every community for the Masonic Lodge to stage an interesting and important observance,
built around what should be, and can be, strong public interest: George Washington's Birthday, Independence Day, Youth Day, Ladies Night, Thanksgiving and a Special Charity Ball. I think there is a real challenge to every Lodge to devise ways and means of developing greater public interest through outstanding and carefully pre-planned programs.

Thirdly, let me talk about our Masonic physical image. By this I mean the physical facilities, which we possess, such as Lodge Halls, Masonic hospitals or old age homes. I also mean the physical image that is presented by individual Masons themselves. Perhaps there is the chance of a real project in your Lodge, a do it-yourself project or perhaps it is time to build a new Temple, or to polish-up the old one. What I am really suggesting here is, that every Lodge should take real pride in the physical appearance of its meeting place, both inside and outside the Lodge hall; and I believe it should be very hard to find any excuse at all to do anything but a first class job of housekeeping.

The public relation of the individual Mason can be constantly at work. The Brother who is looked up to for his every action is constantly bringing credit to the Craft. This reminds me of another item; a detail perhaps, but nevertheless important. Clean aprons at all functions are essential if our image is to be good inside and outside the Temple. Clean and spotless aprons have more than a psychological effect on each of us, who have been instructed in the apron lecture at our initiation.

We as Masons must be alert to all means at our command to interpret ourselves to society and above all, that we do so with dignity and with full attention to the quality and substance of our Order. Public relations for us are not just newspaper stories; it is much more. It is our duty to recognize and use all the facilities at our command to project our image to the outer world, with dignity, honor and decorum.
Freemasonry served all our Nations well in the past and it has continued to guide our countries throughout their histories. Today, too, it is a touchstone of Truth for those men who seek its wisdom. We have no reason to doubt that Freemasonry will meet the challenge of the future. Its Light remains bright and will always continue to be steady and clear. If we are capable of the task, the future is secure. We have only to learn from the past, know the core of Masonic principles today, and carry that message to tomorrow's generations by the example of our own good conduct and high accomplishment. Let us earn our wages daily anew!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Deputy Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Back to Fundamentals

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at the Konvent of the United Grand Lodges of Germany on 28 October 1973 in Berlin)
Most Worshipful Grand Master,
My Dear Brethren:

As grateful as I am for the trust which the M.W. Grand Master of the United Grand Lodges of Germany (VGLvD) has shown in me by his friendly invitation, in allowing, for the first time, a member of the American Canadian Grand Lodge the opportunity of addressing this Convent on the self-chosen theme of:

"Back to fundamentals-Castles in the air do not contribute to the erection of the Temple on Earth," the more serious my doubts are as to whether I can really fulfil the expectations as warranted before such a respectable circle of Brethren possessed of sound knowledge and real merit. Whosoever attempts to visualize the scope of the theme embodied within this title will recognize very quickly that no well grounded answer can be readily provided. Perhaps at the most, only impulses to those basic autodidactic commentary on the basic questions of Freemasonry appeared to me to be coquettish, however, after further reflection, I decided to stick to what, from the first, appeared to be a provocative theme. I will, therefore, dare the attempt to render a statement on those pressing questions which concern u all. It must be an attempt at posing answers which embody questions. This observation may seem to you to be somewhat devious, but I humbly request that you accept this as a preliminary expression of motives based on co-existing mutually interdependent intellectual and social factors.
When one considers the tone permissible, or appropriate, to such and occasion as this Convent, one will readily agree that pathos and over-enthusing sensitivity would be out of place. Both of these terms should not be deprived of their value by such rejection; they are correct and have their place in those forms of expression which they represent and the intellectual strength which gives them life. But the multi-faceted teachings of Freemasonry, when practiced with enthusiasm, demand, at the very least, an equivalent respect.

No one will, I hope, misunderstand and many will, I believe, understand, when I (to me to be a moving moment-reflective of an altered way of life) focus attention to the life-giving an impulses and to the good spirit which led to the co-operation between the German and English speaking Lodges which began and steadily progressed in so exemplary a manner after the period of darkness. The involvement of the English speaking Lodges could not remain without resonance; the joint signing of the Magna Charta of the VGLvD was its crowning moment to date. This bilingual phalanx of German and English speaking Freemasons is a mutual intellectual forum for all the problems of Freemasonry, even those world-wide, a most important and practical medium for the finding of a synthesis of the imminent, contemporary problems of our world. Without this, all plans and clever philosophical excursions of the most able and enthusiastic Brethren would remain but a torso.

Freemasonry is everywhere within us and all around us in this world. It is in our being. Wherever it exists there is love, there is life, there is creative spirit, there is individual freedom. Even that liberalism however sublimated, which especially in the Old World was of such historical repute and which motivated the Fathers (and Brethren) to adopt the Declaration of Independence on the 2nd of July 1776, just as ardently as the power of MONTESQUIEU's idea of "Liberty,
Equality and Fraternity," which as you all know contributed to the style and the development of modern Europe. I refer to that characteristic liberalism, which to us reflects the evident independence of the individual, irrespective of his mother tongue. It is that particular happiness which emanates from the knowledge of freedom based on tolerance, which we do not have to ceremoniously emphasize since it has become a part of our very being; something we want to communicate and share with others. If only this spirit of mutuality would exist world wide among Freemasons, (and how could I forget in this context the "Ancient Charges" so well known to all of us, which remain, to this day, generally valid as one binding constitutional basis and acknowledgment as the custom and moral code of all Freemasons) - if we had just this one mutual tie, even without the primo loco tenants of friendship, brotherly love and truth, then such a broad functional base would exist that further supplementation would hardly be necessary.

In our modern age it is unnecessary to change the world in the sense of Karl Marx or Herbert Marcuse, but it is all the more necessary that we consider our actual obligation and, where necessary, adapt and re-formulate them with a due consideration of our basic guidelines.

Our M.W. Grand Master has summarized this in three axioms following a general normative analysis of Bros. Holtrof and Hohmann:

Engagement for a dignified existence for all by means of communication with society;

Projection of ethical, and with it, educational values through our Fraternity of tolerant, open minded and socially engaged human beings, from within the Temple into the outer world;

Ritual work (also the original), to humanize one sided rationally mechanistic tendencies by a daily application of
concerted effort. We cannot, and do not want, to change the world, but we can make it more human.

What we need is not just life based materialistic values alone, but conscious plans, which will satisfy specific human needs such as freedom, leisure and possession. Instead of un-oriented progressiveness, future planning based on the needs of mankind must develop. By human we refer to those orientations, thought and behavior patterns developed through our long human history, the result of many creative acts and social trials which we have inherited as our cultural property still worthy of respect even though we cannot always rationally establish their origins. Human planning for the future is not feasible without conscious clarification of the norms, which constitute our mutual existence. In this context we are not necessarily concerned with the interpretation of matters beyond this world or religious motivations, but more with an unpretentious unity concerned with those mutually acceptable precepts by which we desire to live together.

This minimum canon should make the solution of our problems easier, should reduce conflicts and informational poisoning, should make our fellow men more immune to bluffs, contribute to a better order of our structures and better planning for the future, and clarify that with which we identify ourselves. It would be enticing for me, considering today's conflict of rationally applied techniques and hollow passions, to reflect on the much maligned 18th century, of which many in this country have a low opinion whereas the Americans are proud, of having derived, and still deriving strength from it. Without doubt the word "enlightenment has become for many intellectuals in Germany today a derisive expression. However, I believe that even in referring to only three names, -VOLTAIRE, Benjamin FRANKLIN and Gotthold Ephraim LESSING I have alluded to what extent we should be appreciative of this period. They
all had one thing in common; escape from the globalistic values of mankind; return to a free evaluation of mankind in the relationship of man-to-man; to show the courage to exemplify love. Is this necessary? Yes, hatred follows the indolence of the heart; it is cheap and comfortable. Love is always a risk, but only by taking a risk do we stand to gain. The meaning of their lives was simple: To do what is humanly right, in order to protect human rights.

Here a sensitive realism of intellect was united with an unquestioning idealism of the soul. Here the right measure and true force of occidental "order" were active. One might easily say this sounds "reactionary" I have no fear of everyday catchwords, because this "order" to which I refer in fact expresses nothing more than a development based on an intellectual heritage from antiquity, progressing through the Judaic-Christian Faith.

This place does not resemble the Temple at Delphi, and the speaker's rostrum is not the tripod in front of which the Greeks waited to learn the fate of their nation. For us this may serve as a beacon in the search for a mutual course, and a reflection upon those means by which Freemasonry can effectively work in the future. A sense of great responsibility in this period between yesterday and tomorrow exists all around us. Our English-speaking brethren practice the Royal Art without involving themselves in the philosophical or ritual problems of German-speaking Freemasonry which all too often appears to them as being too subjective or hypothetical. He cannot fathom the reason for such thematics and therefore finds it rather difficult to follow discussions concerning the so-called humanitarian of Christian aspects of Freemasonry, because they are for him one-and-the same.

Freemasonry is simply that Freemasonry; - a common ground for like-minded Brethren in the midst of a rather hectic world. Simply stated, a Brotherhood! Not a substitute
forum for debates regarding worldly or social problems. For him Freemasonry is neither solely humanistic nor related to one definite monotheistical religion; it does not require subtle analysis. His concept of Brotherhood speaks for itself and does not require explanation; it can only be inadequately translated in the language of the politician, the social worker, the trade unionist or the philosopher, but can never, even in an approximation, be fully permeated. This may seem to some to be too easy, too simple; but do not underestimate the dynamics and the devotion with which our English-speaking Brethren practice the principles of our Order in their daily lives, or the fervent concern with which they here and today pose questions and make suggestions.

1) How can we contribute to the improvement of Freemasonry and make it more effective, not only in Germany but to ensure its growth and integration as a firm element of contemplation and intellect in each individual brother?

2) We are convinced that the organization and strength of a Grand Lodge and its constituent parts constitute the prerequisites for a healthy growth and survival in the future; in this context, among other things, a clear and decisive policy respecting adherence to mutually acceptable and valid rules and regulations on the part of its Lodges must be followed, and observance of such rules must be supervised.

3) Furthermore, we are of the firm conviction that our special energies should first of all be concentrated on the forging of the infrastructure, the ties of the constituent Lodges with the Grand Lodge, the firm steadfastness of the Grand Lodge and the radiating strength of all Lodges, seen as one entity, totally integrated as a part of the Grand Lodge, thereby
contributing to the strength and growth of the United Grand Lodges of Germany; only in this fashion can one United Grand Lodge of Germany ever come into being. As in public life we too, need and must seek those norms, which will provide proper order. Our Masonic effectiveness, bequeathed to us, is as valid today as it was in the beginning, but the responsibilities have yet to be fully exercised.

4) We believe that philosophical exertions are, without question, absolutely essential to gain greater depth of understanding and a clearer conception of our Royal Art, as well as a greater realization of our intellectual heritage. They are, however, no substitute for practical structural improvements in our efforts to create an efficient Grand Lodge. Looked at from this perspective, they are a natural by-product of the Royal Art, - they are Brotherhood.

5) We vehemently oppose that division still existing within our ranks today, because we are not interested in just talking of unity - we want to see it realized. Our desire is to overcome the hesitation and those reservations voiced by Brethren, who must be taken seriously, and who, among themselves earnestly plead for a loose organization. We oppose this, because we view that which has been bequeathed us as an obligation, as has so often been presented in our Masonic past, involving a relationship composed of liberal insight and autocratic will. This we state with what we feel to be a suitable and proper lack of illusion: Freemasons are no demi-Gods, they are human beings or in good Swabian dialect "After all, they too are just folks".

6) We regard ourselves as among the most faithful supporters and promoters of the United Grand Lodges of Germany, and welcome every constructive step in developing a strong United Grand Lodge of Germany.
Here, for some of you, the term "Machtzuwachs" (Centralization of Authority) might be of some insight. I am not quite certain whether the sentence "Power in itself is evil" stems from the septic Jakob BURKHARDT or from the pious Ernst von LASAULX. - I do not agree. Power and Propriety, placed next to each other, are not only a pleasing alliteration of words, but provide the possibility of real fruition, particularly in a crisis situation, - before they are corrupted into reckless violence and result in nothing but chaos....

We have experienced this, and have paid and paid again in the past, we are paying now, in the hard-pressed present, and it can jeopardize our future. Power of itself is not necessarily evil. Granted, there exists the Power of Evil. But there is also the Power of Good. The scale of strength is in the end unimportant, only involvement is demanded. We should not shrink from it, but with that reliable confidence, utilizing every last possibility in these trying times, press forward and risk doing good. This should be understood as an inner obligation. May I put aside explanatory etymology and summarize quite simply: In the end it is the individual, the Brother, to whom we look and to whom we exemplify our love....

7) We want to return again, consciously, to the roots and the fundamentals of Freemasonry: return again to it original rites which are rooted in history. We want to keep Freemasonry simple, transparent and understandable for every man, as was in the beginning. We want to find the way back to an all embracing, unifying foundation from which a stronger individual and common leadership will result. We want to continue together in the building of the Temple which has not yet been completed. On each building site there are many Craftsmen, consummately skilled in their profession, that is equally true of ours today, but let us remember the
construction company and its architects, in our case a Grand Lodge and its Grand Masters, have called them together. In reality we are not merely interested in building a series of masterfully constructed walls; we want to construct a Temple. Without the advantages of capable leadership (i.e. of one construction company), in our instance one Grand Lodge, there will never be a harmonic whole, no master plan for the Temple, in whose interior various styles might rightfully find suitable expression. We are here to erect this Temple on earth. Castles in the air, or expressed in another way, unclear or indistinctly formulated directions do not help us to complete our Temple on earth. For this reason: back to the basics! Team work, or if you will, co-determination, is undoubtedly necessary, but it is no substitute for the responsibility vested in the architect or the firm carrying out the work.

This is an evolutionary process, a wearisome task, which can produce happiness, as well as a little sorrow. Happiness, if one generation attuned to the daily struggle and attainment of a future life can find once again and consciously experiences its unadulterated intellectual heritage. Sorrow, if the past brings to mind only that which we might term "cultivation of tradition", in order to simply justify a return to a dead past. Standards of Freemasonry throughout its history have never been strictly meditative; they have always stood as an underlying intellectual force within a highly contemporary age. But let's not over-exaggerate.

Aptitude for unbiased love. It is certainly not meritorious. It belongs quite simply to Freemasonry. "And Love begets Gratitude, it is its own reward".

In closing, before those here assembled will return to their daily lives, may I express these words: "Seek and we shall find" forever the original path to your own "self" and to your Masonic obligation, the way to your neighbor, the
"whole". Where can one be more inclined to meditate on such considerations as "worthwhile" and "worthless" than here in Berlin, the home of that Most Worshipful Prussian Frederick.... where the rational as a function of critical judgment clearly remains an integral part of the basic and indispensable development; and where one could even then, in 1521, hear the closing words of Martin LUTHER facing the Emperor Charles V at the Reichstag in Worms: "Here I stand... I am what I am.... May the Lord help me AMEN".

/s/Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo THOMAS
Land Grand Junior Warden
American-Canadian Land Grand Lodge
"IN EVERY COUNTRY AND IN EVERY CLIME"

By "The Poet By The Sea"

The Lodge extends from East to West, we learn,
as in old days, so in this present time;
For those are Masons everywhere we turn,
"In every country and in every clime

"Some modern Masons are too loath to speak
When everywhere is wickedness and crime.
For those who still are true, they ought to seek
"In every country and in every clime.

"Let us the ancient virtues still uphold
In strong pronouncements, set in prose or rhyme,
And spread the word, as in the days of old
"In every country and every clime.

'Though evil spews its darkness all around,
We should keep searching for that Light Sublime,
Because we know that Masons can be found
"In every country and every clime."

Walter K. Belt
The Purpose of Freemasonry as A Daily Challenge in Our Present World

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Keynote address commemorating the 10th Anniversary of "Ashlar" Lodge No. 894, 23 November 1974)
THE PURPOSE OF FREEMASONRY AS A DAILY CHALLENGE IN OUR PRESENT WORLD

(Keynote address commemorating the 10th Anniversary of "Ashlar" Lodge No. 894, 23 November 1974)

"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation..."
Isaiah, Ch. 28

Fraternal Greetings
to all resident and non-resident Brothers of Ashlar Lodge No. 894

As grateful as I am for the trust which the Worshipful Master, Brother James A. Ward, and the Brothers of Ashlar Lodge have shown in me by their friendly invitation in giving me the pleasant opportunity of formulating a key note address, suitable for this memorable occasion of the

10th Anniversary Celebration
I may offer you my sincere appreciation for the favorable sentiments with which it abounds. But I also can assure you, that I accepted with some great misgivings. Frankly, the prospect of having to address you, on this auspicious occasion and before such competent Brethren of real merit is quite frightening, because it is a peculiar and different thing to develop an address that, hopefully, will be meaningful to so distinguished an audience, and can do sufficient justice to the dignity of the day of joy and Light.

To express my sentiments or even attempt, would be vulgar, for a language of the heart only is broad casting the message of fraternal affection to this worshipful ASHLAR Lodge, which was brought to Light on the 21st day of November, 1964 A.D. and 5064 A.L., and receive its Charter by the Most Worshipful United Grand Lodges of Germany.

This address is presented with apologies for its defects but with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something at least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new increased interest in the topic:

The purpose of Freemasonry as a daily challenge in our present world is to establish values and to perceive an updated image of our Fraternity.

It is frequently said, that the purpose of Freemasonry is to take good men by the hand and to make them better, to which we all subscribe, but in doing so, Masons have an even nobler goal. They strive for greater achievements. Our Masonic spirit must be transformed into an acting center of Light, whose rays or emanations pervade both, the Universe and this world. For that is the Light for which all Masonic journeys are a search; in which we see the true meaning of the necessity of recovering the world. We are all duly prepared to fulfill our mission by the mode of preparation and tests of purification in the various Degrees.
A philosopher portrays what every man should be. A
Mason conceives what we should do. He must diligently try
to conceive and represent moral beauty, magnanimity and
prudence, love and forgiveness, the soul's greatness; to
portray virtues commended to our imitation and to embody
them into our life. The work of virtue is nobler than any work
of genius, for it is nobler to be a Master than to describe
one, to do right than to plead for it. There are but two things
worth living for: to do what is worthy of being written and to
write what is worthy of being read; and the greater of these
is the doing.

On the volume of Masonic life these bright words are
written, from which on every side blazes an ineffable
splendor: duty and work, truth and faith, relief and charity.

Do you remember when you were introduced to the
concept of infinity? Do you remember being bewildered? I
do! You were told to think of the largest number you could
think of and then keep going on and on. It didn't make any
difference how far you went; there was a number beyond
that. It is this infinity of time that I want us to think about.
Let us think about the problems that will be facing the world
and Freemasonry thirty or hundred years from now. Tomorrow
and tomorrow. We might rightly be concerned whether there
will be anyone here to enjoy that tomorrow. Circumstances
in the world are such that the catalyst of a possible disaster
may now exist. If we assume that we will be here, we need to
take stock of what tomorrow will bring and to determine
what we can do, to make it what we want it to be. And if we
are not going to be here, then we may assess what we will
not experience.

How many times do we try to see beyond our lives,
and plan for the long-term future of others and of our
organization? It strains our imagination to try to think of the
year 2000.
The immensity of the problems to be faced creates the challenge of tomorrow, and the challenge of tomorrow is really the opportunity of today.

There are three parts of the problem. The first has to do with human beings; by their numbers, they create the problem, and they will also solve it or be destroyed. Man is a creature of dignity and of God-given attributes. He is worth saving, and he must believe it. It conditions our way of life, the manner in which we organize ourselves, economically and socially. Man may need to change, but he must not lose his dignity or his freedom.

The second problem area is that of economic conditions. One economic challenge is to find new ways to market new products in a new age. Economic institutions have added to the problem by giving us numbers instead of names. We can ill-afford such depersonalization. The more anonymous a man becomes, the less dignified he is, and the less responsible he may hold himself for his actions.

The third part of the problem is that of organizations. Man's organizations are changing. Some forms of government have ceased to exist; others have taken their place. The challenge to institutions is to remain alive and useful, for they alone are the custodians, they alone are the ones who will keep the fire and the light of freedom burning in the hearts of man. I have presumed to believe that the challenge which warrants this discussion, is the challenge to this institution Freemasonry, to remain alive and useful, thirty years from now, one hundred years from now.

Freemasonry has met challenges in all its history. Persecution has not daunted it. It has might, and this has been one of its great distinguishing characteristics. It has might because it insists in its devotees the permanence of belief in an Infinite Creator. Each one of us has values in His eyes. And He watches over us with the same loving care as
the fondest parent does of its child. The Volume of Sacred Law on our Altar is our constant reminder at all times, that from Him alone come all the blessings that we enjoy in life, and to Him alone we owe our primary allegiance. This is so basic and this is our might.

Today we face a new danger.

All institutions are threatened today. There are people who advocate revolutionary overthrow of the establishment, which includes organizations, governments, business. At least some of these people are dangerous. Many others are simply expressing youthful discontent. But even a greater danger comes from the people, from boredom, from a lack of enthusiasm, from apathy, from doing nothing. How hard is it sometimes to get capable men to subject themselves to election to office. It can be remedied by involvement.

We need government, and churches, and schools. If these organizations were destroyed today they would somehow be recreated. They are relevant. And this world needs Freemasonry, which is essential and a catalyst in our concept of perpetual self-discovery, perpetual reshaping to realize one's best self; to be the person one could or ought to be. Name me any organization, which could be more relevant to this task?

Our principles must be discovered and interpreted by the individual. Our method of teaching permits, and even requires, interpretation by the individual of the lesson, which is taught. To listen one time, then again and again, is to hear and to learn a new lesson each time.

This is Freemasonry's power: the power to change men's lives, to make good men better; to aid each man, by helping him find and keep his best self. The power to renew
that spiritual building that must be constructed and built by the symbolic working tools entrusted to our care. The power to make and mold lives. God wants the whole person, revealing the best that is in that man's life. These principles are noble. But as we face tomorrow, and tomorrow, is this enough? Does the practice conform to the principles? We teach Relief and Truth, but do we always know it or tell it? And how do we measure our life against the cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice. The greatness and strength of the Craft has been the greatness of men, freely united, who share moral commitments and a vigorous sense of individuality.

We believe in social responsibility of man for man, because Freemasonry has a divine spirit, and that great spirit is permeated with love, - our concern for each other, the love of our fellow men. This is the great motivating force of our life, but one of the side elements in this great experience of love is CHARITY. Look about you, my friends, on these grounds, and there you see evidence that God's spirit is at work in the generosity of Brothers, who have been compelled by an inner sense of love to those primary things that have meaning and purpose in life, and they have left here examples of their great faith that God's spirit can only be manifested in helping, aiding and assisting those who cry out for our help.

To protect our tomorrow we may need to find new avenues of activity, to walk rather than to sit. Today and tomorrow is our challenge. So is the day after that. And next year. And all the tomorrow's to come. You and I as individuals may not be here to see all of them, maybe, not even many of them, but we can aid in preserving this institution, which has from time immemorial been dedicated to the task of aiding men aid themselves, and which the Honorable Brother Benjamin FRANKLIN eloquently expressed in his address at the Constitutional Convention in session in 1787: "I have
lived a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs the affairs of men. We have been assured, that except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain who build it. I firmly believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in a political or any other building no better than the builders of Babel."

Congratulations, Brethren of Ashlar Lodge. During the past 10 years you have exemplified what we are teaching. The sound of the gavel and the clink of the trowel could always be heard in all parts of the Masonic edifice you have erected. Let each do that for which he is best fitted. Live Masonry yourself. Spread the principles of our Fraternity in your daily actions. Make some human hearts a little wiser, more hopeful, happy and gentle. Then you shall have done work, worthy of Masons who used that Light they most desired.

Worshipful Master and Brethren all: we shall always consider the members of this good Lodge as our friends and Brothers, as we have learned it in the trowel lecture. We also gratefully acknowledge that your spirit and actions are governed by the simple and sublime teachings of Moses and Christ: Love one another; do unto others as you would others do unto you. May every Brother whom we have met or thought of this day, feel our steadfast affection. May we receive Freemasonry’s gift with thanksgiving and never forget for what purpose they are given. We know, you and your Officers and all Lodge members will exemplify these qualifications.

We thank you for the challenge of this place, and as we leave it, may we go to our various homes with a deeper sense of dedication, that we might share with others that, which we have found here: that Brotherly Love which fills our hearts; that Solidarity which moulds our lives; and the drive which makes us act.
May we become stronger and more dedicated citizens of worldwide Freemasonry and at last see the dawning of a world of a Brotherhood of Men in the words of the great King Solomon as he dedicated the Temple, the final sentence of his prayer:

"That Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even for the place of which Thou hast said, Thy name shall be there ... and Thy name is here. Amen."

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Land Grand Senior Warden
American-Canadian Land Grand Lodge
What is Truth?

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at the Masonic Study Group of "Alt Heidelberg" Lodge No. 821 on 31 January, 1975)
WHAT IS TRUTH?
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PREFACE

As grateful as I am for the confidence reposed in me, to present a topic before a Masonic Discussion Study Group, I can only hope, this address will be meaningful to so distinguished an audience and before such competent Brethren of real Masonic knowledge.

I am referring to Ahiman Rezon Nr. 1, a name extraordinaire, as I see it, chosen for the constitution of the Ancient Fraternity in 1756 and dedicated to the Earl of Elesington by Brother Lawrence Dermott and signifying: "to let the young Brethren know, how they ought to conduct their Actions, with Uprightness, Integrity, Morality and Brotherly Love, still keeping the ancient Land Marks in View."

Ahiman Rezon, an enigmatic title which has no true English equivalent, - and even Christian Dictionaries or Hebrew scholars can only offer something far from a literal translation, and this title certainly induces a stumbling block to the unlearned Masons. To me, therefore, Ahiman Rezon represents "a prepared Brother on the right hand and a faithful Secretary at his left ", both symbolizing 'The Brother's Secret Monitor', readily available to offer correct answers or whispering wise counsels in the ears of an erring or uninformed Brother;

When I decided to name this paper;

The Great Tenet of Truth
It is presented with apologies for its defects but with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something. At least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new increased interest in Masonic education, to establish values and to perceive a deeper meaning of some facets of our Masonic philosophy; ever bearing in mind, on the volume of our Masonic life these bright words are written, from which on every side blazes an affable splendor: duty and work, truth and faith, relief and charity.

Why I ever attempted a discourse on the intricate subject of Truth, I have no ready answer. I am definitely not a student of theology, and studied philosophy only for one and one half years; therefore, I am hardly qualified for such a task. But yet again, just who is really in a position to speak with authority on a matter of such infinite scope? No doubt there are others, and they may well be legion, who, are on our level of thinking on the mysteries of our Fraternity.

What more appropriate than to commence this Lodge of Instruction with the respective passages on TRUTH as explained in the Entered Apprentice's Lecture:

"The principal Tenets of our profession are three-fold, including the inculcation and practice of those truly commendable virtues: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Truth is a divine attribute, and the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry. Hence, while influenced by this principle, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us; sincerity and plain dealing distinguish us; and the heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing in each others prosperity."

In Masonry when we speak of truth we are referring to that Truth and Intelligence which is an eternal attribute of God, and not something which is of the individual soul. In the first degree lecture we learn that the center of the Lodge represents the blazing star, which is emblematical of Divine Truth. The words used are "Divine Providence" but Webster
defines this as "That which God conceived as the ultimate truth, whose sustaining power and ordering activity provide continual guidance over the matters of human destiny."

The point which I am trying to make is that Truth is Truth, and cannot be changed or modified by human interpretation. This does not mean that we as humans do not have our own interpretations of truth, we most certainly do, but what we think does not change the fact. It is 'this very elusiveness of truth that makes the subject important to the thinking mind.

Although truth is truth, each man must find it for himself, and therefore the search for truth is an eternal thing. This is the lesson being taught by Masonry in the Hiramic Legend. We are searching for the Lost Word which is only a symbol for Truth. In many jurisdictions they emphasize this by referring to the "Substitute Word," rather than to the "Grand Masonic Word." That is, the word we find in the Lodge is not TRUTH, but only a symbol for it.

Here is one of the real differences between Masonry and other organizations which are based on moral principles. Masonry does not profess to be the source of truth, and therefore, she does not attempt to teach the truth by some dictatorial means. Masonry only tries to provide the environment and the incentive whereby each member can expect some degree of success in his search for the truth. It has been said that truth is caught not taught.

Perfect truth is not attainable anywhere. We style this Masonic Work toward perfection; and yet, what it teaches is imperfect and defective. Yet we are not to relax in the pursuit of truth, nor contentedly acquiesce in error. It is our duty always to press forward in the search; for though absolute truth is unattainable, yet the amount of error in our views is capable of progressive and perpetual lessening and thus Masonry is a continual struggle toward the light.
As Masons, we must strive to reveal the truth. But on the other hand, we must not pretend to dogmatic certainty, nor vainly imagine such certainty attainable. It is not for us to try to establish and teach the truth, but to provide the basis which can lead men to those doors which will open when knocked upon and reveal the truth for which he is seeking. Truth is never lost; it is only its meaning which is lost, and when we find the truth, we may not recognize it, because it may be colored by our own prejudices. So we do not look to Masonry to serve up truth on a silver platter, but only to help us recognize the truth when we find it.

Operative Masons would explain Truth mathematically; to speculative Masons, Truth and Conscience, both being inevitably linked together like twins, have a far more important and significant meaning, they can only be explained as eternal values in a philosophical approach.

Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher (580 B.C.) was intellectually one of the most important men that ever lived, both when he was wise and when he was unwise. Mathematics begins with him. His greatest discovery was the Pythagorean theorem which is a statement of Euclid. It lays down a geometrical Truth relating to all right-angled triangles. "In any right-angled triangle the longest side, or hypotenuse, the slant line in a diagram, equals when squared, the combined squares of two other sides. It is this relationship which gives the craftsman the simple 3-4-5 method of setting out an angle of 90 degrees. As Freemasons we cannot properly consider the square without associating it with Euclid's 47th problem the motif for the Past Master's jewel: a device demonstrating that any triangle whose sides measure 3, 4 and 5 contains a right (Or square!) angle. No one knows why or when that amazing proposition was adopted as the insignia of the Past Master nor of any Craft Ritual that offers any explanation of the Proposition, or any philosophical lesson it may conceivably teach. It is often claimed that the
method based upon the proposition was for a long period of
time a Masonic trade secret, but this is almost certainly
nothing more than a pleasant fiction. There are many other
ways of arriving at a right angle, though probably none more
suitable for directing of the square angles of large buildings.
Pythagoras, probably saw a strange and striking connection
between the properties of a right-angled triangle and some
great important Truth, probably of a theosophical character.
This may be difficult for ordinary people to understand, but
has not some great thinker suggested that mathematics is a
source of belief in eternal Truth?

This leads us into the "anteroom" of Truth, where it's
meaning is explained through symbols and colors.

Of the many emblems and symbols to be found in the
3 Degrees. That of Jacob's Ladder has always been
conspicuous. This ladder, known as a symbol of moral,
intellectual and spiritual progress, represents the ladder
which Jacob saw in his dream when he beheld "a ladder set
up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and the
angels of God ascending and descending on it." Jacob's
Ladder was and still is a prominent symbol of speculative
Freemasonry. The number of rungs or steps, in the various
ladders was generally seven, which has been a mystic or
sacred number for thousands of years: there were for
example 7 sacred planets, 7 days in creation, 7 ages in the
life of man, the 7th son of a 7th son was notable, among the
Hebrews every 7th year was Sabbatical. And in Freemasonry
this Ladder should apparently have 7 steps, representing
Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice, Faith, Hope and
Charity, thereby leading the thought of the Brethren to
heaven, to moral and religious duties. In the Mithraic
mysteries the seven-runged ladder was a symbol of the ascent
of the soul and conscience to perfection, each rung being
termed a gate. In certain additional degrees the seven steps
represent Justice and Charity, Innocence and Sweetness,
Faith and Responsibility, Firmness and Truth. This Ladder, in Freemasonry, points to the connection between earth and heaven, man and God, and to represent Faith in God, Charity towards all men, and Hope in Immortality.

Colors have a large place in the ancient customs of the Craft; they were no more derived from ancient symbolism than were the colours of the liturgical vestments of the Christian Church from those of the Jewish priests. The clothing of three groups of Degrees is related mainly to three colours: the Craft or symbolic Degrees with blue; the Royal Arch with crimson; and the allied Degrees with green white and other colours, including black. Whichever came first, symbolism or colours, it is undeniable that Freemasonry attaches considerable importance to colours.

In the Craft, White is the natural emblem of purity and hope, of innocence and Truth; and our white lambskin apron is the badge of innocence. The deep Oxford-Blue of Grand Lodge clothing denotes eternity, chastity and fidelity; the light, pale Cambridge Blue represents prudence and goodness. You will remember: Crimson jointly with red and scarlet is the emblem of Faith and Fortitude, of divine love and high dignity (as in the distinguished robe of "Z" in the Royal Arch.) Green, always regarded as the symbol of gladness and abundance, has been directly associated with ideas of resurrection and victory and in some allied Masonic Degrees with immortality and divine Truth. Yellow is used in Freemasonry only as gold, the symbol of the sun and therefore of constancy and Truth. Finally, my Brethren, the Passage through the four Veils in the Royal Arch Degree is a symbol of the trials and difficulties which are encountered as preliminary to the exaltation and must be overcome in the search for Truth; the veils having a particular symbolism related to the colour of the veil: blue for universal friendship and benevolence, purple for union, scarlet for fervency and zeal, and white for purity.
We are now leaving the mathematical and symbolic explanations of Truth and Conscience and are approaching their real interpretation and true meaning on a more sublime and spiritual level. We've seen, Truth is hidden under symbols and allegories, or represented by symbols and hidden images, and it represents the universal medicine of the mind, at least mathematically and practically. Since Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation or cornerstone of every virtue it inculcates a knowledge of God. And this knowledge rather conceals than discloses the Truth; it hints it only, at least; and through our striving for knowledge its varied meanings is only to be discovered by us as Fellows or Masters of the Craft. Truth is symbolized by Light and the Sun, but as the ray of light is separable into rays of different colours, so is Truth separable into different kinds. It is the province of Masonry to teach all Truths, not moral Truth alone, but political and philosophical, and even religious Truth, so far as concerns the great and essential principles of each. Since beliefs and doctrines that do not accord with the right angle of our conscientious convictions, can never give light, so can Truth itself never be truth to us, until we are true to it. It is dark, cold and silent, as the sun's energy in the cosmos, until our souls receive it on the right angle of the square, then it becomes "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." The sun is the hieroglyphical sign of Truth because it is the source of Light which provides us with an immovable basis of Faith and Truth to the intellectual and visible universe. Our souls acquire certain knowledge, by meditating on the light of Truth, which emanates from the Being of Beings, whom the wise call the great, supreme, pervading Spirit, the perfect Truth, whom neither speech can describe, nor mind comprehend.

Freemasonry teaches us the great Truths of the principles of our Order, let me name them the 10 Landmarks of Truth:
1. *No man has seen God at any time.* He is one eternal, all-powerful and all-wise, the source of light and life, coextensive with time and space, and with the thought created the Universe and all living things, and the souls of men, and everything beside him is a perpetual genesis.

2. *The soul of man is immortal.* Not the result of organization, nor an aggregate of modes of action of matter, but an existence, a living spirit, a part of the Great Light, that has entered into and dwells in the body, to be separated there from at death, and return to God who gave it.

3. *The impulse which directs to right conduct,* and defers from crime, is not only older than ages of nations, but coeternal with that Divine Being who sees and rules both heaven and earth. It did not begin to be law when it was first written, nor was it originated; it is coeval with the Divine Intelligence itself. The consequence of virtue is not to be made the end thereof, and laudable performance must have deeper roots, motives and instigation, to give them the stamp of virtue.

4. *The moral Truths are as absolute as the metaphysical Truths.* The principles of morality are axioms, like the principles of Geometry. The moral laws are the necessary relations that flow from the nature of things, and they are not created by, but have existed eternally in God. Their continued existence does not depend upon the exercise of his will. Truth and Justice are of his essence, and he has given us the law of Truth and Justice; but he has not arbitrarily instituted that law. God is the principle of Morality, but not by his mere will, which, abstracted from all other of his attributes, would be neither just nor unjust. Truth is inherent in his will; because it is contained in his intelligence and wisdom, in his very nature and most intimate essence.
5. *There is an essential distinction between good and evil, what is just or unjust.* To this distinction is attached, for every intelligent and free creature, the absolute obligation of conforming to this principle. Man is a free being, free, because he is conscious that it is his duty, and it is made his duty, to obey the dictates of Truth and Justice and therefore he must necessarily have the power of doing so, which involves the power of not doing so. Man is capable of comprehending the distinction between good and evil, justice and injustice, and the obligation which accompanies it, and of naturally adhering to that obligation, independently of any contract or positive law. Man is capable also of resisting the temptations which urge him toward evil and injustice, and of complying with the sacred law of eternal justice. To act differently would mean to deny the Omnipotence of God.

6. *The necessity of practicing the moral Truth is obligation.* The moral obligation, like the moral truth that is its foundation, is absolute. If the obligation is absolute, it is immutable and universal. For if that of today may not be that of tomorrow, if what is obligatory on me may not be obligatory on you, the obligation would differ from itself, and be variable and contingent. This fact is the principle of all morality. That every act contrary to right and justice deserves to be repressed by force and be punished when committed, equally in the absence of any law or contract. Man naturally recognizes the distinction between the merit and demerit of actions as he does that between justice and injustice, honesty and dishonesty. The Deity being infinitely just and good, it must follow as a necessary and inflexible law that punishment shall be the result of sin as a natural effect and not a mere arbitrary vengeance.

7. *The immutable law of God requires, that besides respecting the absolute rights of others,* and being merely
just, we should do good, be charitable, and obey the dictates of the generous and noble sentiments of the soul. Charity is a law, because our conscience is not satisfied nor at ease if we have not relieved the suffering, the distressed, the destitute. It is to give that, which he, to whom you give, has no right to take or demand. To be charitable is obligatory on us. But the obligation is not as precise and flexible as the obligation to be just. Charity knows neither rule nor limit. It goes beyond all obligation. Its beauty consists in its liberty. These are the sublime dictates of the Moral Law: to be kindly affectionate one to another with Brotherly Love; to relieve the necessities of the needy and be generous, liberal and hospitable; to return to no man evil for evil; to rejoice at the good fortune of others, and sympathize with them in their sorrows and reverses; to live peaceably with all men, and repay injuries with benefits and kindness.

8. That the Laws which control and regulate the Universe of God, are those of motion and harmony. We see only the isolated incidents of things, and with our limited capacity and vision cannot discern their connection. Pain and sorrow persecution and destitution, sickness and death are but the means, by which alone the noblest virtues can be developed. Without them, without sin, error and wrong, there can be no effect without an adequate cause: neither patience under suffering, nor prudence in difficulty, nor temperance to avoid excess, nor courage to meet danger; nor charity for the destitute, nor love when it is met with ingratitude, nor toleration of erroneous opinions, nor generosity or charitable judgment and construction of men's motives and actions, nor truth, when to speak the truth is hazardous. These and most other virtues and excellencies would have no existence, and even their name is unknown.
9. The Justice, Wisdom and Mercy of the Great Architect of the Universe are alike, infinite and perfect, and form a harmonious Trinity of Divine attributes. The principle of merit and demerit are absolute, and every good action deserves to be rewarded and the bad one's to be punished, because God is as just as He is good. Oh yes, in this world crime and cruelty, oppression and injustice are prosperous and enjoy all the blessings of God's beneficence, while the virtues and good are un-fortunate, destitute, famishing with hunger and are slaves of oppression. If there were no existence beyond it, this world, therefore, would be a place of wrong and injustice, proving God wholly disregardful of His own necessary law of merit and demerit. It follows that there must be another life in which these apparent wrongs shall be repaired; that all the powers of man's soul tend to infinity, and his indomitable instinct of immortality, and the universal hope of another life, testified by all creeds, poetry or traditions, establish its certainty. For the day must come when Light and Truth, and the just and good shall be victorious over darkness, wrong and evil. Light will ultimately prevail over darkness.

10. All good men on earth are tending to that state and realm of Light and Truth, which is absolutely certain. The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward; everything presses on to Eternity. Therefore, let every Mason obey the voice of Truth and his conscience that calls him. Let us seek the things that are above, and be not content with a world that must shortly perish, and which we must speedily quit, while we neglect to prepare for that, in which we are invited to dwell forever. While everything within us and around us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparation for another world, and earnestly implore that help and strength from our
heavenly Father. When, finally, our desires and our destiny move in the same direction, and that, which God's will renders unavoidable shall become our choice, all things will be ours: Life will be divested of its vanity, and death disarmed of its terrors. This is the sublime mission of Freemasonry, also in this modern world.

**TRUTH** as I understand it, challenges our highest capacity to keep a candid mind. A great American teacher, A.A. Hodge, was motivated through this Truth, when he humbly confessed: *"No one's truth is rightly held until it is clearly confessed: No one's truth is rightly held until it is clearly conceived and stated: and no single truth is adequately comprehended until it is viewed in harmonious relations to all other truths of the system of which the Prophets in the Volume of Sacred Law and the Revelation of Christ are the center."

I personally believe, our ancient Grand Master Hiram Abiff would say: *"If the entire world goes against Truth, then Hiram goes against the World."

In closing, my Brethren, I deeply appreciate your attentive Ear and your faithful Breast. We realize, I hope, our work is important and noble. We have to face many difficulties in the years to come. But I invite you to consider how comforting it will be for us, when we come to the close of our lives on earth, to be able to say to ourselves: we have served the Truth!

/s/ Hugo Thomas  
1-Hugo Thomas  
Land Grand Senior Warden  
American Canadian Grand Lodge
On Masonic Charity

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at Hiram Lodge No. 819 on 24 May 1976)
ON MASONIC CHARITY

(Presented at Hiram Lodge No. 819 on 24 May 1976)

"Work is love made visible... We may give without loving but we cannot give love, without giving."
T.W.E.

When I decided to name this lecture,

On Masonic CHARITY

I felt myself placed on a very solid rock, with firm guidelines and Landmarks available, as outlined in the applicable portions of our ritual: as Entered Apprentice we learn... "The covering of a Lodge is no less than the clouded canopy, or starry decked Heaven, where all good Masons hope at last to arrive, by aid of that ladder which Jacob in his vision saw extended from Earth to Heaven, the principal rounds of which are denominated Faith, Hope and Charity, which admonish us to have faith in God, hope of immortality, and charity to all mankind. The greatest of these is Charity. For Faith may be lost in sight, Hope end in fruition, but Charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity..." To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, particularly upon Masons, who are linked together by a chain of sincere affection. To soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with them in their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their
troubled minds, are aims we have in view. On this basis, we establish our connection, and form our friendships; as Fellowcrafts we are taught to apply our knowledge to the discharge of our duties to God, our neighbor, and ourselves; and as Master Masons we learn..." As we come into the world as rational and intelligent beings, so should we ever be industrious, never content to be idle, while our fell creatures are in want if it is in our power to relieve them."

On such a solid foundation "and while a Mason keeps himself thus circumscribed, it is impossible that he should materially err".

This lecture is presented with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something; at least achieve its main purpose: the stimulation of an increased interest in one of the most important subjects of Freemasonry:

What do Masons mean by Charity?

In Webster's definition it is divine love for man; an act of loving all men as brothers because they are sons of God; an act or feeling of affection or benevolence. Charity and Love are words in the ancient Greek translation, denoting that kindly state of mind which renders a person full of good will and affectionate regard towards others.

Paraphrasing the Apostle Paul: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not Love and Charity, I am become a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not Love and Charity, I am nothing.'

Thus we see that most of the definitions of charity imply Love and not mere monetary giving. Charity is the brightest jewel in the Masonic crown; it is the cornerstone
and the Corinthian pillar of our Fraternity. Charity is the radiant spark emanating from God, the inexhaustible source of Love; every discordant passion bows before its lenient sovereignty.

Not the charity circumscribed by the narrow limits of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and binding up the wounds of the afflicted, but that NOBLER charity that regards all men as brothers. The charity that is swift of foot, ready of hand, in the cause of a common humanity. The charity that writes a brother's vices in water and his virtues in enduring brass. Let this, a Mason's charity, burn upon the altar of our heart as living fire. This charity whose superstructure is friendship, morality, brotherly love; whose capstone is Holiness to the Lord. Masons are charged to be charitable, by the noblest instincts of our manhood and by our hope of Heaven, so to act and live, that our Masonic life may be an open book known and read by all men.

Whatever good we do is but DUTY done. If a sorrow we have lifted, or a tear wiped away; if a poverty's load we have taken a share from some weary soul; if we have lifted a cup of water to the lips of a famished mortal - then so far we have illustrated the divine teachings of Masonry. Through our performed charity, the fellowship in our Lodge will be blessed and by the same token, to his great name shall be all the praise.

Masonry is not an easy way. Men must seek Masonry and then they must be evaluated by its rigid standards. To strive for the serious purposes and lofty aims of our Institution in our daily life, is our obligation which we have promised to keep and perform. A Mason will readily acknowledge his debt of gratitude for all that Masonry has meant to him, for all the gifts of incomparable value.

At the same time, however, we must recognize the truth, that Masonry offers no simple and easy path. It does
not promise a magic key which will open wisdom to men who are indifferent to spiritual values. Masonic teachings are not just taught once, and the book then closed; underlying lessons are repeated over and over again. Degrees are not simply conferred on a candidate, but each candidate must receive the redeeming message of Masonry into his own heart and mind. Moral and spiritual lessons are eternally repeated, heard and seen by those who maintain an attitude of alertness to their meanings. This, too, is Masonic Charity. Basically, Charity means Love, Masonic Charity means love of our fellowmen, with the opportunity to serve.

"The sunny side of life is always with those who brighten the corners of the earth with good deeds. Part of our good deeds are our Masonic Charities. The giving of out time, our talents and our moneys. Like the stars that are beautiful because of what they are, so we can make our lives a beneficial influence on others by developing a continual spirit of giving within our hearts and minds. The most precious heritage in the world can become covered with dust; the finest brass will tarnish; the purest iron will rust. Likewise, the noblest man can become useless unless he keeps polished by exposing himself to a sound course of action. Everyone needs rekindling sometimes. All of us need new concerns, new targets, and new causes. The more we practice what we know, the more we shall know what to practice."

These words indicate the great challenge before us. Charity is Masonry in Action, and it has been clearly demonstrated by Grand Lodge and all other Masonic Bodies that in order to raise substantial amounts of money for charity, it is necessary to have a specific, single objective, so that the money will produce the most beneficial results.

Masonic benevolences are linked to the human body when we review the services that Masonry renders to mankind. Esteem the Brother who takes a pleasure in acts of charity, and never babbles about it; take him to your bosom,
and cherish him as a credit to Masonry and an honor to mankind.

Half the misery of human life might be extinguished if men would alleviate the general curse they lie under by mutual offers of compassion, benevolence and humanity. Like blazing stars in the heavens, our Masonic charities shine over the trackless seas of today's bureaucratic and mass-produced social welfare. Our charities are infused with the spirit of us who are giving, and our gifts provide the recipients with the comforting, gracious and spiritual atmosphere which we as Masons treasure.

Our gifts are given not with a routine sense of duty, but with the inspiration that charity to fellowmen is a basic tenet of our fraternity. We give, not because the recipient has asserted his "rights" to receive help, but because we know that human beings, like ourselves, are in need. The needs may be for worldly goods, food, clothing, shelter needs now generally recognized by the government agencies, and filled in a routine way. These needs are met from money raised by taxation, not by giving.

Wherever we can, we go far beyond meeting the needs of the body. Masons practice Charity where the financial, mental and spiritual comforts are provided as well. This is the subtle but infinite difference which is so characteristic of our Masonic charity.

It is this spirit which motivates us to carry our Brothers who might be faced with the severe Masonic punishment of "Suspension". We remit their dues for a while and most of them gratefully reciprocate abundantly.

An Institution which places the responsibility for growth and development on the shoulders of the individual, must forever stress the truth, which the Institution is but the reflection of its members. Masonry's growth must ever come from the individual, whose sincere application and
patient study of Masonry's teachings make of him a stronger person.

There are always unfortunate sufferers with us, and such there will be until the end of time. Very much has been done by our Fraternity to relieve the unfortunate, to lessen the aggregate of human misery. If charity to the destitute is a duty, than the Masonic Institution deserves the patronage of every benevolent, humane and charitable person. it deserves the applause of mankind in general, since it is a wise permanent and universal establishment. It shields from danger, and it teaches us even to feed an enemy, should his necessities absolutely require. Such charity is God-like. Such benevolent charity disarms the heart of enmity, and if universally exercised, would restore and perpetuate peace to the world. Hence the principles of Freemasonry in every aspect aim directly at the alleviation of human misery, the advancement of society, and the friendship and brotherly affection of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Charity is a shining virtue, adorns our nature and is deeply characteristic of true benevolence of heart. Hence Masonry, as a charitable Fraternity aside from all other considerations, is justly entitled to the approbation of mankind. Individuals in their private capacities, are not always expected to promptly meet the needs of innocent sufferers. The Lodges of our Craft afford surer and more prompt means of effecting this important objective and service.

Every Brother knows, that there will always be in this world wrongs to forgive, sorrows asking for sympathy, necessities and destitution to relieve, and ample occasions for the exercise of active Charity and beneficence.

The true Mason must be and must have a right to be content with himself. He can be so only when he lives not for himself alone, but for others also, who need his assistance and have a claim upon his sympathy. A true Mason is his Brother's keeper. We must measure our desires by our fortune
and condition, not our fortune by our desires. We must be governed by our needs, not by our fancy; by nature, not by evil customs and ambitious principles. It is no evil to be poor, but to be vicious and impatient, and to cheat or wrong men, especially a Brother, Charity presupposes Justice.

He who loves his Brother, respects the rights of his Brother;—but he does more, who forgets his own. egoism sells or takes. Love delights in giving, and the more we give, the more we possess.

The immutable law of GOD requires, to be just and to do good, to be charitable, and to obey the dictates of the generous and noble sentiments of soul.

Charity is a law because our conscience is not satisfied nor at ease if we have not relieved the suffering, the distressed, and the destitute. Charity knows neither rule nor limit, it goes beyond all obligations. Its beauty consists in its liberty.

These are the sublime principles of the Moral Law of Charity which Masonry teaches: to be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; to relieve the necessities of the needy and be generous, liberal and hospitable; to return to no man evil for evil; to rejoice at the good fortune of others, and sympathize with them in their sorrows and reverses; to live peaceably with all men, and repay injuries with benefits and kindness.

Masons are summoned to develop our noble virtues, as there can be no effect without an adequate cause: neither patience under suffering and distress; nor prudence in difficulty; nor temperance to avoid excess; nor courage to meet danger; nor truth, when to speak the truth is hazardous; nor love, when it is met with ingratitude; nor charity for the needy and destitute; nor toleration of erroneous opinions; nor forgiveness charitable judgment, honor or generosity. The united and focused will of Freemasonry is a force; its
limits are yet unknown. There is a seeming identity between our will to be charitable, that moves other Brothers, and our creative will whose action seems so incomprehensible. It is the man of will and action, not the man of pure intellect, which governs the world.

Charity, Clemency and Generosity are essential qualities of the true and gentle and faithful Mason. They protect our Fraternity when we are unarmed, and they are our arms that we cannot lose, unless we be false to ourselves. Guarded by the favor of GOD, strengthened by the love of our Brethren, our Charity actions rest upon a basis which the strength of evil cannot overthrow. And with these and a generous and noble temper, we have everything to fulfill our doings. To be consistent with our profession as Masons, to retain the dignity of our nature, the consciousness of our own honor, and the spirit of our solemn obligations we have taken upon the Three Great Lights, our Charity will be magnified, glorified and ennobled. Virtue, Love, Truth and Charity - possessing these and never proving false to our vows, we will be worthy to call ourselves Free and Accepted Masons.

From the beginning our Faith and Charity have illuminated human souls and constituted the consciousness of our own dignity, our divine inspiration, and our immortality. That Faith and Charity which is the Light by which the human soul is enabled to see itself and to follow the pathway to the East unsullied. The Providence of the Great Architect of the Universe rules directly in all our affairs and changes of material things. Obligated to, and strengthened through the Square and Compasses we are enabled to govern our words, thoughts and deeds and our passions, and both points of the Compasses will remain above the square forever.

Freemasonry is a charitable society; here are funds expressly reserved for charitable purposes. Yet Masonic charity is not wholly confined to our Brotherhood: wherever
suffering humanity is found, there is an object which touches a Mason's heart with sympathy, excites his compassion, and is promptly relieved. Such has been the uniform practice of our Craft from time immemorial, and such should be the liberality of its individual Brothers, insofar as their abilities permit.

To me, the Masonic definition of charity is "Love your fellow man, especially your Brother". In fact, might it not be possible, that "Love" is one of the lost words, and that some day man will love his Brothers as he did in the beginning?

Such is the sentiment that constitutes the cementing bond of Freemasonry. In comparing charity with Faith and Hope, Charity is the greatest of the three; in Masonry it occupies the topmost round of our mystic ladder. We must not fall into the common error of believing that charity is only that sentiment of commiseration which leads us to assist the poor with pecuniary donations. Its Masonic application is more noble and more extensive. Guided by the sentiment of the Masonic triad of virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity, the true Mason will suffer long and be kind. He will be slow to anger and easy to forgive. He will help his falling brother by gentle admonition, and warn him with kindness of approaching danger. He will not open his ears to slanderers, and will close his lips against all reproach. Another's faults will be locked in his breast, and prayer for mercy will ascend to our Lord for his Brother's errors. Nor will these sentiments of benevolence be confined to those who are bound to him by ties of Masonic or worldly friendship alone. But extending them throughout the globe, he will love and cherish all who sit beneath the canopy of our Universal Lodge. For it is the boast of our Institution that a Mason may find in every clime a Brother, and in every land a home.

We believe in CHARITY.
Unfortunately, some brethren think of Masonry as a vast beneficent society, helping only each other, but actually the real theme of Masonry is brotherhood, education, service, and humility. Freemasonry is not in any sense a beneficent society, nor is it based upon calculations which could render this possible. We believe that Charity has a much wider context than that of the giving of alms. For us, it includes the charity of thought which overlooks the faults and errors of his fellowmen and Brothers.

We all have weaknesses and shortcomings. But I have figured, that my Brothers have put up with mine so tolerably, that I would be much less than fair, not to make a reasonable discount for theirs.

Masons identify themselves with Abraham Lincoln's philosophy on charity:

"...The kind things you mean to say when your friends are dead and gone, say before they are gone. The flowers you meant to send for their coffins, send now to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them..."

"... If my Brothers have any alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy, good will and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would prefer they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours and open them, that I may be refreshed, cheered and made better while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of Brotherly Love and affection and charity..."

In closing I may confess my personal charity motto:

"...I will discriminate against no man by reason of his faith or creed. I will daily deal with every man on the basis of
his true individual worth. In my conduct, I will consecrate myself hour by hour, day by day, to the achievement of the highest ideals of the dignity of man, human equality and human Brotherhood in the border of the Holy Empire of Freemasonry...

"...I try to realize that down in his heart every man is as noble as vile, as divine as diabolic, and as lonely as myself - and seek to know and love my fellow man..."

"...I try to learn how to sympathize with men, even in their sins, knowing that each man fights a hard fight against odds, and still believe in them when they do not believe in me or in themselves..."

"...I try to learn how to make friends and to keep them, and above all, how to keep friends and Brothers with myself. "...I try to learn that no voice of distress may ever reach my ears in vain, and no hand seeks my aid without response..."

"...I try to look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud, and to look into the face of the most forlorn fellow mortal and see something beyond sin..."

"...I try to know how to pray, how to love, how to hope, how to meet defeat, without being defeated..."

"...I try to keep faith with myself, with my Brothers, with my Heavenly Father; in my hand a sword against evil, in my heart a bit of a song - glad to live, but not afraid to die!...

"...I try to learn how to give myself, to forgive others, and to live with thanksgiving..." To all of these I try with the help of Deity and in the spirit of Freemasonry.

To achieve this we must be an active living Fraternity. We must turn the sentiment of Brotherly Love and affection
into reality. Bearing this in mind let us follow constantly some ancient universal Landmarks of humanity as expressed in this noble State-motto of the USA:

    E pluribus unum..." ("out of many one.."), and with the devoting motto of former Germany "Emmanuel" ("May our Lord protect us."), because "...Spes mea in Deo est...".

/s/Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Maimonides' "Eight Degrees of Charity", written eight centuries ago, reflected the accepted Jewish standards of charity

1. Those who bestow charity but with grumbling.
2. Those who do so cheerfully but give less than they ought.
3. Those who contribute only when they are asked and what they are asked.
4. Those who give before they are requested to do so.
5. Those who give charity but do not know who benefits by it, although the recipient is aware from whom he has received it.
6. Those who give charity and do not disclose their names to those who received it.
7. Those who do not know to whom their contribution will be given while the recipients do not know from whom they have received it.
8. Those who extend a loan or bestow a gift upon the needy, or who take a poor man into partnership or help him to establish himself in business so that he should not be compelled to apply for charity. Such people practice the highest degree of charity.
On Symbolism

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 18 July, 1981 at the "A CGL Past Masters Lodge No. 950")
ON SYMBOLISM

(Presented on 18 July, 1981 at the "A CGL Past Masters Lodge No. 950")

PREFACE

Reflecting upon the deeper meaning of this topic "Symbolism" let me offer you my contemplations on the symbolic interpretation of "Greatness".

Ever since we began to develop our feelings for quantity we began to loose our sense of greatness. Quantity is after all a quantitative term; greatness however was originally a qualitative one. If for instance, we say a person has a great heart we mean he is magnanimous and by no means are we referring to the physical size of his heart. Our heads may produce intelligent and astonishing ideas, but no idea will achieve greatness unless it also goes through a great heart. Our habit of judging things and events according to their size and dimension is laming our ability to perceive greatness, meaning, and true worthiness.

Statistics may be a good thing in their field. However, if we raise it to the level of a philosophy of life or an orientation point, it becomes all too common. Genuine greatness cannot be measured in statistics, it can only be perceived by the heart. An old priest once said "To know what justice is, one must first be just. To know what goodness is, one must first be good. To know about beauty, one must have a beautiful heart".

This is exactly what I mean. Unfortunately, we no longer even attempt to trust the greatness of the heart. We only
see ourselves and then others as distant points within a calculation. And we should not be surprised to find ourselves becoming ordinary. But how can we protect ourselves from sliding into the lure of calculation, mistaking quantity for greatness? How then can we protect our heart? Only by measuring our heart with one which is superior to our own. Only a heart capable of looking upwards to him who is superior remains great. A noble heart is not lifted in the presence of lessers. By looking downwards the heart does not grow but becomes small and mean. Looking upwards to him who is superior to our heart is the way of humility. In fact, humility is nothing more than receptivity for greatness.

Humility has nothing to do with degradation but the contrary; it is something great and noble. He who cannot be humble consequently becomes base. He who is humble keeps his sense of greatness. This is a law to which mankind is subject to. Man cannot alter it at his liking. He can only turn to statistics and it serves him right if then he leaves the world of greatness.

Before I start this presentation I must humbly admit, that I am not prepared to comply with the high expectations of a hierophant, signifying one who explains the Sacred Things. This is not my intention, nor do I instruct neophytes or candidates. This paper is therefore presented with caution; I've not used any references, no bibliography. I did not even read any Masonic publication respecting the topic on purpose, and rather tried to voice my own ideas and interpretations instead. And this is my/our basic position and a fundamental: our Order is founded on the activity of closely united men, who employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the Mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally
to ennoble themselves and others and thereby to bring about a universal Brotherhood of Mankind.

**On Symbolism and Allegory**

Freemasonry is said to be a beautiful exoteric and esoteric system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. The two words exoteric and esoteric are often misconstrued in their application to Masonic ritual and symbolism. The former denotes modes of speech intelligible to the popular and uninstructed world, the common place or ordinary meaning.

Esoteric denotes the inner meaning - normally intended only for the initiated, actually for the Brother who has the energy and ability to penetrate below the surface meaning.

The word allegory is from two Greek words and means story within a story "the Masonic story" is told as a fact, but it presents the doctrine of immortality. Allegory, parable, fable, myth, legend, tradition, are correlative terms. The myth may be founded on fact; the legend and tradition more probably are founded on fact, but the allegory, parable, fable, are not. Yet they may be "true" if "true "is not taken to be factual. All allegories may contain truth, without being fact.

The allegory of the Master's Degree is not true in any factual sense, except in the historical background from the Biblical account of the building of the Temple. That the Hiram were Grand Masters; that the workmen on the building were Entered Apprentices, Fellowcrafts and Master Masons; that they met in various apartments of the Temple, with different numbers required for various quorums; that the events delineated in the ceremony actually happened are not factual statements. Yet the allegory is true in the best sense of the word. For the story of Hiram is the story of the
dearest hope of mankind. It is a tale told in every religion. It is affirmation, by picture, drama, story, of man's rugged faith that Job's immortal question, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" Must be answered in the affirmative. It is a Mason's observation that truth, slain by error, will be born again; it is the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Carpenter who died between two thieves. The Masonic allegory is true in the deepest sense of truth.

Is the Masonic story of Hiram Abif true?

If by true is meant" factual ", the answer is no. If by "true" is meant "containing a great truth "then the answer is yes; it is true as is the story of Santa Claus which tells a truth to children in words they can understand. The Legend of Hiram as told in the Master Mason's degree is one of the oldest legends in the world but Freemasonry's legend is peculiarly her own. The three who encountered Hiram at the gates of the Temple are themselves symbols of error, evil, sin and the story as a whole is of the ultimate weakness of such forces against the power of the Great Architect. The word Abif is translated both "his father" and "my father", with "father" used in these senses as a patriarch, a teacher, a source of wisdom, and not as the actual father of a family. "Hiram, my father" is thus a title of honor and respect. "In the investigation of the true meaning of every Masonic symbol and allegory, we must be governed by the single principle that the whole design of Freemasonry as a speculative science is the investigation of divine truth."

We have become so familiar with the word symbolism in our daily lives we seldom think about it. The American flag is an excellent example. To many it's nothing but a piece of cloth colored red, white and blue. But the historian sees the thirteen original colonies in its stripes. The stars
represent the number of present States. The patriot will see
a glorious past and the flag as a symbol of loyalty. A
Freemason sees all these things and more. The red becomes
a symbol of the blood shed to create and preserve the
country. The white symbolizes purity, and the establishment
of freedom for all men. The blue takes on a symbol of fidelity
to the highest principles. Actually, there is no limitation to
what a person can find in this or any other symbol. Past
experience, knowledge, and background help or hinder us
in what we see.

So it is with Masonic symbolism. No one can ever write
all there is to know about it. One can only state his personal
views insofar as his perception helps him to see this
symbolism.

Everyone, I believe, agrees that each individual Mason
is free to interpret the symbols and ceremonies of Masonry
according to the light which he has received. It is frustrating,
consequently, to be told that an interpretation which may
be under discussion can't possibly be accepted because it
was never intended.

For example - the allusions in the ritual to matters
only contained in our Volume of Sacred Law, the "Three Ages
of Man, the allusion to a "sacred symbol in the centre of the
Lodge in our closing in the Second Degree", intemperance
of "the evils of drink", the dew of Hermon, Ecclesiastes XII
("keepers, strong men, grinders, doors shut, his long home").
Too often we have the tendency to start from the outside
with our own peculiar ideas, fully determined to force them
into a Masonic context. We ought to take the Masonic symbols
and try to interpret them "working outwards" towards an
understanding of what they mean. Indeed no person, no
authority can order and compel a man to believe something.
It seems to me that he will only believe, or accept something
that satisfies him as to its veracity, or historical accuracy, or
as being a convincing explanation of something he does not fully understand.

Allowing that I am a complete novice on the subject of Symbolism, holding convictions that arise from instant rather than from rational analysis, I am far less well equipped to answer a question you seem to believe. Yet I must try to answer, if only as an exercise in self discipline.

Symbolism is not an exact science; so far as I know, there are no rules by which we can measure the authenticity, or logic, or the accuracy of one's interpretations. There is no sure means which will enable us to decide, as between several more-or-less different views inspired by a particular symbol, that one of them is more "correct" than the others, or nearer the "truth" than the others. Our estimation of truth or accuracy, in dealing with symbols, will be governed entirely by how far a particular explanation or interpretation is in accord with our previous convictions, or how far those explanations, interpretations, may succeed in satisfying us in our search for understanding.

Hence I argue that every man is fully entitled and should be encouraged to create, evolve or work out his own symbolism and when he has done this to his own full satisfaction, his symbolism is valid for him, regardless of the arguments of extraneous logic.

First, my views on the meaning and purpose of symbolism. I may be all wrong but it seems to me that symbols are a mode of communication - in fact - a method of teaching, either by implication, or recollection, or interpretation. For myself, I prefer interpretation at its simplest level and, whenever possible, in the actual words of the ritual. e.g., "The square teaches us to regulate our lives and actions."

To illustrate the necessity
for this kind of approach, imagine the teacher-child relationship. There may be many different ways in which a particular point or problem could be explained. One of them may be the generally accepted one, on which most teachers are agreed. Good; but for the child of slower perception it is the teacher's bounded duty to try another and another until the point is clarified.

For the brilliant child, or the near genius, it would be the teacher's duty to go beyond the normally accepted interpretation, especially if that would enable the child to reach out and explore a wider understanding. No teacher could justify neglecting a particular level of instruction if it enables him to teach a lesson effectively.

I have only used the "teacher-child" relationship in order to emphasize my point; we can abandon it now because I am quite certain that the same reasoning would apply to one's own interpretation of symbolism, i.e., a system of self teaching which has, and should have, no specific limits, no object except enlightenment and understanding.

My instinctive love of simplicity urges me to agree that the interpretation of a symbol of late introduction that was originally "never intended" should be shunned, but I realize that this could be wrong and probably is wrong. We have to interpret the whole of our ritual as it stands today; we cannot separate the 17th century words and practices from those of late 18th or 19th century, when they stand in our ritual side by side. If we reject the customary interpretation of the three degrees as the "Three Ages (stages?) of Man" simply because there was a time when there were only two degrees, we are denying the need for the ritual to develop and grow as it must; to grow as it has done throughout the centuries, or it must become petrified.

You will realize now that I have been compelled to abandon my original views of simplicity, clarification and
satisfaction as the "test of merit" in symbolism and have to admit the necessity for a completely different test of validity of a particular interpretation.

In some instances certain passages in our Lectures seem to be really nonsense, only acceptable as a parable which contains a lesson when it is interpreted properly. Obviously the "Lectures" are the place in which one would expect to find the interpretation, or explanation of all this wildly improbable material, but they add nothing to the story by way of explanation; they simply repeat it all, word for word!

As a result of this, perhaps, I am able to view them without that awe and veneration which they receive in some places. I have said this only to explain why there are some parts of the Lectures that I simply could not and cannot accept, remembering that their only justification is that they are supposed to have been designed to explain or illustrate the meaning of our ceremonies and especially the meaning of those parts which are obscure.

That is really the end of my story except that I must still put on record a deep rooted dislike for aberrations in symbolism, extremes of interpretation with no justification in the symbol itself and only mislead the reader or succeed in bemusing him.

There is no yardstick by which we can measure what is right or wrong in the interpretation of symbols; it may be that we have to find a different answer for every Tom, Dick and Harry and the only answer that may truly be deemed acceptable is that which satisfies the particular inquirer.

Similarly I am convinced that real damage is done by those inveterate symbolists who need the dimensions of the pyramids, the mysteries of the heavily bodies, the Tarot Cards, the Zodiac and other equally complex paths towards truth.
In closing I feel bound to point out that sometimes some of the promises made by Candidates or Brothers in our Craft ritual are not kept and performed. It would be interesting to know how many Brethren do actually and solemnly promise "to remind a Brother of his failings, whisper wise counsels in the ear of an erring Brother and aid his reformation."

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Dr. Hugo Thomas, PGM
American Canadian Grand Lodge
On Landmarks

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 3 November 1975
at Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861)
ON LANDMARKS

(Presented on 3 November 1975 at Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861)

Worshipful Master and Brethren all:

The words "Ancient Landmarks are seldom a part of the conversational currency we exchange every day. While they have a distinctive Masonic connotation, they are not exclusively Masonic. Primarily, they mean boundary marks.

The landmark is the post, stone, or marker of any kind that indicates where your property, your community, your state, or your country ends and another begins. It was important in the ancient Jewish scheme of things, for it is the subject of a Mosaic curse: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark". There is an admonition inculcated.

Aircraft in flight and ships at sea verify their position and check their course at regular intervals according to established regulations and fundamentals. Men determine their traveling course in compliance with a fixed object serving as a boundary mark as a guide, or connected with a distinguishing fact and a memorable object and event. These milestones and light-towers which mark and border our pathway are generally called:

LANDMARKS

The profane world knows thousands of them: cathedrals, monuments, special buildings, Cape Canaveral, - but also the Romer (or city hail in Frankfurt. By the same token human beings have a set of individual Landmarks by which a moral and ethical course must be set. Most of our
old standards of time and motion have been swept by a deluge of theories of modern natural science. In the chaos of modern living, when drastic changes take place overnight, it seems to be difficult for men to retain their sense of value.

The question of Landmarks is an involved one, not to say impossible one, following an American definition. No one appears to know what they are, or how many should find place in the list. Numerous catalogues of these indispensables have been offered to the Masonic public, to all of which objections have been made.

The best short definition of Landmarks in Freemasonry is that given by the late Carl Claudy: "Land Marks are the unchanged and unchanging fundamentals which make the Craft what it is, and without which it would be something entirely different." In another sense Landmarks are Masonic axioms, namely, self-evident propositions that do not require demonstration or proof. To the majority of us, it is that something - or those something's - which are ancient, which are universal, and which could not be taken from Freemasonry without making Freemasonry into something else. These several somethings not only cannot be taken from Freemasonry, but cannot be changed.

These peculiar marks of distinction by which Masons are separated from the profane world, and by which we are enabled to designate our inheritance as the "Sons of Light", are called Landmarks of the Order.

"....The ancient Landmarks of the Fraternity entrusted to our care, we are carefully to preserve, and never suffer them to be infringed..."

They are those fundamental principles which characterize Masonry as defined by the Ancient Charges of Freemasonry, and without which the institution cannot he identified as Free Masonry, combined with essentials of the
unwritten words by which brethren distinguish each other as Masons.

Albert G. Mackey first published his list of Landmarks in 1859 consisting of 25. Mackey defines a Landmark as that which in Freemasonry existed from time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, which is unrepeateable, and which is universal.

We believe it as unnecessary to adopt an official list of Landmarks as to adopt an official list of scientific laws, such as the law of gravitation. The Landmarks, like scientific laws, are valid only in so far as they are true, and their adoption by any so-called body has no affect whatever on their validity. Individual scientists may list what they conceive to be the laws of nature, but no scientific society would undertake to officially adopt these laws as the official laws of the science in which they are interested.

In our country the best example of a landmark is the fence around the field of the farmer. It shows at once the line which separates his land from the land of his neighbors. In ancient times the Landmarks, or "termini," were usually set up to mark boundaries, although in Egypt it is said that holes were dug in the earth for that purpose.

The Bible contains a command not to remove the Landmarks which was, and is, a sort of theft. The landowner, in order to find the lines of his property, has recourse to geometry, or surveying; the Mason, likewise must employ geometry to find his lines and thus know where to place the Landmarks of Freemasonry. "Geometry means "earthy measuring", coming into the English language from the Greek. Every Mason knows the stress laid on it in the Lodge, but it seems to have a deeper meaning for the earnest student than is apparent to the careless or indifferent lodge member."

If the ancient and supposedly immutable customs are to be claimed as Landmarks, then their number is legion.
They have been defined as "Leading and essential characteristics as "Leading principles from which there can be no deviation", as "Universal laws of Masonry", as "Ceremonies, rules and laws deemed absolutely necessary", and finally as "Immemorial and universal observances". Each one of these essentials is a Landmark. The combination of all Landmarks is the body of Freemasonry. The Landmarks are universal, unalterable and unrepeatable fundamentals which have existed from time immemorial.

The modern use of the word has become wide and figurative. If they are to be correctly defined, we must first define Freemasonry. When we define Freemasonry, mark it off from all other societies; then and then only will we have fixed a firm line, on which to set the Landmarks so that future ages will not, cannot, remove them. Therefore, those who are predisposed to the general idea of venerable, valuable, and basic principles, practices, and old Charges of the Craft, - and the existence of something of that kind must certainly be admitted, should try to determine what it is, that really comprises Freemasonry and is indispensable to its existence and prosperity. In this lecture I try to express myself accordingly.

The Landmarks of Masonry are certain fundamentals or principles which are essential to the welfare and permanence of the society, without any one of which would no longer be Freemasonry, but which cannot properly be defined or enumerated. A Landmark is so fundamental to Freemasonry that it cannot be repealed. Neither can it be adopted. Because anything that can be adopted can be repealed.

The Landmarks have come down to us as the immutable law of Freemasonry, closely followed in significance by the Old Charges and Regulations. We have no way of knowing precisely which of the old customs and practices constitute the Landmarks: we do know the Old
Charges in detail because they were listed in Anderson's Constitutions of Free-Masons, 1723, as were the General Regulations.

The old manuscript charges range from about the year 1390, A.D., to the eighteenth century, and all are thought to be different versions and copies of some unknown original of earlier date. The main features are an invocation, a traditional history, and a set of "articles" and "points" which later evolved into regulations for our present government. These articles and points constitute the earliest information regarding the nature of Masonic law prior to the Grand Lodge era.

The Regis manuscript is the oldest known manuscript of Freemasonry, and, while it is not strictly one of the "Old Charges" which were read at the making of Masons, it is an account of them in poetry, and contains the earliest version of the articles and points which is the basis of Masonic law and usage. The Regius manuscript is estimated as being written about 1390 and on account of its antiquity holds a peculiarly favorable position among the ancient documents of the craft.

In addition to articles of similar importance to those in the Regius and other manuscripts, the Harleian Manuscript No. 1942 (about 1670 A.D.) contains a set called "The New Articles" which are not to be found in any of the other known manuscripts which contain much that shows the evolution that was going on at that period. These new articles are said to have been agreed upon on the 8th of December, 1663, and this manuscript was considered by William J. Hughan to have been the one used in printing the Robert's edition of the "Constitution" of 1722.

The question occasionally arises, however, as to whether modern Masonry is actually governed by these old Landmarks and Charges, or by interpretations advanced by some self constituted authorities.
Until the year 1859 no effort had been made to give them a comprehensible form until Mackey in that year published an article in the American Quarterly Review of Masonry on "The Foundation of Masonic Laws" which contained a distinct enumeration of 25 Landmarks, which has since been generally adopted by the fraternity.

Because of his prominence and the wide circulation of his encyclopaedia and other works, many Masons believe they are the actual Landmarks of Masonry. Some Grand Lodges have adopted the Mackey Landmarks, but of course these so-called Landmarks are effective only within the Grand Lodges which have adopted them. It is uncertain that there are no universal Landmarks, each Grand Lodge is a law unto itself and determines what its Landmarks are.

In our American Canadian Grand Lodge the initial portions of the CODE can certainly be considered as Landmarks; they are:

The Authority, Powers, Recognition and Preamble which includes the Basic Principles;

1. The 6 Ancient Charges of a Free Mason.
2. What are the Old or Ancient Charges?

The first competent book of Freemasonry, printed in 1723, is known as Anderson's Constitutions. In it appear six "Old Charges" which are a statement of the old laws of operative Freemasonry concerning a Mason and his conduct. The six Old Charges are titled:

"Of God and Religion
"Of the Civil Magistrate Supreme and Subordinate
"Of Lodges"
"Of Masters, Wardens, Fellows and Apprentices"
"Of the Management of the Craft in Working"

"Of Behavior"

The last sixth Old Charges is concerned with behavior: "in the Lodge while constituted; after Lodge is over and the Brethren not gone; when Brethren meet without Strangers, but not in a Lodge; in presence of Strangers not Masons; at Home and in the Neighborhood; towards a strange Brother."

There is something about the thought of Ancient Landmarks in Freemasonry that captures the imagination. We are enjoined to preserve them unsullied and never suffer them to be infringed. The young Junior Deacon in Kipling's delightful poem boasted that his Lodge in India knew the Ancient Landmarks, "and we keep "em to a hair". But now, a young Mason gets up to ask the peculiar question: "What are our Ancient Landmarks?" And there the trouble begins.

I do not profess to be either original, authentic or exhaustive in either of these subjects. Yet I believe that each of these is interesting as well as informative, and to me they present a challenge. I hope by what has been said so far, you will have been challenged and that each listener, will dig deeper, harder, further and more exhaustively into the past, and those discoveries and truths he learns he will use to light his pathway for the future.

I would like to approach our subject of discussion from an entirely different point of view, for it matters little what truths we learn if we are unable to apply them to our lives and to our future. We have discussed the position, permanence and correctness of our Landmarks and yet I believe that we must remember that it was the purpose of the object which marked a boundary that made it a Landmark, not the object itself. The stones which were used as Landmarks ceased to be such when moved away from the boundary line. It is the line rather than the stone that is important. In the same way, it is the principles of Masonry
rather than concrete lists which determine the character of our institution. A stone used as a landmark could be replaced by a post or some other object, but the boundary would remain unchanged. The object must mark the line, or it is no landmark.

The Grand Lodge of England, which should know a thing or two about the ancient landmarks, has never "adopted" landmarks or in any way attempted to define them other than to make casual references to certain practices. No Grand Lodge of Freemasonry outside the United States has ever become concerned about what the landmarks are, or how many there may be. Grand Lodges in the United States, a little more than a century ago literally ran races to see how many ancient landmarks they could 'adopt' officially.

Brother R. F. Gould, premier Masonic historian, reminds us that between 1723 and 1738 it is an established fact Freemasonry changed from a two Degree to a three Degree system. As early as 1723 three striking "innovations" had been introduced, among which was the abandonment of an established religion in Freemasonry and the acceptance of "that religion in which all men agree."

No changes in Freemasonry? Remember when Masonic benevolence was quiet and personal, and there was no such thing as institutional care of the aged and needy? Remember when the doctrine of the Perfect Youth forbade the admission of any young man who was not physically perfect in all his parts? Remember when the sponsorship of youth organizations was an activity in which no Lodge would think of engaging? All too often we fall into the error of identifying as landmarks certain practices that may have been helpful a century ago but long since ceased to serve us well. Such practices are habits and nothing more.

Before we permit our temperatures to soar above normal over the thought of infringements of the ancient
landmarks. We should ponder on this point: No one knows for sure what the ancient landmarks really are. We can be reasonably certain of only seven - and not one of the old boresome, time consuming habits we have added from time to time is included among the seven.

Various Grand Lodges have "adopted" various "lists of Ancient Landmarks" and thus have given the tenets in the list the force of law in those Grand Lodges. But no Grand Lodge can make or unmake a landmark, any more than the Congress of the United States can make or unmake a law of nature. Congress might pass a law saying that the law of gravitation was hereafter to be inoperative, but presumably an apple rolling from a table would still fall to the floor! Grand Lodges which leave landmarks undefined and unrestricted by listing seem to have the better practice, just as those churches which do not list "the moral1 aw" clause by clause seem to have a better grasp of what it is.

The late great Charles C. Hunt, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, put in his point of view in a few words: "The Masonic conception of a landmark is fundamental law of Masonry which no body of men or Masons can repeal. Anything that can be adopted can be repealed. If a Grand Lodge has power to adopt, it has the power to repeal. It is the very fact that they are unalterable which makes the landmarks similar to scientific laws which cannot be changed or altered by any man or body of men.

Lodges will agree that at least seven Masonic fundamentals are landmarks.

These are:

1. Monotheism, the sole dogma of Freemasonry.
2. Belief in immortality, the ultimate lesson of Masonic philosophy.
3. The Volume of the Sacred Law, an indispensable part of the furniture of a Lodge.

4. The legend of the Third Degree.

5. Secrecy.

6. The symbolism of the operative art.

7. A Mason must be a freeborn male adult.

Every Mason should ascertain what his own Grand Lodge has adopted (or not adopted) as "landmarks" and govern himself accordingly.

The words of a Masonic writer of more than a century ago have always delighted me. "Nobody knows what the Landmarks comprise or omit", he says. "They are of no earthly authority because everything is a Landmark when in accordance with our Masonic philosophy.

How many of us have ever taken the time to see how the enumerated Landmarks apply to our individual lives? True, they are enumerated for the government of the fraternity, but a purposeful analysis will transform them into Landmarks or principles for our individual lives.

I cannot defer from the personal temptation to briefly name some of these sublime Landmarks we advocate: our Masonic conscience, as an inward monitor of our daily actions; Morality is one of our greatest challenge and one of our most important business; the readiness and willingness of being of Service to our Brothers created in us by our feeling of gratitude to the Fraternity for the Light we have received from it; the Inspiration of Masonry, holding constantly before our inner eyes a spiritual ideal, ever bearing in mind that the Perfect Ashlar is inside the rough Ashlar all the time, only waiting the cunning hand of the workman to break off
the corners, to reveal the perfection underneath. Masonry deliberately offers the Chance to learn as a fascinating Landmark. It seems to me that the world of study and information, which Freemasonry opens up to its votaries is its greatest challenge, but we must dig into Masonic philosophy by ourselves, and try to find all the Light.

And, finally, my Brothers, Masonry exemplifies the Spirit of Friendship.

On this basis we form our friendships and establish our connections. The profane thinks, that friends are easy to make, as easily in a club or on board of trade as he could in a Lodge. But there is a great difference between the friendship made in profane gatherings, and those which result from "meeting on the level". For any real friendship, there must be some sort of a mutually shared background. Each lodge is an oasis of equality and good will, a great league of sympathy and service, of friends and Brothers. There is a golden cord to which we can all hold. We all have a cable tow about us, and by it we can pull ourselves closer together. We meet on a common level. We think the same sort of thoughts, at the same time. When we worship the Great Architect of the Universe, we do it in the same way, with the same words, at the same time, made with the same thoughts and for the same purposes. This is one background of unity on which our friendships are formed.

There is another! To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all, but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection and Brotherly Love. The charity and the sympathy of a Lodge is one of the great mysteries and force in the making of friends through Masonic communication because of our common interest and feelings, and the identity of our heart and conscience, and those lofty aspirations toward which good men strive with unaffected humility. We all build a hope, that belongs not only to the Fraternity, but to all humanity.
Our excuse for being and our legitimate claim upon men's efforts and devotion lie in the ability of individuals to build and to keep building more closely, to the designs of our Great Creator. We need not ask if our purpose is real, for the answer to that lies in the imperative vision of a Brotherhood, devoted to the love of justice and truth, transmitted from Brother to Brother.

Following these landmarks is as simple as it is challenging. Call them conscience, morality, service, inspiration, knowledge, charity or friendship. They all originate from the same source: ...from the most significant of our symbols, the letter "G" in the East.

With these precious, sacred and immutable Landmarks, safely lodged in our faithful breast, Masonry and the world await our answers and our deeds, to build the Holy Empire of the Masonic Brotherhood.

In closing I may paraphrase Aristotle's, the famous ancient Greek philosopher:

"My heart remains restless until it finds rest in the Landmarks of the Fraternity."

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Deputy Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Are Working Tools Important?

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at Lodge of Instruction at "Ashlar Lodge No. 894 on 8th January, 1975)
ARE WORKING TOOLS IMPORTANT?

(Presented at Lodge of Instruction at "Ashlar Lodge No. 894 on 8th January, 1975)

For several years, I have been attending Masonic meetings! I have listened to many Masonic papers being presented. I have attended Masonic Lectures and participated in Masonic Seminars. Each time, there is a sense of feeling within me that I have gained additional knowledge.

Masonry teaches that each of us must interpret its lessons and symbols for himself. One's religion alone is good reason for the various interpretations that our Brethren may give to the same subject matter. If you are truly interested in improving and adding to your knowledge of Freemasonry, I know of no better way than by reading, by witnessing the various degrees over and over again, and by listening to what others have to say. You may not always agree with them but by paying attention you will frequently be benefited. Remember, Voltaire's often quoted statement, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

How many of us have done, namely retrace the years to the time when you were sitting in the preparation room, waiting for the proper moment to approach the door of the Lodge for the first admission? What thoughts were going through your mind? Were you nervous because some friend, thinking he was being funny, had suggested that there might be some horseplay or rough stuff? Or, did a real friend put you at ease by telling you of the seriousness and solemnity of the Degree? Or, were you at a complete loss, as I was, because no one was thoughtful enough to take the time, to help you be mentally prepared to receive the greatest benefits from the ritual work?
I am certain that every candidate, if properly prepared mentally as well as being clothed properly, would learn more and possibly be more interested in continuing his active involvement in his Lodge.

"How may I receive the most benefit from the Entered Apprentice Degree? By approaching your first step in Masonry with a humble and serene attitude; with mind and heart attuned to those things which elevate man to the position of dignity and responsibility which his Creator intended him to occupy. Before you enter the Lodge room dismiss from your mind all worldly matters that might detract from the seriousness and solemnity of that which you will hear and see. Be keenly alert to all that is said and done, for in this manner only can you receive and assimilate the time-honored teachings of Freemasonry."

"The methods used for your instruction will be new to you, for the great lessons of our Craft are taught by allegory and by symbolism. But these methods are as effective as they are ancient, as you will discover if your mind and heart are receptive as the degree progresses. Remember too, that every man that is now a Mason has had exactly the same teachings."

"There is no rough stuff or horse play in any of the Symbolic Degrees."

With this information, I'm sure that our candidates will be more alert and will absorb more of what is presented to them. It is amazing to me to see how little some of our Brethren remember lessons and knowledge given them in the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason Degrees. Recently I have asked several Brethren if they could name the principal working tools of a Master Mason. The answers were pitiful. Could we make better Masons of our candidates and retain more of them in our ranks if we devoted more time and attention to them in the preparation room?
Are Working Tools Important? If so, how can we use them if we don't remember what they are? If we do know them, do we know how to use them properly.

In our Masonic Fraternity many wonderful lessons have been presented to us; also many working tools have been given to us symbolically to use. If these lessons are observed and the working tools applied in the manner in which we are taught to use them, we know that, when we reach the end of life's journey, we will be better and wiser men; that we will have faith in the immortality of the soul; and that we will not be afraid to face our future existence.

Should we neither benefit from those wonderful lessons nor use the symbolic working tools as we are taught, the chances are great that we will not be ready to make that transition peacefully but will be confronted with confused thoughts and fear of the unknown.

There are those Masons who may ask, due to the fact that they paid little attention when they were being initiated and not interested enough to find out later, what are the working tools of a Mason. Some may answer the twenty-four inch gauge and common gavel, the plumb, square and level and the trowel. Are these all? I should say not.

"We should not however forget that these are not the only tools and implements used by operative and speculative Masons in the building of their spiritual edifices,~ all the forces at man's control, or subject to man's influence, are his working tools."

"I am overwhelmed with the tremendous task of enumerating the working tools which are given to us, and developing their spiritual aspects. We are given a most concentrated capsule, over-flowing with an abundance of thoughts. Some few can be pointed out with a prayer that these might lead others to seek and find out "Acres of Diamonds" which are priceless jewels of thought for contriving a structure which is the immortal part of Man."
And speaking of prayer, I cannot help but to remind you that prayer is frequently used in our business sessions as well as in the ritual of each degree. We do not hesitate to ask for guidance and help when needed, and so inform the candidate. He is told very clearly what to do and where to go for his help when he has exhausted all of his own resources. Yes, my Brethren, prayer is one of the most useful tools at our disposal.

Words are potential tools, the working tools of understanding.

In every vocabulary is a set of keys, keys to thinking and the working tools with which one puts together one's thoughts. Try as you may, you cannot express yourself, or even think, without a vocabulary. There must be a name for everything. A keyword is a key to thought. As the musician cannot play a Chopin, Bach or a Wagner composition on a piano with less than a dozen keys, so does the individual fall short of harmony and beauty of expression without a wide range of keys to thought. They are needed for those finer, deeper and richer shades of meaning. In nearly every vocabulary, there are explosive words. Some phrases are hand grenades, or time bombs, and T.N.T may be packed in a single by-word. They are the kind that destroy friendships, shatter confidence and promote distrust. They are prone to bring on barrages of invective and vituperation. Abusive language in political orations has lost elections. Many things have been won by words - watchwords we call them: - Remember the Alamo; also: Brotherly Love, Solidarity, knowledgeable Brothers, more Light from Masonry! So, words have often directed the fate of mankind. They can also dictate changes and alter the aims of your life and mine.

The most effective changes come with an amazing new power to think. George Bernard Shaw was right when he said that few people think more than two or three times in a year. In this tangled and confused world it is more important than
ever, that the tools of expression be kept keen and bright. Only those adequately equipped to face the tough challenges of this age can hope to survive without injury. This is an era in the passage of time when there is no allowance for alibis. As in every lifetime, you and I will get what we ask for but we must know how to ask for what we want. World understanding cannot be greater than word understanding. The unsettled issues of the Twentieth Century hang on a common concept of meaning. Words can be on the knife-edge balance between disaster and happiness.

Open your Bible to the Twelfth Chapter of Judges and there you will find an account of an all-powerful word. At the fords of the Jordan, the Ephraimites and the Gileadites at war were identified by the way they pronounced the word for a sheaf of corn. The password was "Shibboleth." but the Ephraimites identified themselves enemies, losing their lives in the wake of a word.

Consciously or not, we speak colloquially, in idioms, slang, dialect, obsolescence, Briticism and argot. Ordinarily people use 8,000 to 10,000 words. College students know 62,000 to 70,000 words, but use only 15,000 to 20,000. It is of the greatest importance to mean what you say, when you say what you mean. It is within your power to banish misunderstanding and create havoc with doubts, fears and prejudice. The bigger the vocabulary, the better the thinking. Problems will dissolve like mists before the summer sun, for you will have the keys to a vast treasure of understanding.

...... with all thy getting get understanding. ......”
Prov. IV:7

Words are potent things! Once spoken they ring down the lengthening vistas of time, reverberating like an echo in an endless cavern. They tell of love, truth, faith, praise, hope, vanity, scorn, envy, - yes, even hate, - expressing every
emotion of mankind, from the basest to the noblest. Like the mighty clockwork of the universe, once set in motion they roll onward forever, utterly beyond recall.

Words are the expression of thoughts and ideas! Their influence, for either good or evil, is beyond calculation. They set up a chain reaction in human behavior, continuing on, the good doing more good, and the evil, by the same token, doing more evil. A reflection of the intellect, words shape the destiny of the world, set man apart and make him superior to every other creature. Words truly are immortal things.

Flaming words! Inspired by a noble heart and selfless devotion to duty, tempered in the furnace of human emotion, inspire men to do daring deeds. Listen to them: "They shall not pass." - "Don't give up the ship." - "Give me liberty or give me death!" Spurring men to action when first spoken, they go on and on prodding mankind to do more than just duty alone.

Freezing words! - That cut like a silver sword, that quick freeze the blood and chill the marrow, words to which there is no answer. Listen to them: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."

Soft words! - resembling pure gold, shining with benign beauty and rich intrinsic worth as words of truth, love, faith and praise, are like a gentle, falling rain on parched, dry earth. The very thought of them brings back memories of love, faith and praise. Listen to them: "I love you truly." "I shall believe in you." "Well done, my faithful Brother." Hard words! 'like tempered steel, that cut and rend like a sharp edged blade, words of scorn, contempt, envy and hate. They sting and burn that time cannot erase. Do not listen to them!

Words are sacred things! - We are told that by the agency of words God created the universe and all that is, was, and will be. Listen to them: "In the beginning was the
Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- "Let there be Light; and there was Light." - Words are powerful things, aren't they?

There are many more working tools to which I could refer, such as Brotherly Love, Relief, Truth, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. Much could be said about each of these, but for now I wish to make a few comments only about the Twenty-four Inch Gauge. "The Twenty-four Inch Gauge is an instrument used by operative Masons to measure and lay out their work; but we as Free and Accepted Masons are taught to use it for a more noble and glorious purpose of dividing our time; it being divided into twenty our equal parts, is emblematical of the twenty-four hours of the day, which we are taught to divide into three equal parts; whereby are found: eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy Brother; eight for our usual vocations; and eight for refreshment and sleep."

We know what the operative Mason did with his gauge. He measured his stone; if the ashlar was too long, he shortened it. If it was too wide he narrowed it, if it could not be made true and square, it was discarded and he would start again with another rough ashlar. But how do we as speculative Masons use this gauge? Is it not to measure time and time alone? Should every person measure and distribute his time in the same proportions? To me, the answer is no. All people do not have the same capabilities, for various reasons. Some people have better health than others, require less sleep, are stronger than others, and more ambitious and have a greater desire to improve themselves. These reasons could go on and on. I do believe, however that each person should use the twenty-four inch gauge as a guide to measure and allocate his time. If eight hours is not required for refreshment and sleep, devote the difference elsewhere. Do not waste time. Time lost can never be regained. It is gone forever.
What is meant by eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy Brother? To me this not only includes prayer, meditation and helping a distressed Master Mason, but also working with character building organizations, the aged, the handicapped, and the many others of this type that need our help.

The eight hours for our usual vocation is a matter of scheduling. Years ago, twelve hours was a normal work day. Later it was reduced to ten hours. Today it is eight hours. There is now consideration being given to a six hour day. Some people because of health or age are not able to work a full day. Their time must be gauged accordingly but not wasted.

We have as all hears the person who, when asked to do something for his Masonic Lodge or for some other worthwhile purpose, gives the answer... "I'm sorry. I just don't have the time." In most cases, this is not true. Have him read the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, verses one through eight in which it says.... "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven" ... It concludes by saying:... "A time to keep silent and a time to speak; a time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace." .but nowhere does it set forth a time to waste time.

Abraham Lincoln, before entering public office, devoted all of his spare time learning political affairs, and studying the problems of slavery. He knew the meaning of the Twenty-four Inch Gauge.

Many questions can be asked about time. Probably the one that concerns people the most is.... How long do we have on earth? The Bible tells us three score and ten years. This undoubtedly is an average but it appears to be the best answer to the question.
Knowing that our days are numbered and our time is limited, does it not behove us all to take another serious look at our schedule and make sure that we are using the Twenty-four Inch Gauge properly and wisely. I am sure that we will find ample room for improvement.

In reviewing the working tools of Freemasonry known to me, and after giving them careful study and consideration, I can honestly say - Yes, they are not only important, they are most important if we wish to develop and live the type of life outlined for us in this great philosophical order of Freemasonry to which we belong.

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Land Grand Senior Warden
American Canadian Grand Lodge
The Ballot

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented on 23 Nov., 1976
at "Oregon Military" Lodge No. 936
THE BALLOT

(Presented on 23rd November 1976 at Oregon Military Lodge No. 936)

My Brothers: The BALLOT is a frightening responsibility.

Today, times are not really much different as in former decades. We Masons are part of "the establishment".

We still believe in the equal rights of men and the freedom of opportunity. We know that all are not born equal because the Almighty has seen fit, to bestow upon some the ability of genius and on others lesser ability. However, all who seek it, equality of opportunity, will receive it; if one wishes to improve oneself, an effort in that regard can be rewarded. "As a citizen you are enjoined to be exemplary in your civil duties". We have all memorized that statement; consequently we have to live what we have learned.

Certainly, we Masons will not agree on all candidates or proposition upon the ballot, but if we carefully investigate the matters to be voted upon, so as to be knowledgeably informed in regards thereto, and then BALLOT, we will make our determinations known in the best possible way.

All Masons, having been obligated through the three degrees in the belief and support of freedom, equality and Brotherly affection, should be able to influence others in matters of right. We Masons are individuals, who believe in the rights of men and who believe that disagreements, when they cannot be settled by argument and persuasion, should then be resolved Masonically.
The beauty of the Masonic Degrees, the fellowship within our Masonic Lodges, and our charitable efforts are enlightening, wonderful and extremely important, to be sure.

However, we have additional obligations, not the least of which is, to participate in making our fraternal views and tenets known to those about us by our actions and the way we govern our daily lives.

Thereby we will become involved as individuals in those problems round about us, which we know are right and good. As we live and act, so will we be known.

Therefore, there is no more important privilege or responsibility in Freemasonry than the proper use of the ballot, and there is no more unmasonic act than to abuse or misuse it. Membership in the Masonic Fraternity is not a right to be demanded by anyone; it is a privilege to be bestowed or withheld by the Fraternity.

In accordance with ancient Masonic usage, members are never solicited. If a person is interested in becoming a Freemason, he has only to make his desire known to any Freemason who will be glad to counsel and advise him in obtaining a petition providing he is considered a proper person for Freemasonry. After the petition is filled out, properly signed by a member of the Lodge as sponsor and the required fee attached, it is presented to the Secretary of the Lodge and read at the next stated Communication of the Lodge.

An investigating Committee of not less than three Brothers is then appointed and charged with the responsibility of determining whether or not the petitioner is in fact a suitable person to become a Freemason. At the next stated Communication, the Committee renders its findings and report.
The ballot is prepared and every member present is required to ballot. A unanimous, favorable ballot is required for election to receive the degrees.

It is here that each member becomes an absolute dictator, for, by his own negative vote, he can keep anyone and everyone from becoming a member of that Lodge and possibly from ever becoming a member of any Masonic Lodge. It is terrible, a frightening responsibility for every conscientious Freemason.

In England today the rule prevails, a man may have three ballots against him and still be made a member, but the Lodge may, if it wishes, demand unanimity.

What is one to do when he does not know the petitioner? In most Lodges, it is frequently true, that very few of the members know personally those who petition for membership. That is one of the reasons for requiring a sponsor who is supposed to know the petitioner and vouch for the fact he is worthy for membership.

Then, as additional precautions an Investigating Committee is appointed to make an objective investigation and evaluation of his worthiness. If these Brethren agree he is worthy most Brethren are willing to rely upon and trust their judgment.

It would be cruel to cast a blackball just because one did not know the petitioner. We would have very few candidates; if all of us blackballed everyone we did not know personally. Most of us know only a small portion of the membership of our Lodge, much less all the petitioners. We must rely largely upon the sponsor and the Investigating Committee.

We realize that it is always possible for the sponsor and the committee to make mistakes. When you know that they have, then it is you responsibility to rectify their mistake.
at the ballot box. But, unless you know for a certainty that the petitioner is unworthy, it would seem proper to trust the judgment of the sponsor and the committee.

Certainly no feeling of envy, ill-will, prejudice, jealously or vengeance should be permitted to influence your ballot.

Remember, my Brothers, when your investigating Committee reports favorably on a petition, you should take their word for the petitioner's worthiness. If you know something that should be brought to their attention, do so, but do not just ballot against the petitioner because you have a feud going with the Brother who recommended him or with the person petitioning.

Every Brother present at a meeting in which ballots are spread must cast his ballot in this jurisdiction. Unanimous consent is as necessary from the standpoint of the lodge, as that the candidate comes of his own free will and accord. Therefore, no brother will be permitted by the Master to refrain from balloting, lest at some future time it be alleged that the admission of the candidate was not by unanimous consent.

The privilege of casting a completely secret ballot is a sacred Masonic right. It is a Masonic offense to question a Brother's ballot or to reveal your own. It is improper and out of order for any Brother, prior to or after a ballot, to speak for or against a candidate or petitioner.

The secrecy of the ballot is of great importance, so much so that Grand Lodges have passed strict laws against any member disclosing in advance how he will ballot, or how he has balloted. This is considered a Masonic offense, and subjects the offender to Masonic discipline. The need for secrecy is based on the freedom of choice of the individual brother, it is the safeguard of that peace and harmony and unity for which all Lodges strive.
In summarizing the secrecy: It is exceedingly improper and un-Masonic for any brother to make any remark reflecting upon the ballot of any other brother or the motives influencing him. The ballot is and should remain secret. No brother has the right to inquire who cast a negative ballot or why. No one has the right to say how he voted, or why, and a by-law contravening this is void.

The secrecy of the ballot is always inviolable under all circumstances and cannot be discussed or inquired into even by unanimous consent; nor can the Master comment on the result by hint, innuendo, or otherwise. He may only declare it.

The use of a Ballot Box is universal, and they are so made, that the hand of the brother balloting is concealed as he picks up his white or black ball or cube and deposits it in a separate compartment or in a tube which leads to a drawer below. This is to ensure that no one sees the choice and thus inadvertently violate the secrecy of the ballot. To make sure that the ballot box is properly prepared, having no black or white balls in the compartment in which ballots are deposited, it is inspected prior to each ballot by the Master and both Wardens. When the ballot is closed, it is inspected by both Wardens and the Master, all of whom report publicly to the lodge that the ballot is either clear or dark. This assures all brothers present that no mistake has been made; that their three most trusted officers are agreed on the complexion of the ballot. On the theory that the Master and the Wardens represent their "immovable jewels in lodge during the period of labor, the ballot box is carried to the three principle officers. It should then be placed on the Alter, every brother advances, salutes, ballots and retires to his seat, to impress upon all present the sacredness, the secrecy, the inviolability of the ballot, which either admits to the initiation of a candidate, the greatest gift in the power of a lodge to bestow, or denies it.

It is common practice to retake a ballot in which up to three negative ballots appears; this is to guard against a
negative ballot cast in error. A third ballot may be taken at the Master's discretion, but the several ballots must be continuous, and not interrupted by any other business.

A collective ballot may be taken. The Master reads several petitions; the brothers advance to the Altar and cast their ballots on all at once. A negative ballot requires then, that all ballots must be taken separately. In no case is the petition of one on whom an unfavorable report has been made by the committee, balloted on in company with one or more petitions on whom favorable reports have been made.

A rejected candidate is held to be the property of the lodge rejecting him, so that he may not apply to another lodge without a waiver of jurisdiction. The ACGL also demands of its lodges, a lapse of 12 months, before a rejected petitioner may again apply. This provision is provided for by the CODE, ACGL.

Reconsideration of many questions can be moved in most parliamentary assemblies, but never in a lodge for the reconsideration of a ballot on a petition for the degrees of Freemasonry. Even Grand Lodges cannot order reconsideration of ballots on petitioners, its material being universally held to be the inalienable possession of a lodge, and a lodge the judge of its membership.

No man may receive the privilege of Masonry against the will of any brother of the lodge to which he applies. A secret ballot is required hedged about with the strictest of provisions. The privilege of balloting, and the right of all lodges to select their material without Interference or dictation is indefeasible. The main question will always remain how to find and perform justice in our daily life especially on an investigation committee and when balloting. In literature men always look for practical justice, and desire, that virtue should have its own reward, and vice its appropriate punishment. The mass of men are always looking for what is
just. We understand by intuition what justice is, better than we can depict it.

A sentence is written against all that is unjust, written by God in the nature of man, and in the nature of the Universe, because it is in the nature of the Almighty God. We as Freemasons have learned fidelity to our faculties, trust in their convictions, that is justice to our self; a life in obedience to the principles, laws, rules and edicts of our Fraternity, that is justice toward men and ourselves as well.

In human affairs, the justice of God must work by human means, WE are the instruments of God's principles. Our morality is the instrument of His justices which, incomprehensible to us, seems to our short vision often to work injustice. Justice is the rule of conduct written in the nature of mankind.

Freemasons must strive in their daily life, at home, at work, in the office or in the court, help to prepare the way for the commonwealth of justice which is slowly but surely approaching. All the justice we mature will bless us here and hereafter, and at our death we shall leave it added to the common store of mankind.

Every Mason who, content to do that, which is possible and practicable, does and enforces justice, may help deepen the channel of human morality in which God's justice runs.

On the question of balloting, I think we will all agree that a Freemason is responsible to no human power for the vote that he casts on the petition of a candidate. To his own conscience alone, is he to answer for the motives that have led to the act itself. The whole object of the secret ballot otherwise would be defeated. Let us, my Brethren, in this as in all else, endeavor always to perform the duties of a good Mason and a good man.
In closing I may quote Abraham LINCOLN:

"I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true;
I am not bound to succeed,
but I am bound to live up to the Light I have...
I must stand with anybody who stands right,
stand with him while he is right,
and part with him when he goes wrong".

/s/ Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
The Cable-tow

by
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented at Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben Lodge No. 837 on 21st January 1975)
THE CABLE-TOW

(Presented at Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben Lodge No. 837 on 21st January 1975)

...“The length of your cable-tow alludes to your ability to obey a summons ....

Sometimes we may be very short in recalling the lecture of the Twenty-four Inch Gauge, but long on remembering the loop-hole of the abbreviated cable-tow, when it comes to excusing ourselves from the "eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy Brother." The time consumed in the competitive, non-Masonic, so called fellowship activities, outside the Lodge Hall, leaves us sometimes at a loss to find the connection between the theory and the practice of Masonry. Therefore we should never place a period instead of a coma after being initiated, passed or raised, realizing that dignity lies in serving not ruling; honor consists in growing better, not in getting grander; happiness comes more from well-doing than through doing well.

The stones of human life have to be shaped, squared and built together according to the plan of that Spiritual Temple, if the structure is to be established in strength to stand forever. "For the more noble and glorious purpose... and within the length of my cable-tow."

"Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." This is the simplest, yet more perfect, best and most popular definition of Freemasonry that I know.

A symbol is a visible representation of some object or thing real or imagined, employed to convey a certain idea; an allegory is a figure of speech, a departure from the direct and simple mode of speaking and the employment, for the
sake of illustration or emphasis, or a fancied resemblance between one object or thing and another, sort of extended simile with the comparative form and works left out in which the real subject is never mentioned but inferred.

Many people like symbolism for many reasons, but I think: "The symbolism of Masonry is the soul of Masonry." Every emblem, character and figure depicted in the Lodge has a moral and useful meaning and forcibly inculcates the practice of virtue. Of course the same could be said about every ceremony, sign, token, legend and allegory. So my Brethren, if you are ignorant of Masonic Symbolism, you are ignorant of Masonry. It has always distressed me to see how much time is spent memorizing the work and how little in ascertaining what it all means.

The first thing we do for a candidate is to fit him out with a Cable-tow. In England, this is only done in the First Degree and probably only refers to the simple explanation given in that lecture. We have so many explanations for the Cable-tow it becomes almost impossible to sort out the truth.

What is a Cable-tow? . . . The word "Tow" means a line to draw or pull. A Cable-tow is therefore, a rope or line for drawing or leading. In its first inception the Cable-Tow was used as a physical means of controlling the candidate; this is the interpretation as given in the Entered Apprentice Degree. Some say it is emblematical of the changes which surround us in this life, especially if we should rashly stray from the paths of duty. Another says it is to remind the initiated to submit, while he is ignorant, to be guided by those whom he knows to be enlightened. In the Second and Third Degrees, the Cable-Tow symbolizes the covenant with which all Freemasons are tied.

From whence came the Cable-Tow? This is a difficult question to answer. As far back as we can go in the history initiation we find the Cable-Tow used very much like we use it in the First Degree of Masonry today. It was mentioned in
the Bible when the King of Syria was defeated by the King of Israel. In those days the meaning seemed to be kind of a pledge - a vow in which a man pledged his life. The Cable-Tow is an outward and visible symbol of a vow in which a man pledged his life, or has made a pledge to save another's life even at the risk of his own. In our oath we agree to forfeit our life if our vow is broken. We agree to go to the aid of a Brother using all our power "if within the length of our Cable-Tow."

What is the length of the Cable-Tow? Some say the distance is three miles for an Entered Apprentice. In ancient times every adult had to present himself before the sheriff or chief authority of the country to renew his oath fealty to his king, nor were any excused from this service except they were a considerable distance away, usually fifty miles, which was a very long journey in those days.

In 1842, at a National Masonic Convention held in Baltimore, the length of the Cable-Tow was defines as "within the scope of a man's reasonable ability." Actually, for each Mason, the Cable-Tow reaches as far as his moral principles go and his material conditions will allow. Of that distance each must be his own judge.

Brother W.J. Shaw says of the Cable-Tow, "As a poetic symbol, it has a special reference to the idea of rescue and assistance, and as a form of expression it has that significance in our Masonic Rites. Upon the cable depends the safety of the ship riding at anchor, the salvation of the man overboard and in peril. On land it was also a means of aid and rescue upon a mountain and plain, and especially so in the sense, that operative Masons made of it in the construction of those magnificent buildings with which they adorned Europe."

Our obligation, therefore, simply is that the length of the Freemasons' Cable-Tow, or long rope, is the measure of his ability to aid and rescue his fellowman if within the reach of his means and ability.
Possibly the expression "the length of my Cable-Tow" came about in the following manner. You will remember the timber for the building of Solomon's Temple was felled in the forest of Lebanon and sent down in floats by sea to Joppa. These floats or rafts of timber necessarily had to be towed by boats with some type of power and the use of a long rope or Cable-Tow. When the floats reached Joppa, they would be released from the boats and tied to the shore by the same Cable-Tow. In this connection the Cable-Tow may be considered an apt symbol of obedience, obedience to the dictates of our Masonic duty, which must be performed even under the most adverse circumstances, and if need be, without fee or reward, except that gratifying test of a good conscience.

Are we not reminded by the Cable-Tow by which we metaphorically lead our candidates into the Temple that we too have a duty to fulfill? Could we think of it as a symbol of the love and affection with which we seek to draw the initiates from darkness of ignorance to the glorious light and liberty of our Fraternity?

As Masons we become Brothers because of the purposes and objectives of our Order. The tie that binds is no less meaningful today. How strong is the tie? It is as strong as the Cable-Tow. Let us remember that a Cable-Tow has two ends. As it binds a Mason: The one obligation needs to be the token that binds the fraternity to each Mason. The one obligation needs to be emphasized as much as the other. What is the length of our Cable-Tow? Is it ten feet or a thousand feet? For each of us it reaches as far as his moral principles and his material conditions allow. Each must judge himself by his own acts and by his treatment of others. When the Cable-Tow of each of us is joined with that of every other Mason, and all are united in one Cable of fraternalism, it makes a bond of brotherhood the strength of which no man can measure. It is one of the greatest assets of humanity, a far-reaching tie, mystical and unseen, yet more durable than
strands of steel, in which the obligation and loyalty, each to the other, are entwined. Our individual Cable-Tow reaches into our Camps, our Lodges, and out to our Brethren everywhere.

As brothers, we have all trodden the same path, taken the same obligation. We have been selected for membership in our Order because of our contributions and devotion to Masonry. Let time not dim our memories or dilute our interest. Ask yourself: "What have I done lately to be worthy of being a Brother? What am I doing to benefit my neighborhood, my state, my nation?" Are you satisfied with your answer?

We must take an active part and work in harmony to promote the principles and traditions that have bound us with the Cable-Tow. As Masons you can read the phrase used in a specific ceremony " A two-fold cord is strong, but a threefold cord is not easily broken." I do not know if a Cable-Tow is composed of three principal strands or not but, if so, the reference in both instances surely is the three great principles of our institution - Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

I wonder how many of us have given serious consideration to the significance of the Cable-Tow of Freemasonry, which has both physical and spiritual symbolism. Its derivation and definition are uncertain and the word probably comes from either a Hebrew or German word meaning " a pledge of the body." An intriguing definition of the Cable-Tow compares it symbolically with the life cord by which embryo receives life from the mother. It is the Masonic cord by which the Masonic infant is attached to his Lodge. As soon as the infant is born, the physical cord is severed, but never the knife was around which can cut the spiritual cord which ties a man to his mother.

In Masonry the physical restraint of the Cable-Tow is removed as soon as the spiritual bond of the obligation has been assumed, but never the means have been made by which to cut the obligation which binds a man spiritually to
his Lodge and to the Craft. Even expulsion does not relieve a man from his fraternal obligation; demitting to another Lodge cannot make of the new Lodge a Mother Lodge.

The Fellowcraft wears the Cable-Tow so that it may be an aid to his journey; an urge to action; a girding up; a strengthening for the Masonic life to come; by it, a Brother may assist him on the way. He also learns that the Cable-Tow is more than a rope; it is at once a tie and a measurement. In the Master Mason Degree the candidate pledges himself as fully as it is possible for him to do so. He is brought fully to Light. Spiritual bonds are complete and physical shackles forever removed; for we do not care to restrain by physical bonds one, whom spiritual bonds will not fetter.

What is the length of a Cable-Tow? Thousands have asked, but few have attempted to answer, who can define the length of a spiritual tie? Each Brother must decide himself the length of his Cable-Tow. Oh yes, my Brethren, measurement of service should have no physical nor spiritual restraints imposed by others.

We frequently hear the statement: "Masonry stands for freedom of thought and conscience." But what does this decision of conscience actually inculcate. By decision of conscience I understand a decision oriented to the categories of good and evil. A decision which the individual reaches within himself and which is binding for him, immediately and absolutely obligatory. A decision he does not make rationally and according to which he must act. This genuine decision of conscience is an imperative, a moral precept affecting with the final consequence the entire personality and having the character of a warning against evil and intolerance and a direct appeal to do good, to practice tolerance and brotherly love. Immediacy, directness, non-manipulative quality are the decisive factors. God has given us a moral faculty, our conscience: this we have to use faithfully, applying it to the existing relations and
circumstances, develop it and all its kindred powers; then we learn the moral law of justice and right, the divine rule of conduct for human life, by intuitive perception. The object of the conscience is justice, and fits it as light fits the eye and truth the mind. This alone is the way a Mason should make his decision of conscience, - within the length of his Cable-Tow.

/s/ Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Grand Senior Warden
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Patience and The Meaning of The Ritual

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented at Dominion Lodge No. 848 on 7th June 1976)
PATIENCE AND THE MEANING OF THE RITUAL

(Presented at Dominion Lodge No. 848 on 7th June 1976)

My Brothers;

When I decided to name this topic

Patience

and

the Meaning of our Ritual

I was primarily motivated to pay a fitting tribute to English-speaking Freemasonry we inherited from the Grand Mother Lodge of England. And I will preface my presentation quoting our genius in poetry, William Shakespeare: ... "Give me that man who is not passion's slave..., whose blood and judgment are so well commingled... that he takes fortune's buffets and rewards with equal thanks." Well did Shakespeare know, as does the contriver of every opera that without man's passion there would be small tragedy and little farce? It is when men surrender to hate, revenge, ambition, egotistical pride, fear and selfish love that the world is out of tune.

Our teachings tell us to keep our passions within due bounds toward all mankind. We recognize this as GOD's self evident truth.

That the Craft is holding the line is evident from an examination of its publications. God is wonderful and marvellous in His order and reason. Faith proclaims that our
world will survive its present crisis and that moral law prevails as it ever has and always will.

The development of our Masonic ritual and the system of Degrees which it has produced is of great interest to most Masonic students. The ritual is the first point of contact which the profane has with our Fraternity and, as he hears the beauties of its language he is often impressed with it, though he may not always comprehend the lessons which it seeks to inculcate at that time.

First off, it must be said that the Operative Craftsmen had little if any ritual in the sense in which we now regard it. Nor was the ritual born immediately after the Grand Lodge came into being in 1717. Freemasonry had its ascendancy beginning at about the time which saw the Duke of Montague as Grand Master. It was during this period that, according to Anderson in his Constitutions, "Masonry flourished in harmony, Reputation and Numbers; many noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank desired to be admitted to the fraternity besides other learned men, Merchants, Tradesmen and Clergymen who found a lodge to be safe and pleasant relaxation from intense study of the hurry of business, without politics or party.

Perhaps the sudden popularity of Freemasonry was brought about by the secrecy which surrounded its proceedings. Curiosity is often the touchstone of popularity and men have sought to probe into the secrets of Freemasonry. In 1723, when Anderson wrote the words which we have quoted, the rituals were beginning to develop. Soon after that date and for many years thereafter the British Isles and a part of the Continent of Europe saw a number of publications which we now call exposé's or exposures of the work of Freemasonry. Among these were catechisms which purported to reveal the secrets of Freemasonry. The publication of these tracts was not a passing thing, for some of them had as many as twenty editions. The practice of
writing and publishing such booklets and books continued for nearly a hundred years.

Prichard's Masonry Dissected was one of the earliest and more popular works of this character. It appears to have been published as early as 1730. There were others, of course, but these, in the early years, were not booklets. Some of these gave only the words and signs of Freemasonry; others had considerably more but none of these, until Prichard's work, gave the whole of the details as to the ritual.

Today we realize that these writings did much to improve the ritual of Freemasonry by establishing something of a pattern of uniformity and a text book from which many men earned the lessons of ritualistic work. Such works are today discounted and every Lodge is protected from intrusion by interlopers by the use of certificates, dues cards, etc., which prove his connection with a particular regular Lodge. This and his examination by a Lodge Committee, guard the doors of our Lodges against impostors.

There are many articles written on Masonic philosophy but have you really thought where the majority of this can be found? We so often expect the well versed Brother to interpret for us the meaning of current ritual and add his knowledge of ancient rituals. Are we failing in our duty as responsible Masons by not listening to every word of well delivered work and wringing the meanings out, based on our own interpretation?

There has been many novels written where the author has been shocked to find the strange interpretation that the "experts" have placed upon what was a simple story. When the poor author complains, he is told that he really meant what the "experts" said he meant, even if he wasn't aware of it. How gullible we have become if we believe all this pseudoscientific rubbish.
As Masons then, we should rely on the brain that we have been given, to think about the meanings that can be derived from our ritual. This does not mean that we should not discuss, question and refine our opinion constantly, but it suggests that the value of Masonry comes from our personal understanding. Have you really thought about the meaning of a specific piece of ritual that has made you reconsider a way of acting in your life? In any of these areas, where ritual has had a dramatic effect on you, it has been at the time of a sudden flash of insight into a meaning that has been suddenly interpreted by YOU. To just be told the philosophy, is like feeding people with a food that they do not like. It will sustain them in life but will not give them that joy of life, which comes from the things that are enjoyed. When you get that insight into ritual you have then done something worthwhile to your life because in most cases you will use the extra information that you now possess.

The philosophy of Masonry that you hear from others is fine, but it belongs to the interpreter. Your life, in and out of the Lodge as a Mason, must be based on YOUR philosophy as gained from Masonry, church, school, home, friends and plain old "experience in life." Now the order of these sources may differ but they all attempt to give a decent, honest, and upright way of existing in this world of people and things. You have to find the right method of interpreting the sometimes conflicting messages and then do the best possible job of being a person that you are proud of, for a Mason is taught that he has the personal responsibility of living the "Masonic Life".

"In tracing the progress of Freemasonry, we find it so intimately connected with the history of philosophy, of religion, and of art of all ages of the world, that it is evident that no Freemason can expect thoroughly to understand the nature of the institution, or to appreciate its character, unless he shall carefully study its annals, and make himself
conversant with the facts of history, to which and from which it gives and receives a mutual influence..."

The brother who unfortunately supposes that the only requisites of a skilful Freemason consist in repeating with fluency the ordinary lectures, or in correcting opening and closing the Lodge or in giving with sufficient accuracy the modes recognition will hardly credit the assertion, that he whose knowledge of the "Royal Art" extends no further than these preliminaries has scarcely advanced beyond the rudiments of our science...

Our Mission in life is to help one another and it should never be our intention to sound too self-important. None of us in our Brotherhood are oracles who sit upon Olympian heights to hand down rules and institutions to the rest. Not at all. We are simply men and brothers, who share alike in the joys, the grief, the happiness and the sorrows of this world.

Masonry is not built around a few individuals, who for a time may occupy places of authority and responsibility. Masonry is that sublime work in which the whole body of craftsmen are engaged daily, in building that Temple not made with hands. From the reports of our lodges we find rich evidences that the great work, begun so long ago, is still going on.

What binds men together is a common interest in something that all possess. In Masonry we have that bond and purpose. It is a ground for understanding and a basis for friendship whenever and wherever two or more Masons meet. They are not strangers but brothers and fellow workmen. Together they realize and experience the fact that the more one knows about Masonry, its tenets and ideals, the more and greater are the benefits derived from it.
With all our Masonic experience, it must, or at least should, lead to a growing understanding of its arts and a greater appreciation of the lights, rights and benefits of Masonry. Progress in that direction will be attained as we gain a deeper comprehension of the "wisdom of the ages, and of our Ritual".

To study a bit further into these mysteries and beauties, it is necessary that we refer to a certain memorable occasion when we were instructed to "wait with patience" until certain things had been done. Did the exact wording of that instruction mean a great deal to you then? Probably not. But remember this, not one word is wasted in the Masonic Ritual. Each word of the entire ritual was carved and placed there as a jewel of meaning. It is when we begin to truly comprehend the significance of these words that we really sense the deep meaning of our Order.

Note that you were not told merely to wait. You were advised by a friend and Brother "to wait with patience. Why? Wise men of long ago, and even the master architect of the Temple knew that one of the besetting sins and weaknesses of mankind is impatience.

There were some you will recall who could not wait for the Temple to be finished. That indeed was not a fanciful act. It was not done merely to impress you with something, lifted from ancient legends of traditions. A lesson page from the wisdom of the ages was being opened to you.

When we actually stop to think about it, how much of the misery and sorrow of the world has come about because men could or would not wait with patience? Simple words, to be sure, but great truths are always simple. Putting them in practice is what is hard. The finding of this truth was what occurred when you were brought to light. That was what you came asking for. Other friends and brothers, who had found it, assisted you. But light is of value only when used. And so, once that light was thrown into dark places, you
were supposed to employ it in seeking out the riches that had been given you. Therefore, "wait with patience" is not merely a phrase. It is a part of the rule and guide that should direct our ways.

Patience is indeed a great virtue and with patience one can accomplish many things in life. It not only leads to light but to tolerance and understanding. Those who are impatient never take time to think. They never take time to meditate or ponder over what is right and what is wrong. Thinking things out slowly and clearly, will eventually meet the needs of one's hungering spirit, for as you think so are you. To patiently think some positive and noble thought will assist you in cultivating higher personal standards of morality. It will also prove that kindness heals many hearts and that encouragement will bring much peace. With patience as your standard, take time for Masonry. Your vision, enthusiasm and participation will strengthen not only you, but your Lodge and the whole brotherhood.

This year, why not take a new look at the ritual you hear and get your own philosophy, or confirm your old philosophy, and be prepared to face the Grand Architect with no one other than yourself to blame for, the way you have lived.

Do it with patience, please!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
On Brotherly Love, Friendship and Forgiveness

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented at a Meeting of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Masonic Districts on 6 and 27th March 1976)
ON BROTHERLY LOVE, 
FRIENDSHIP AND FORGIVENESS

(Presented at a Meeting of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Masonic Districts on 6 and 27th March 1976)

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:
for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God who he hath not seen?

1 John, chapter 4, verse 20

Very Worshipful District Masters, Worshipful Masters and Brethren all:

We are not here assembled to bridge a gap between the various Lodges, because there is no gap and Freemasonry is our strong bond between Brothers linked together by the Mystic Tie. Today, more Light from Masonry was imparted to us and we learned how to convert our problems of today into the Light of challenging opportunities of tomorrow. And speaking of Light, I am reminded of a story which is self-explanatory:

The church hired a new pastor and at the first meeting the board of deacons asked him what he would suggest first to improve the church. Not quite certain the pastor suggested a chandelier for the sanctuary. The board said it would let him know. Two days later he received a letter from the board president. "Dear Pastor: We have decided against what you asked for. First, no one can spell it. Second, no one can play it. And third, what we really need is more light." This teaches us one important lesson: "If we can't spell it, we can't play it."
We diligently try to correctly spell our Masonic principles and our order's vision of duty to country, its esteem for Brotherhood and traditional values, its spiritual high principles and its humble acceptance of God as the Supreme Being. These Masonic guidelines are our course of personal strength by which we strive to become an upright man.

It is for that reason we will never despair. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions, and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times. It is apparent to me, that the Supreme Architect has set out the duties each of us has to perform, and we all have trusted in HIS will with knowledge that our trust is well-founded.

In our modern age it is necessary to change the world but it is all the more necessary to maintain and uphold our basic principles and to reformulate our actual commitments; engagement for a dignified existence for all; projection of ethical and with it educational values through our Fraternity of tolerant, open-minded and socially engaged human beings into the outer world. We cannot, and do not want, to change the world, but we can make it more human. Instead of un-oriented progressiveness, human planning for the future based on the needs of mankind must develop, which is not feasible without conscience clarification of the norms which constitute our mutual existence.

Some of these norms are our fundamentals; they represent cornerstones of our Masonic edifice. Just to name a few, I am referring to Brotherly Love, to communicate Masonic Light, to friendship, and to forgiveness. I'll attend to them in the order given.

Many times we succeed in feeling Brotherly Love in spite of difficulties which can arise, and which are solved by means of the Love.

Many times this Love becomes a part of ourselves, we should let it, like a faithful friend, guide our footsteps, so
that readiness to help does not harden into routine, so that fraternal affection does not just remain an empty phrase, so that fraternalism does more than hold together strained relationships. Then let us look again into the face of a Brother whom we might perhaps have overlooked, and the cool glance will warm to a smile, and trusting words will flow again. Then it becomes possible to listen, even a foreign tongue can be understood and uprightness meets with trust, and fair criticism can be readily accepted. Then Brotherly Love becomes credible.

Let us always strive to hold firmly to this love and to this belief, even when hopes are disappointed when mistrust might grow, when lack of understanding and the weight of unhappy experience close in on us.

Let us always fight for the Brotherly Love, so that we can look into the depths of true happiness, so that we can become free of selfishness, and find our way to others, to our Brothers. Thus the many hours of friendship, upon which the light of the Mystic Tie shines from the depths, will become a part of ourselves.

Love as Brothers understand it, should dissolve domination and the luster of power! That part of the future entrusted to our care begins today, and love engenders, and is engendered, by love alone. Let us not set any limits, therefore, on Brotherly Love, of our own free will and accord.

Every member of the craft should take cognizance of the heritage of his Lodge and simultaneously contemplate the means by which his efforts will assist in forging its future through communication of Masonic Light.

Continuity and motivation may well be considered the two prime responsibilities in the leadership of a Lodge. Accountability requires a comprehension of the past in order to focus on the present in light of its continuing progression. Far too often the importance of continuity has been
misconstrued as maintenance of the Status Quo. No definition of progress may be considered adequate without the stress of a forward concept. Motivation, therefore, while concerned with the Now, serves to impel thoughtful actions and dynamic programs.

To give light to one Brother or fellow, a man must consume himself, display and disperse energy. A master or teacher who puts no energy into his doctrines could not gather disciples. In time all men die, but some rust out while others burn out. Those who burn out may go the more quickly, but at least they go gloriously. The Initiate, the Fellowcraft and the Master Mason who kneel at the Altar may have the candle of their soul ignited by the enthusiasm of those who give them Masonic Light, and by touch with that light of new truth. To give light we must burn. No luke warm Brother inspires the spirit of his Brethren to higher endeavour. May the gentle illumination of the Masonic Light on our sacred Altar shine into the far places and illuminate the heart and the pathway of the Craftsmen and of your Lodges forever.

Recently I studied in the poetry of John Ford (1586-1639) and was fascinated by his seeking for stability, directly where it has its full residence, in the heart of men, in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds. And here I found one of the different keys, how to defeat our "inner enemy". It says: "Before a smile comes out on the face, it begins deep down in a happy and thankful heart. Looking inside our hearts and counting our blessings, we can start each morning with a smile, and others will recognize the warmth of a smile". This quotation is familiar to all of us; it is exactly a description of some of our basic tenets.

We all know, to have a friend, one must be a friend. It takes two to create friendship and to keep it going. Each brings something and each takes something. When one is always taking but never giving, friendship ends.
I consider the members of our honorable and well governed Lodges as true ambassadors of our most valuable tenets: Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love; and one of man's greatest assets is the exemplification of Friendship. Since friendship is the greatest investment man can make, it gives a fuller understanding of the wonders our Creator has given us. When the word "Friend" is used without depth of the true understanding, the meaning becomes a parody. The spread of a tree is not what counts. It is the depth of the roots in the ground, which gives strength to outward appearances. And appearance without stability is nothing. And life without friends is a desert! To have a friend means to be one in all our actions and doings. As true Freemasons we learn how to expand our principles of Friendship, how to practice it, not just "mouthing" the word. Anyone who has submerged himself into this uplifting CREDO will forevermore partake of this lofty experience of having and receiving the benefits of this sublime Degree of Friendship.

We thank you for being our friends and Brothers in the bonds of union and friendship.

There are moments in our life when our thoughts are primarily focused on a precious jewel, safely lodged in a faithful breast; - this jewel is named "FORGIVENESS".

Agreeably to common established definitions, forgiveness inculcates: To grant pardon for or remission of something that was wrong done; to grant freedom from penalty to some-one; to cease to blame or feel resentment against a person; in short, to be merciful, to have compassion.

It seems to me, however, that giving is the biggest part of forgiveness. Because it is not something we can earn, or buy, or get in any other way, except have it given to us. It is a little frightening to think about it. I mean really, lying-awake-in-the-dark-of-night, thinking about it.

When we think about the price of forgiveness, we have no tools to measure it, it is priceless, and no coins have been
minted, to buy its spiritual symbolism. That is because forgiveness is all involved with our trespasses, our superfluities of mind, and our charitable love, so huge, that we cannot even begin to comprehend or understand it. And it would not be so bad except when we know that we constantly need this kind of spiritual tie, of fraternal affection and measurement of service without physical or spiritual restraints. As the cabletow is our "pledge of the body", so is forgiveness "a pledge of our Masonic conscious", one facet of our Masonic Charity. There is a lot, though, that forgiveness can do for us, and it does, whether we know it or not. It knows neither rule nor limit; it obeys only the orders of the generous and noble sentiments of the soul.

Forgiveness can make and keep us alive. We do not mean alive, in the life-after-death way. Although that is a part of it, too. We mean that after a while our shame becomes something we can stand because it finally begins to sink into our own ego. Then it becomes possible for us to live with ourselves in peace and harmony and be alive; and that is what I am talking about.

There is nothing to compare forgiveness with, because there is really, deep down, nothing that compares with it, and because we are - "judged with candor, admonished with friendship and reprehended with justice".

And that is all I know about forgiveness. Maybe, that's all I need to know.

My Brothers: your Worshipful Masters have been entrusted with the Ionic Pillar of your respective Lodges which combines the Strength of the Doric with the Beauty of the Corinthian. This emblem of Wisdom points out to us that they are to combine Wisdom with Strength, and firmness of mind with the Beauties of persuasive eloquence in the government of the Lodge.
Emulate the daring, the courageous, the noble, in the quest of truth with dynamic and creative thinking, and, please, let us remember: a job well done, means to do the work.

Let us perform this work in the spirit of Brother Marshall's closing prayer:

"Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change. And when we are right, make us easy to live with".

/s/Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Deputy Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Freemasonry in Germany

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Presented on 24th March 1980 at
Nahe Temple Lodge No. 824

Presented on 9th April 1980 at
Peter M. Rasmussen Lodge No. 916

Presented on 17th June 1980 at
More Light Lodge No. 874
Brethren of the Mystic Tie:

I am most grateful to the Worshipful Master, his Wardens, Officers and Brothers of this - my - Lodge for your kind invitation, extended to me some months ago, to present this paper on the subject of a brief history of:

Freemasonry in Germany

I would like to express a vote of thanks to all Brothers in attendance. I fear, however, time limitation does not permit me delving into details at length and to pay a proper respect to so vital a topic of Masonic interest and significance. I can offer some food for thought, - much remains for us to uncover. My observations coincide, I believe, with the realities of our integration within the United Grand Lodges of Germany. And I'll try to provide our Masters of Lodges and the Brethren incentive and motivation for research on their part, to liven things up and ensure the brothers will sit up and take notice.

Let me preface my presentation with two thrilling personal incidents I experienced lately. First: at my last military duty I noticed the Drill Sergeant bellowing at a recruit, "What is the first thing to do when cleaning a rifle?" . . . Recruit: "Check the serial number." Sergeant: "And just what
has that got to do with it." ... *Recruit*: "To make sure I am cleaning my own"... "I know the serial number!"

It is remarkable that this simple story is no fiction but a daily curiosity. The Masonic legend, however, is a curious combination of history and fiction.

Second: We read in the 24th Chapter of Proverbs, words which are not without interest to Freemasons whose speculations go beyond ritual. The text begins: . . . "By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established."

Lecture is the operative word here. I shall try in all humility to recapture the spirit of our Masonic founding fathers. They set out to appeal to a wide audience of diverse interests to carry another great light into the world, and that is the light of education for all on equal basis. And that's just what I endeavor to emulate.

At the distance of more than a decade, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first entered a place representing the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple. The words *"Whence came you"... "From a Lodge of the Holy Saints John of Jerusalem"*, which I hasten to add are not a little romantically, an emotional experience which so inspired the great Masonic historians and scholars that they were impelled to write their classic histories of Ancient Free and Accepted Masonry, and quite after expressed their emotions in words and phrases of excelling beauty. And all of us have an abiding interest in beginnings. To effect these we use a ritual having the preciseness of form required if liturgical recitation, which we try to perform and encourage others to emulate, in such a way that an emotional atmosphere is created which can he felt throughout the whole Lodge. We want to make so powerful and enduring an impression upon the mind of the initiate, to convey to him the gravity of the occasion, that he
will remember it to the end of his life. For this purpose we, depend mainly upon words, since words are not only the stones of our fabric but are also the principal working tools of the speculative Mason and the way we handle them will determine our qualifications. For patiently we are craftsmen in words. But recognition of these qualities depends upon our use of other men's words, for no honors are awarded if we make up our own as we go along. This is not the occasion, nor am I the person to expound upon the delivery of historic Masonic material, but I have an historian's interest in the way our modern Masonic edifice was gradually erected and it is in the hope that I can stimulate similar interest in others that I have made this the theme of my address.

Perhaps the edifices I build are not the taste of everyone. but I can only suggest that, as in almost every walk of life today, which was once acceptable without question to our fore bearers is now seen in a different and not necessarily worse light. But before going on to discuss parts, my own understanding of the beginning of our kind of Masonry must be declared, for this is a fundamental.

Let us, therefore, briefly shed light on the advent of Free Masonry in England, on some peculiar Masonic developments in the United States, in order to comprehend structure, past and present, of Free Masonry in Germany.

1. English Free and Accepted Masonry, from which stems speculative Masonry the world over, was established in the early years of the 18th century. We cannot in truth claim to be a continuation of medieval operative masonry, for the ground rules are entirely different. When in June 1717 a small group of people met together in London to form that which blossomed out into the first Grand Lodge, it was a primitive organization composed mainly of men of humble origin who left for posterity no records of their proceedings. In the early 1720's still within the confines of London and Westminster, the seeds of a great
international movement had begun to take root by the
foundation of the Premier Grand Lodge of England. If our
forebearers had any intention of developing a system of
morality it is difficult to recognize it as such, but on the
other hand it is crystal clear that one of their principal
objectives was laid down in the Old Charges and certain
basic rules and principles called "Landmarks", which
cannot be changed, repealed or amended by any Mason,
Lodge or Grand Lodge. If they were removed Masonry
would cease to be Masonry; e.g. no participation as
Masons in any form of controversial religious or political
sectarianism, a belief in a Supreme Being, the immortality
of the soul, strict adherence to tolerance and to discharge
the duties of good citizenship.

2. The effect of Freemasonry on the intellectual and social
developments spread quickly to the British Colonies in
North America: Canada and the United States. Jean
Jacques Rousseau's spirit of enlightenment and the
fanfare initiating the French revolution "Liberty, Equality
and Fraternity" found an attentive ear in the American
colonies. It inspired the 56 signers of the Declaration of
Independence on 2nd July, 1776. Many of them confessed
their Masonic background: John Hancock, Robert Paine,
Dr. Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington, just to
ame a few. The English Masonic heritage was
deliberately absorbed by the young, independent United
States and in the text of the American Constitution of
the English Minister, Brother James Anderson, who
formulated the Ancient (Old) Charges, is celebrating
posthumously a triumph even today. The original ritual
was adopted from England. It is practiced in all 49 United
States Grand Lodges with insignificant modifications
since. The divisions in English Freemasonry in Europe,
accentuated by the growth of the "Ancients" and
"Moderns", the special emphasis of European Lodges on
formalism and philosophy, even the admission of
members to adherents of the Christian Faith exclusively remained without response in the new world. The first three degrees of Blue Craft Masonry formed the solid base and are an essential condition for further Masonic activities. A number of typical American-styled Masonic allied or appendant Bodies developed, represented by the Scottish and York Rite Bodies, the Order of DeMolay and Rainbow for girls, the Order of the Eastern Star and the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine..., and many other Masonic related organizations. The dominant idea of freedom, fraternity, patriotism and Charity soon permeated all realms of life. In Europe the German poet Heinrich Heine sighed: "America, you are lucky; you do not have to bear the heavy burden and the inclemency's of an unbalanced history." Oh, no! America did not sigh. Deep philosophical discussions in Lodge life are not of primary importance to American speaking Brethren. They exercise the Royal Art without concern for the Philosophical or ritual approach of German speaking Freemasonry which frequently appears to them to be subjective. They realize our common Masonic ideals and tenets in active work directed to the outside, with a moderate touch of the good old pioneer spirit. For him, Masonry is a way of life; is the practical application and projection of our fundamentals into daily life; it is simply Brotherhood. And for him, Masonry is neither primarily humanitarian nor predominantly religious. Brother Henry Ford formulated this different intellectual approach all too well: "You can go through life trying to gain knowledge but despite all your efforts you will not be able to keep pace with your own time. You can fill your brain with facts of all centuries, but in the end you will have no more than an overcrowded storage place of facts. The Truth is, great volumes of stored knowledge is not identical with mental activity. Men can be well educated and yet quite useless. However, an uneducated man can prove himself to be quite useful.
The purpose of education is not to fill man's brain with facts, but to teach him to use his brain for the purpose of thinking. What can you do to help and to heal the World? That is the real test of education. A man who can achieve his goal is really somebody; if he can help ten or one hundred or one thousand to achieve their goals then he is even more. He may be completely rusty in the field of books, yet he is a wise men. When man is master of his own sphere he has earned his doctor title and has entered the realm of wisdom."

What more can I add to my Masonic promoter?

3. It has been seen that the Craft extended its influence throughout Europe so that in the early decades of the 18th century there were Lodges in Hamburg, Paris, The Hague, Geneva and other European cities. It would be impossible in this presentation to review in detail all the incidents which brought Freemasonry to that stage of development which it had reached in Europe. But to form an appreciation of the course of events by this review it is necessary to consider, albeit some what briefly, the situation in Germany in particular.

The first period of English Freemasonry in Germany opened in 1733 and continued until 1873 when the last Lodge in Germany, warranted or constituted by the Grand Lodge of England, was erased from the list. Since the consecration of the first German Lodge in Hamburg in 1733, and the initiation of the Prince Royal in 1738, the later King Frederic the Great of Prussia, the Craft had emerged from the period of repression it had suffered at the hands of his father, when members of the Lodges were imprisoned under
an order prohibiting such assemblies. The formation of the first and oldest Lodges in Hamburg, Braunschweig, Berlin and Frankfurt were created as a result of British influence and working with British rituals, were wholly ignored by the Mother Grand Lodge of England. The rituals and instructions were transmitted solely by word of mouth and as a result underwent considerable modifications. Customs were adapted to local conditions and gradually the English influence was to be superseded by that of the French for whose culture the Germans had considerable respect; even the French language had become a necessity for those who wished to play a role in the society of that time. Frederick William II, the Great, as Master in the Chair, had initiated both his brothers in 1740 and many other distinguished noblemen. In 1740 a Lodge was founded in Berlin as an offspring of the famous later:

a) Grand National Mother Lodge of the Prussian State known as the Three World Globes (1744), and obtained a Scottish patent to enable it to work other than the Craft Degree (7 degrees), 1760.

"(Things developed far more complicated in Germany than it appears in this brief presentation. There were formatted other Grand Lodges of varying importance, comprising the "Old Prussian Grand Lodges)"

b) The Grand Lodge Royal York of Friendship (1798)

c) The National Grand Lodge of German Freemasons (1770).

The progress of German Freemasonry was momentarily halted by the Napoleonic conquest of several countries and became more or less subject" to the Grand Orient de France. In response to repeated demands by France, the Prussian Government took, or pretended to take, legislation to dissolve these bodies. Freemasonry, however, was exempted from
such legislation. From this point German Freemasonry, supported by the Prussian and other German States continued to make progress in the Royal Art. The second half of the 18th century which must be considered as a severe testing time for Freemasonry, marked the beginning of a new era. Despite newly invested rites and degrees and superstitions, there emerged a stronger and purified moral order which played no small part in the rebuilding of Europe in the century to come. In the British Colonies in North America, Freemasonry was a Microcosm of Empire, but by and large its devolution into independencies was achieved peacefully.

Two of the Old Prussian Lodges initiated only men of the Christian faith, one of which adopted the Swedish Rite or "System". The three existing Prussian Lodges were augmented and complimented by the formation of Grand Lodges in other German States, most of them patronized and protected by the head of state. These "Humanitarian Grand Lodges" accepted for initiation men of any faith:


e) The Grand Lodge of the Sun of Bayreuth (1741)

f) The Mother Grand Lodge of the Eclectis Union in Frankfurt (1742).

g) The National Grand Lodge of Saxony in Dresden (1811).

h) The Lodge Concord at Darmstadt (1846).

i) The Grand Lodge Chain of German Brotherhood at Leipzig (1924).

All these 9 Grand Lodges maintained and enjoyed regular fraternal relations. "There is only one Masonry ... this unity demands the communication of all true Masons, the only fundament of whom are the blue Craft Degrees", so
stated Brother King Frederic the Great of Prussia. Truly, a prophetic vision.

Before I proceed further in this historical essay, I must briefly touch on certain turbulence in the climate of European Freemasonry, especially in England.

The inauguration of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 is related to some prominent names, such as those of the Reverend Doctor James Anderson, George Payne, and John, Duke of Montague. Of these, James Anderson and his book of Constitutions of 1723, generally known as "Anderson's Constitution" is best known; and even the "Ancient Charges" as now in use almost everywhere, are coupled with his name. The form which Anderson gave to the "Ancient Charges" and his liberal conception of the idea of humanity and tolerance, which constitutes the basis of the Fraternity, stamped the Ancient Charges as new charges of imperishable value. But not all Lodges existing in 1717 joined the new Grand Lodge. Many could not reconcile themselves to the Constitutions which so expressly stipulated the Religion in which all men agree. That seemed to them a much too revolutionary innovation, an invasion of the traditional edifice, which they had suddenly recalled to mind. The Lodge of York, which had served as the center of union for the highly placed personages of the country proclaimed itself an independent 'Grand Lodge of all England" in 1725. It drew up its own Statute Book, known as the "Old Rules of the Grand Lodge of York". This Grand Lodge of York existed until about 1790. It maintained the fundamental principles of Freemasons: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, questioned the Grand Lodge of London or England's jurisdictional power over all Freemasons in England and particularly emphasized that a distinctive trait of a Mason should be, that he is a good Christian, loyal Citizen and true friend. No difficulties arose for the Grand Lodge of England because of the existence of its sister Grand Lodge of York.
But in 1751 another exceedingly ambitious Grand Lodge appeared in London, inspired by a most remarkable English Freemason born in Ireland in 1729, initiated and became the Master in a Dublin Lodge, Worshipful Brother Laurence Dermott. On 17th July 1751 he founded the "Grand Lodge of England according to the Old Institutions". His slogan was "Universal Masonry" and no innovations, although this new Grand Lodge fostered considerable Innovations; in addition to the three symbolic Degrees it included a fourth, the Royal Arch, as a completion of the Third Degree and ostensibly gave answers to the questions which the legends of the Master's degree left open. Brother Dermott's impetuous temperament, his honest purpose and his great literary talent found expression in the new Constitution Ahiman Rezon, or "A help to a Brother" written by him and published in 1756. It had a very fruitful effect upon the development of his newly founded Grand Lodge still keeping the ancient Land Marks in view and culminating in Masonic principles such as to love mercy, do justice and to walk humbly before God. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this Grand Lodge recorded on its registers 359 constituent Lodges and 116 Regimental Lodges, (military Lodges traveling with regiments.) Dermott very cleverly traced his new creation back to the alleged principles of the alleged first Constitution of the Anglo-Saxon Prince Edwin of 926, and derived there from the right to describe himself as the "Moderns". The special interest which the Duke of Atholl as Grand Master and members of the Royal family showed for the "Ancients" caused many of these to describe it as the "Atholl Grand Lodge".

For sixty years the two Grand Lodges developed side by side: The Grand Lodge of England, according to Anderson's Constitution or the "Moderns", and the Grand Lodge of England, according to the Old Institution and Dermott's Constitution or the "Ancients"; the Grand Lodge of York ceased to exist in 1790. However, a desire for union and
alliance of the "Ancients" and "Moderns" grew stronger every year. The unification was sealed in the "Articles of Union between the two Grand Lodges of Freemasons in England", and the "United Grand Lodge of England" was formed on 27th December 1813 (St John the Evangelist Day) with great solemnity in the Grand Temple of Freemason's Hall in London. A "Special Lodge of Promulgation", later "Lodge of Reconciliation" was formed in 1809, comprising members from each group, created and maintained the basis for the reconciliation of both Grand Lodges and remained in activity for some years after the Union in order to further the harmonic adjustment of all questions. Since then English Freemasonry has continued to prosper. The final principles laid down in 1813 were left unaltered. The idea of tolerance was strongly adhered to and promulgated... "We exclude nobody from our Order on account of his religion or on account of the way, in which he worships God, whatsoever be the nature of that worship"... And this new "United Grand Lodge of England" was far from ready to allow these principles to be watered down by other Grand Lodges outside of England. That was clearly demonstrated in the case of the only exciting incident which occurred in the history of English Freemasonry since the reconciliation between the Ancients and the Moderns, that is to say, in the case of the breach with the Grand Orient of France. The possibility that the belief in the GAOTU might be departed from and that atheists might also be accepted in French Lodges caused the English to sever themselves from their French Brethren. Not, however, because they supposed that the Grand Orient desired to espouse the cause of atheism or materialism, but because they regarded the rejection of the GAOTU and the display of the VSL as the removal of the very foundation stone of the whole Masonic Edifice, as a departure from the "traditions and usages of ancient and modern Freemasonry".

The Grand Lodge of Scotland and the Grand Lodge of Ireland associated themselves with this breach. The former
was founded on 30th November 1736 (St Andrew's Day) in Edinburgh by William St. Clair of Roslin; the latter was founded in 1724 in Dublin with Lord Rosse presiding as first Grand Master. Both developed independently of, but concurrently with, the Grand Lodge of England and have followed much the same direction. A direction, the aim of which Robert Burns, the Poet Laureate of British Freemasonry and an inspired writer on humanity recorded when he sang:

"Then let us pray, that come it may -
As come it will for a' that -
That man to man, the world O'er
Shall brothers be, for a' that."

The division in English Freemasonry, accentuated by the growth of the "Ancients" versus the "Moderns" in the second half of the 18th century led to a weakening of the prestige of the Premier Grand Lodge of England in the eyes of the Continental Lodges. With two English Grand Lodges, both commanding a considerable following of distinguished members, it was no small wonder that the European lodges would have experienced embarrassment, if nothing more, at the state of open conflict between their English brethren, whose members were not even on visiting terms with each other. Later a custom seems to have grown up in "Ancients" lodges of holding a second warrant from the "Moderns" Grand Lodge, perhaps as a guarantee of their respectability, especially for visiting Brethren. The gradual decline in prestige and authority of the Premier Grand Lodge of England was probably instrumental in the development of jealous circles and sects, some claiming affiliation with the Masonic order, and linking their belief with the principles of Masonic idealism. I refer to the Illuminates, the Mysticists, the Rose-Croix, Alchemists and others. The Masonic influence on the
spiritual development in Germany was a blessing. The post
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing expressed it all too well: "The
spirits rise, the studies are in bloom, it is a joy to be living;
Freemasonry is in its manner as old as the civil society"; and
other famous Brothers like Goeth, Claudius, Herder, Voltaire,
and Kent applauded him. And this free Masonic world reflects
in Germany names of highest reputation and esteem: Mozart,
von Stein, Humboldt, General Bucher and Scharnhorst, Dr.
Samual Hahnemann but also the Count Bishop of Steinheim.

Kings, monarchs, nobles and representatives of all
regions of life have impressed their best on the development
of the Royal Art and its philosophical curriculum. until the
trying times came to the over hundred thousand German
speaking Brothers in 1937: the Three Great Lights were
extinguished the Lodges and their property were confiscated,
the Brothers persecuted and left as prey to abject despair.
But the spirit of Freemasonry lived under ground under the
greatest of difficulties; the Mystic Tie remained strong and
vital. A little blue Forget-Me-Not flower, in lieu of the
traditional trowel or square and compasses marked a Brother
and distinguished him as one who refused the Masonic Light
to be extinguished. And because this spirit lived on,
Freemasonry in Germany was able to rise after 1945.

Restrictions of Lodge meetings were lifted in the latter
half of 1946 and in early 1947, and the Masonic Working
Community in Frankfurt sent out invitations to Freemasons
throughout the western, free part of Germany. Many fruitful
discussions ensued and they realized that the pre-war
structure of many Grand Lodges, all working independently
of one another, was not practicable; they also realized that it
was essential to find a common ground whereby all
Freemasons in Germany could be united into one Grand
Lodge to ensure recognition by foreign Grand Lodges. But,
you will remember, they were members of nine different
Grand Lodges. At their meeting culminating in the firm belief:
"There is only one Freemasonry which embraces all Brothers, scattered though they may be and yet bound together by the Royal Art, German Freemasons are pledged to carry into fulfilment the desires of many generations of Masonry". On the 19th of June 1949 representatives of German Lodges entered the Paulskirche in Frankfurt to found, constitute and consecrate the new "United Grand Lodge of German Freemasons, AF & AM" and to install its first Grand Master, Doctor Theodor Vogel. This bright day had its sadness as well.

You will recall that a third of the so-called Christian Lodges, the National Grand Lodge of German Freemasons, found herself unable to unite with the new Grand Masonic body, and formed their own Grand Lodge, the: "Grand Land Lodge of German Freemasons or Freemasons Order" (FO).

The Lodges which formed the new United Grand Lodge of Germany agreed to follow and accept the principles of the English Constitution and to acknowledge the three degrees as we know them. The Lodges of the Freemasons Order which practice the Swedish or Scandinavian rite, operate a system of ten degrees, six of which must be passed before eligibility for the Master's Chair, maintain a distinction between the "Blue Lodges". i.e. the first three degrees and the advanced degrees. In some ways, the advanced degrees may be equated with the American York Rite system. It is this very problem of distinction or independence of the Blue Lodges which presents the greatest obstacle to the Freemasons Order becoming completely unified with the other Grand Lodges, a problem requiring great understanding from all sides. Old habits and customs die hard (the Rite came to Germany in 1770), and it can readily be understood that this old Grand Lodge was not willing to relinquish its inheritance. But it should be stressed that the Freemasons Order was not against some form of unification, and after long discussions, the second memorable occasion in post-war Freemasonry was
the convention on the 27th of April, 1958, where the "United Grand Lodges of Germany" (VGLvD) were born, the operative word in the title being "Lodges". On this memorable day the United Grand Lodge of Germany Freemasons AF & AM ("AFAM") and the Grand Lodge of German Freemasons (Freemasons Order) merged, and shortly after this the Grand Mother Lodge of the 3 World Globes ("3wk"), was admitted to the United Grand Lodges of Germany. The basis for this unification is the document "The Magna Charta of German Freemasonry 1958". At a meeting of the Konvent in Berlin on the 24th of October, 1970 an amendment to the Magna Charta was ratified and the two English speaking Grand Lodges in Germany, The Grand Land Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany ("GLL-BFG") and the American Canadian Grand Lodge ("ACGL"), were admitted as equal partners to the United Grand Lodges of Germany. The five partner Grand Lodges which comprise the VGLvD are listed in the order in which they became signers to the Magna Charta:

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The adoption of the Magna Charta as the Constitution of the VGL defined the position of German Freemasonry; it was drawn up to effect a structural unification of scattered Masonic systems in Germany, for the purpose of seeking and retaining recognition with other Masonic jurisdictions of the world with which German Freemasons claimed a "mutual community of interest". Consequently we read in Article I of the Magna Charta: "We German Freemasons acknowledge our right and our duty to provide our national order with a form commensurate with the development of German Freemasonry and the customs of Freemasonry throughout the world."

This document, the Magna Charta, clearly states the constituent Grand Lodges are autonomous; they govern their own internal affairs. It also contains the rules for electing a Grand Master for the VGLvD, and authorizes two Deputies, a Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer, which are part of the so called Grand Master's Office (Grossmeisteramt); but there are no Grand Wardens in the VGLvD. Under authority of the Magna Charta, additional laws and regulations have been adopted for government of the VGLvD: regulations for the establishment of the Senate as the law giving and legislative body; rules for the regular convening of the annual communication called Konvent as the representation of the general membership, - a word akin to the English convention.

The VGLvD, through its Grand Master, the Senate, and the Konvent is the sovereign Grand Lodge in Germany, and is the only Grand Lodge in Germany that is officially
recognized by more than 150 other Grand Lodges of the world. As a consequence, each of the constituent Grand Lodges enjoys recognition through its membership in the VGLvD. This designation "Brotherhood of German Freemasons", as supplement to the VGLvD title, convincingly infers, that it is not only the individual Grand Lodge, the signers of the Magna Charta, which are members of the VGLvD, but all Freemasons in Germany, irrespective of their nationality, represented by the Grand Master of the VGLvD, Senate and the Konvent. And we are German Freemasons, and were it not for those inspired few of 1948 and 1959, we would not now be practicing our beloved Craft here in Germany.

In closing my necessarily incomplete survey I must apologize for its probable unusual length. And I beg your indulgence in due form. But I would like, in this context, to paraphrase a dialog between Brother Mozart and his Emperor, Joseph II. After the gala performance of one of his famous operas the Emperor admonished kindly: "A fine music but very many notes, my dear Mozart". Like him I respectfully respond:

"Not one more than necessary, Your Majesty!"

I thank you!

/s/ Hugh Thomas
Dr. Hugo Thomas. PGM
American Canadian Grand Lodge
The Kovent of the VGLvD

An Explanation of the United Grand Lodges of Germany

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented at the Semi-Annual Communication of the American Canadian Grand Lodge on 12th November 1977)
THE KONVENT OF THE VGLvD
(An Explanation of the United Grand Lodges of Germany)
(Presented at the Semi-Annual Communication of the
American Canadian Grand Lodge on 12th November 1977)

Right Worshipful Grand Master
Distinguished Grand Officers, Past and Present
Worshipful Masters of our Constituent Lodges
My Brothers

Permit me to express my sincere appreciation for the confidence our Right Worshipful Grand Master reposed in me when he assigned me the task to prepare and present this talk on the topic entitled:

"Explanation of the VGLvD;
Attending VGL Konvents"

Time limitations will preclude any possibility of delving into details at length, but my observations coincide, I believe, with the realities of our association within the VGLvD. I will try, however, to provide our newly installed Worshipful Masters and Officers incentive and motivation for action on their part, to liven things up and ensure the brethren will sit up and take notice.

The purpose of this brief summary is to describe the present structure of Freemasonry within the VGLvD - an acronym for "Vereinigt Grosslogen von Deutschland". German Freemasonry can trace its origins to the formation of the first of nine recognized Grand Lodges in Germany, all of which remained in existence, until the era of Hitler brought
a temporary end to Freemasonry in this country. The first Grand Lodge was established in 1740 by Brother, The Prince Royal, Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, -known as Frederic The Great-, the first Grand Master of the "Grand Mother Lodge of the Three World Globes". This Grand Lodge was one of the 3 "Old Prussian Lodges" consisting of:

1. Grand Mother Lodge of the Three World Globes (1740)
2. Grand Lodge of Prussia (1760)
3. National Grand Lodge of German Freemasonry (1770)

They initiated only men of the Christian faith; the third one adopted the Swedish Rite or "System".

The other Grand Lodges were:

4. Grand Lodge of Hamburg (1743)
5. Grand Lodge of the Sun of Bayreuth (1741)
6. Mother Grand Lodge of the Eclectis Union at Frankfurt (1742)
7. National Grand Lodge of Saxony at Dresden (1911)
8. Grand Lodge Concord at Darmstadt (1846)
9. Grand Lodge Chain of German Brotherhood at Leipzig (1924)

and have been called the "Humanitarian" Grand Lodges as they accepted for initiation men of any faith.

"There is only one Masonry...this Unity demands the communication of all true Masons, the only fundament of whom are the three blue degrees," so stated the Honorable
Brother Frederic The Great, Protector of the three Prussian Grand Lodges, who was initiated in 1738 in "Absalom Lodge" No. 1 in Hamburg. Truly, a prophetic statement. It is easy to understand that, when the hour of trial came in 1933, these Grand Lodges with a membership of 100,000 Brethren, were compelled to become silent and went underground, a prey to abject despair, their property confiscated. Happily, the spirit of Freemasonry lived underground under the greatest of difficulties... a 'little blue Forget Me Not in a lapel marked a Brother, in lieu of the traditional Square and Compasses and distinguished those who refused to allow the Light of Masonry to be extinguished and because this spirit lived on, Freemasonry in Germany was able to rise.

Restrictions of Lodge meetings were lifted in the latter half of 1946 and in early 1947 the Masonic Working Community in Frankfurt sent out invitations to Freemasons throughout the western, free part of Germany. Many fruitful discussions ensued; they realized that the pre-war structure of many Grand Lodges, all working independently of one another, was not practicable; they also realized that it was essential to find a common ground whereby all Freemasons in Germany could be united into one Grand Lodge to ensure recognition by foreign Grand Lodges. But, you will remember, they were members of nine different Grand Lodges. At their meeting in Bad Kissingen in 1949 a proclamation was drafted culminating in the firm belief: "There is only one Freemasonry which embraces all Brothers, scattered though they may be and yet bound together by the Royal Art. German Freemasons are pledged to carry into fulfilment the desires of many generations of Masonry". On the 19th of June 1949 representatives of German Lodges entered the Paulskirche in Frankfurt to found, constitute and consecrate the new "United Land Grand Lodge of German Freemasons or Freemasons Order" (FO).

The Lodges which formed the new United Grand Lodge of Germany agreed to follow and accept the principles of the
English Constitution and to acknowledge the three degrees as we know them. The Lodges of the Freemasons Order which practice the Swedish or Scandinavian rite, operate a system of 10 degrees, - 6 of which must be passed before eligibility for the Master's Chair, maintain a distinction between the "Blue Lodges", i.e. the first three degrees and the advanced degrees. In some ways, the advanced degrees may be equated with the American York Rite system. It is this very problem of distinction or independence of the Blue Lodges which presents the greatest obstacle to the Freemasons Order becoming completely unified with the other Grand Lodge, a problem requiring great understanding from all sides. Old habits and customs die hard (the Rite came to Germany in 1770), and it can readily be understood that this old Grand Lodge was not willing to relinquish its inheritance.

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The VGLvD, through its Grand Master, the Senate, and the Konvent is the sovereign Grand Lodge in Germany, and is the only Grand Lodge in Germany that is officially recognized by more than 150 other Grand Lodges of the world. As a consequence, each of the constituent Grand Lodges enjoys recognition through its membership in the VGLvD. The designation "Brotherhood of German Freemasons", as supplement to the VGLvD title, convincingly infers, that it is not only the individual Grand Lodges, - the signers of the Magna Charta -, which are members of the VGLvD, but all freemasons in Germany, irrespective of their Nationality, represented by the Grand Master of the VGLvD, Senate and the Konvent. And we are German Freemasons, and were it not for those inspired few of 1948 and 1958, we
would not now be practicing our beloved Craft here in Germany. Fraternal relations, including the exchange of Grand Representatives with other Grand Lodges, may be accomplished only by the VGLvD. Correspondence between Grand Lodges must be channelled through the VGLvD, except in certain instances where this authority and right is delegated directly to the Grand Secretary of the ACGL. The partner Grand Lodges enjoy autonomy and govern their affairs virtually without interference, just as with any Grand Lodge, certain restrictions are placed on their activities, and they cannot, individually pre-empt the rights and prerogatives of the VGLvD. In effect, each is a subordinate Grand Lodge . . . and it is the VGLvD which guaranties our recognition with other Grand Lodges, and therefore must have control over the regularity of Lodges working within its sovereign jurisdiction.

There have been varying interpretations as to just where the border line of control exercised by the VGLvD ends and where the control and authority rests with the subordinate Grand Lodges. In an on-going attempt to define these matters, the Senate and various committees assigned specific functions, meets at fairly regular intervals. They will particularly be engaged with two problem areas: the first involves the so called parity applied to the financing of the VGLvD, where those partner Grand Lodges with the least number of Lodges or total membership have been paying a vastly disproportionate share of the cost of running the VGLvD; the second aspect is the need for the establishment of a legislative body, a truly representation of the constituent Lodges, either on the basis of the number of Lodges or per capita representation. Our Senate does not meet that criteria, hence our VGLvD does not meet all the criteria's of a Masonically recognized form as a Grand Lodge... You will find more and comprehensive information on this subject in the striking keynote address of Right Worshipful Brother
Jess Minton, delivered at the Konvent in Hannover on 22nd October, 1977.

This brings me to the second section of my talk .. . “The Konvent”.

The Konvent or annual communication or convention of the VGLvD is held generally in the month of October, and is announced by the Grand Master. Each Lodge within the VGLvD is entitled to one vote, and that vote can be exercised, as with almost any Grand Lodge, by the Master or one of the Wardens. A proxy may be appointed to represent the Lodge, subject to specific rules.

According to Section 5 of the Magna Charta, the Konvent is maintained as being the representative of the constituent Lodges ("Vertretung der Bruderschaft"). The nature of the Konvent, besides the Senate and the Grand Master is that of a "body" or "organ" (Sect. 6-8 Magna Charta). In accordance with Masonic law, legislative power is normally incumbent upon the General Assembly (Konvent) in its capacity as supreme authority. The Magna Charta deviates from this view in that, it restricts legislative power to the five partner Grand Lodges through the act of delegating members to the Senate, while indeed granting the Konvent cooperative rights (statute pertaining to the Konvent , 29.10.1960). The senators, however, are subject to no directions at all (sect. 7:6 Magna Charta). Under this regulation, they are not delegates of the Konvent as supreme authority of the VGLvD, but their respective Grand Lodges, and nevertheless subject to none of the directives thereof.

The legislative function, therefore, has been delegated to the Senate. The Konvent is thereby afforded mere cooperative rights: they consist of the authority to call upon the Committee of Arbitration, if in a case of conflicting opinions, no agreement can be arrived at with the Senate, or if the Senate refuses to comply with the Konvent’s petition. The recommendations made by the Committee of Arbitration
can then only be rejected by the Konvent with a two thirds majority. The Konvent, therefore, retains a small legislative authority in a rather negative sense.

I disagree with this sole supervisory nature of the Konvent; it takes no statutory initiative; it defines its attitudes about the laws and resolutions presented to it. That's not enough. The Konvent appears to be the most important of the three bodies of the VGLvD; but it is full of contradictions and fails entirely in living up to its importance. Summary:

1. To be sure, the Konvent elects the Grand Master and two Deputy Grand Masters. every three years. Its choice is limited to the candidates nominated by the Senate and of selecting two such candidates for election. The Grand Master and his two Deputies rotate in the office of Grand Master for the three-year period, with the first Deputy becoming Grand Master for the second year, and the second Deputy becoming Grand Master for the third year. While not serving as Grand Master, the Brothers concerned are Deputy Grand Masters.

2. The Konvent is permitted no legislative initiative, except in cases of extreme emergency, in which it can call upon the assistance of the Committee of Arbitration and its qualified majority to repeal laws already passed by the Senate. For the Konvent this results in the lack of an opportunity to actively participate in deliberating the inception of laws. It is only entitled to legalize and/or ratify the Senate's laws. This means that the Konvent has very little opportunity of contributing to fraternal integration or unification, at least within the realm of legislation. This, though, could be different case, if laws were proposed and debated in the Konvent prior to the resolution thereof. These facts make room for a certain uneasiness about the Konvent possibly being reduced to a sort of
acclimating organization with a rubber stamp function - as characterized by Right Worshipful Brother Minton; the members of the Konvent could lose interest in legislative participation.

3. I fear, that the Konvent's authority is limited, in spite of its lawful designation as the "Fraternal Representation" of which all Masters of Lodges are voting members, and in which they could all personally participate. This important organ, the Konvent, duly empowered by the preamble of the Law and regulations concerning the Konvent, represents the "Fraternal Order" in accordance with the ancient rules, regulations and customs of the Order. It is the voice of all constituent Lodges within the VGLvD, to all regular Brothers throughout the world and to the public. Furthermore, it is the "lawful and sovereign representative of the Brotherhood" and should visualize the quick energy and the vital spirit of the Brotherhood. In a legislative sense, the Konvent is unable to realize such duties, because it is presently and to a large extent rendered ineffective.

The Konvent's main task can therefore be recognized as a fraternal representation. And representational functions are assumed by institutions claiming a specific intrinsic dignity. Above all, representational activities have an integrating effect in any community; integration through personal representation. The dignity bestowed on the representatives of the fraternity lends visible significance to the fraternity's own dignity: it is the concept of humanitarianism, of brotherly love and truth. In its capacity as the voice of the Brotherhood, the Konvent is called upon in a very special sense to express this concept, call it to mind and to document our Masonic Spirit.
We are in no need of systems and tutorial opinions, or disputes as to the proper ways and means. - No, what we need are Brothers, crewmen, no passengers; Brothers who take their fellowman as Brothers, not as rivals or competitors.

In closing may I reiterate: members of Grand Lodge should be fairly conversant with the problems encountered, and must be familiar with the historical development of Masonry in their own jurisdiction, as well as the functioning of Grand Lodge. This ideal situation can only be realized if a concerted program of education on the subject is undertaken by every lodge. And it is the responsibility of every Master of a Lodge, the only member of his Lodge who holds voting membership in Grand Lodge, to promote such a program. And once conversant with Grand Lodge, he will be more than pleased to follow through in his own lodge.

Masonic unity has a long hard road, but with mutual understanding and respect for others, closer personal contacts and sharing of our common work, we are convinced that social and Masonic intercourse will lead to friendships and friendships to recognition and a United Grand Lodge of Germany. Thank you very much!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
United Grand Lodges of Germany (VGLvD)

Grand Mother Lodge of the Three World Globes (1740)
United Grand Lodge of German Freemasons AF&AM (AFAM) (1760)
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“Old Prussian Lodges”
“Humanitarian Grand Lodges”
Reflections

Light in Masonry

Speeches by Right Worshipful Brother (Dr.) Hugo Thomas

Volume II
Proudly presents this compilation of addresses presented over many years by a distinguished member of this Lodge who, through his love for our great fraternity together with serious study and personal application, offered his "Reflections" to many spellbound audiences.

The Lodge again offers these "Reflections" in the sincere hope these will instill in many a greater love and understanding of many of the basic principles of our Fraternity.

To Right Worshipful Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas;

we offer our sincere thanks and heart felt appreciation for sharing "the Light herein contained" with all of your Brethren.
Credit for the original idea and permission to reprint and publish these speeches by Right Worshipful Brother (Dr.) Hugo Thomas belongs to Very Worshipful Brother Derek J. Simpson, Past Master, Past Masters Research Lodge No.950, (1991-1992)


Masonic publications and organizations are invited to refer to, reproduce, extract, copy or reprint the contents of this book providing that the source be indicated and credit given to the original writer. Any proceeds derived from the sale of any portion of this book are to be donated to the American Canadian Grand Lodge Peter M. Rasmussen Charity Fund.
FOREWORD

On February 3rd, 1969, Dr. Hugo Thomas was rejected when his first petition for the degrees of Masonry was placed for ballot. The motivation behind that rejection will never be known. The following day his recommender, in what turned out to be a futile attempt to have the 12-month waiting period before repetitioning waived, called me to arrange a meeting with Dr. Thomas. February is an extremely busy time of the year in our Grand lodge office, and although I rarely take lunch and was very reluctant about getting involved in the matter, I relented, and subsequently met Dr. Thomas for lunch in a quiet restaurant in downtown Frankfurt.

At about the time the dinner crowd started arriving, we both realized it was long past the time to take our leave. We had been thoroughly engrossed in non-stop conversation, oblivious to everything around us, for approximately six hours. It was a fascinating encounter I will never forget. Thirteen months later, Dr. Thomas’ second petition to Frankfurt on the Main Lodge No. 861 was accepted, and he was initiated on March 23rd, 1970.

R.W. Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas’ subsequent service in the various stations in our Lodge, and later in our Grand Lodge, culminating in his serving as Grand Master during 1976-77, are well documented. To even attempt a summary of those years or to expound on his continuing intense dedication and love for Freemasonry, or comment on what evolved into a lifelong friendship, in the Foreword to this edition of some of his writings, would be foolhardy. His works and words speak for themselves.

With unabated enthusiasm for his works, copies of his various papers have been requested by many Brethren over the years. His consummate ability to project and convey his ideas and thoughts in a language other than German, his mother tongue, is remarkable in itself. Of even greater significance, evident in all his writings, is his humanity, his humility, and undying love for Freemasonry and its principles. Read on, dear reader, and join R.W. Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas as he takes you by the hand on an enlightening experience through the realm of what the essence of Freemasonry is all about .. .

Frankfurt, Germany
April 4th, 1994

Fraternally,

Jess Minton, PGM
Grand Secretary
Right Worshipful Brother Hugo Thomas

Past Master, Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861
Past Grand Master, American Canadian Grand Lodge
Past Deputy Grand Master, United Grand Lodges of Germany

A True Mason Among All Mankind
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Of My Own Free Will

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at "Pyramid Lodge No. 869"
on 3rd April 1975)
Of My Own Free Will

(Presented at "Pyramid Lodge No. 869" on 3rd April 1975)

"A word spoken in due season, how good it is."

(Proverbs 15:32)

Worshipful Master and Brethren all;

I thank you for your fraternal invitation and I gratefully acknowledge the honor to communicate with you at this Lodge of Instruction. At this time, I would like to preface our work with some remarks of general interest.

In the beginning of his Masonic travels, a candidate must indicate his willingness to absorb all the lessons taught in the Degree. He must acquire and cultivate the spirit of Brotherhood. He must offer his particular gifts to speculative or Freemasonry for any task a Lodge may require of him. Encompassed in such a favorable climate he ought to grow Masonically. By the same token, Brothers of longer standing membership will grow in stature, provided they make the required efforts. However, Brothers who freely admit personal shortcomings in measuring up to the high standards of Freemasonry are numerous. These searching's of the conscience should or rather must consequently lead to higher levels of life and conduct.

One Brother will go back to the phraseology of the petition to help his fellowman, or whether he has shirked his duties often. Another Brother is somewhat awed by the thought that he owes an immeasurable debt to the two recommenders and avouchers who signed his petition. Such a Brother states quite definitely that he must try to live up
to the high opinion they had of his character. Still another Brother will consider his Lodge's good opinion of him must be sustained, because he was honored with a unanimous ballot. He might wonder whether an Investigation Committee would recommend him again should he petition anew.

These mental interrogations indicate the Brother is drawing to make sacrifices and perform duties that he may have previously shunned. To the Brother with regrets because he has been a passive, inactive member, one can order the antidote, of steering him to the opposite course. There is always room in the Lodge, especially set up for Brothers who are constructive with their suggestions, who are desirous of having and receiving Light, more Light, who promote peace and harmony, and who are willing to go far beyond the line of duty to repay, in part, their voluntarily assumed duty to Freemasonry.

My Brethren, you did not honor Freemasonry when you were admitted into the Temple for the first time. Masonry honored you and you are indebted to the Fraternity for this honor, it can never be repaid in full. The will to work, act and part, outlines a principle, which is especially applicable to the endeavors of a Freemason. Responsibility is the obligation one is accountable for and the fulfillment of which we must squarely accept. To respect and honor this educational process is to be mature, to implement and fulfill it, is to be a true Mason, and for each Brother to do more than his share is to be noble. . Brethren! "to these duties you are bound by the most sacred ties.”

When I decided to name this presentation:

OF MY OWN FREE WILL

it is presented with apologies for its omissions but with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something, at least achieve its primary purpose, the stimulation of a new increased interest in Masonic education, to establish values
and to perceive a deeper meaning of some facets of our Masonic philosophy, ever bearing in mind, on the volume of our Masonic life these bright words are written, from which every side blazes an ineffable splendor; duty and work, truth and faith, relief and charity.

Freemasonry is a voluntary association of men, which is entitled for doing only those things voluntarily, which they desire. It is our job, to instill in our Brothers the desire to fulfill their voluntary duties daily anew, in every day.

The most devastating and furious enemy of Freemasonry can reside within its own bosom. This malignant disease is characterized by indifference, intolerance and ignorance. Masonry teaches the practice of good morals and accepted standards of behavior, leaving interpretations of right and wrong to the individual conscience.

We believe in the equal rights of all men and the freedom of opportunity. We know that all are not born equal because the Almighty has seen fit, to bestow upon some the ability of genius and on others, lesser ability. However, all who seek it, equality of opportunity, will receive it; if one wishes to improve oneself, an effort in that regard can be rewarded. "As a citizen you are enjoined to be exemplary in your civil duties." We have all memorized that statement; consequently we have to live what we have learned.

Certainly, as Freemasons we will not agree on all candidates or propositions placed upon the ballot, but if we carefully investigate the matters to be voted upon so as to be knowledgeably informed in regard thereto and then Ballot, we will make our determination known in the best possible way.

We all agree, politics has no place in Masonry, but politics is nothing more than the art of persuading others to support our point of view. And all Masons, having been obligated through the three degrees in the belief and support
of freedom, equality and Brotherly affection, should be able to influence others in matters of right. We Masons as individuals, who believe in the rights of man and who believe, that disagreements, when they cannot be settled by argument and persuasion, should then be resolved Masonically. There are men, and one sometimes meets them, who reach the evening of life a little disappointed that no one has asked them to join our Fraternity. They sometimes wonder why it is that with other honors coming their way, with their services in demand for this and that social enterprise, with the apparent regard and esteem of their fellows, they have never been invited to enter our mystic circle.

Freemasonry is almost, if not quite alone in refusing to proselytize, to sell anyone the idea of membership. But, after all, Masonic funds are put to good use; the more members we have who pay initiation fees and dues, the better will our work be done. It seems logical that we should seek out men who would enjoy the Masonic association, and suggest to them that they might become a member. A year or two ago some well meaning Brothers in Germany and the United States were dallying around with the idea of introducing proposals to permit solicitation. Lately little has been heard of these proposals, and it seems likely, that wiser counsels have insured their natural death. We do not guard this landmark simply because it is a landmark, simply because we have agreed to guard it. There are practical reasons too.

We have many defections from our ranks. Some men enter the Craft, take the three Degrees and from lack of real interest in instructions, gradually fall away. Others go through the chairs, attain the rank of Past Master, but have been so little gripped by the realities of the Craft that when the excitement is over and the Past Master's Jewel pinned in place, they cease to be active. Others, on changing their
place of residence, take no steps to resume attendance when they have settled down. A few and they are probably very few; indeed, resign in dudgeon or disappointment, unable to get on with their fellows. Some are struck off for non-payment of dues.

Many who leave us could be saved, but when one considers how very highly most of us value the privilege of Freemasonry, the number who do cease to be active Freemasons, seems too high. And yet these are all men who have themselves taken the initiative. They have themselves, by their own approach, and uninfluenced by the solicitation of other people, sought to be received into the Craft. They cannot say that someone else persuaded them. They cannot plead that they were given a wrong idea of the institution and so induced to join. If they are not at home, they have no one to blame but themselves. For the ordinary society, membership for a few years, resignation, then a further period of membership is not abnormal. But once a man is a Freemason he remains a Freemason. He may or may not remain active; he may not remain in good standing, but lie is nevertheless a Freemason. Death can sever the bond, but neither expulsion nor resignation can dispense from the provisions of the obligations, which are taken willingly, and without reservation. They are obligations, which it would not be proper to persuade a man to take. The preconceived opinion, which we require, must be a genuine one; the sincere wish, based on worthy motives, to be numbered among us must not be a wish deliberately implanted by someone else. Only if this is so, can we feel assured that men come to us of their own free will and accord, and only if they do this, can we be assured that their interest is likely to be genuine enough for us, to be able to rely on its permanence.

Whatever we do, we will lose some members, although we shall not always lose their sympathy. Men in the course
of their adult lives do change; the Craft is not the only influence acting upon them. A man may become generally embittered, may lose his faith, may follow gods of which the Craft knows nothing. A man may become solitary, may cease to feel the need of adult male companionship, may find himself no longer in sympathy with our objectives, may feel he has discovered a conflict between our tenets and his own religious faith.

These men we lose, and it is normal wastage. But we should not lose men because they have been induced to join us in the first place, because their desire has been influenced rather than spontaneous. We are wise to scrutinize our candidates carefully. "Easy come" can soon develop into "easy go" and the Masonic Craft is no short-term diversion for the unthoughtful. Our mysteries and privileges are to be ensured to worthy men alone, and enjoyed forever.

When balloting, our virtue, honor and reputation are concerned; when spreading the cement of Charity and Brotherly affection we implant deeply and firmly in our hearts, those foundation stones of principle, on which to erect our Masonic Faith, which all the storms of misfortune and all the powers and temptations shall not prevail against.

My Brothers, keep in mind: "sense shines with a double luster when set in humility."

In our daily life, we must apply the principles of temperance to all facets of our dealings with our fellowman, most especially our Brothers. If we ask ourselves the question, and the answers being in the affirmative, are we not exercising temperance?

Do we show moderation by not flying off the handle when our Brother does not measure up to our expectation? Do we carry out our Lodge assignments without complaining? Do we, when on an investigating committee, carry out our
responsibilities, without letting personal prejudices interfere with our duty?

Temperance is one of the cardinal virtues, one we should practice and emulate in our daily life, for such things as "joy, love, peace, mildness, faith, self control" are attributes worthy of attainment. The beauty of the Masonic Degrees, the fellowship within our Masonic Lodges, and our charitable efforts are enlightening, and extremely important, to be sure.

However, we have additional obligations, not the least of which is to participate in making our fraternal views and tenets known to those about us, by our actions and the way we lead our daily lives. Thereby, we will become involved as individuals in those problems round about us, which we know are right and good. As we live and act, so will we be known.

In closing, I owe gratitude for the famous remark of the French philosopher "Voltaire", who stated: "I disagree sharply with your opinion, but will defend your right to voice your opinion with my life. " And quoting "Abraham Lincoln": "I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true; I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the Light I have received I must stand with anybody who stands right, stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong."

/s/Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Land Grand Senior Warden
American Canadian Land Grand Lodge
What Came You Here To Do

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at the "Past Masters' Night at Truth and Friendship Lodge No. 828. 10th January 1979)
What Came You Here To Do?

And now, my brother,
What came you here to do?
When you joined our mystic circle,
Had you a purpose in your heart
To be of service to your fellow man
And perform your allotted part?
Or come you out of curiosity
Or motive personal in view?
Tell me, brother, on the square,
What came you here to do?
Have you failed to grasp the meaning
Of the symbols of our chart?
Have you learned to subdue your passions
And make improvements in your art?
Do you always, always uphold the trusts
On which we firmly stand
Teaching the Fatherhood of God
And the Brotherhood of man?
Have you been willing to aid the brother
When life surges fierce and wild?
Have you offered cheer and comfort
To the Mason's, widow, wife, and child?
If you have done so, my brother,
You are a Mason good and true,
And can give a correct answer
What came you here to do?
"Anonymous"
What Came You Here To Do?

(Presented at the "Past Masters' Night at Truth and Friendship Lodge No. 828. 10th January 1979)

Worshipful Master, my Brothers:

This evening we have much to be thankful for to the Worshipful Master of this well governed "Truth and Friendship" Lodge No. 828, Worshipful Brother Billy W. Harris, to the Past Masters, and to the Wardens and Brethren of this or any other Lodge, for once again impressing upon our minds and consciences the beauty of ritual and the meaningfulness of our Masonic ties. I regard being here tonight as a great privilege, and am deeply grateful for the opportunity to commune with my brethren especially under such auspicious circumstances: a Past Masters Night in the Degree of an Entered Apprentice.

One of the first questions any candidate encounters when he is introduced to the mysteries of Freemasonry is:

"Whence came you . . . and in whom do you put your trust?"

Truly a thought provoking, soul searching, demanding question asked of every man and Mason. And there seems to be a driving force that makes us ask over and over:

"What came you here to do?"

Upon being initiated, and later advanced, into our ancient and honorable Fraternity, - and mark well: into its mysteries! The heart and mind of the Brother is prepared to receive them; he becomes intellectually fitted to comprehend them and to answer the above given questions. However, the rough ashlar must be trued, squared and polished for its appropriate place in the structure of the Masonic edifice. All the forces at man's disposal are a Mason's working tools.
Morality, sympathy and friendship are such forces which first unite and then cement our Brotherhood. A friendship, culminating in that peculiar Brotherly Love, sealed by most solemn pledges ever made by man to man. No Brother can ever forget or ignore these strongest ties that ever united the hearts in the bonds of intimate trusting Brotherhood, without violating his vows or betraying his trust.

In our Fraternity a degree is a principle in action, and the beginning "on the step" is essentially a symbol of rectitude, serving as a guideline, when we are charged to inculcate the three great duties: to God, to our neighbor and to ourselves. These duties tend to strengthen man in his daily conduct, to build up his willpower against evil and temptation, to avoid all irregularity and integrity, his self-respect and fidelity. This Masonic life is a great and solemn dispensation. Yet it is also graciously cognizant of the frailties of human nature and man's proneness to error. We, therefore, never measure our progress by the degrees we receive, rather than the degrees with which we throw our influence into applied Masonic teachings and education. It is not possible for everyone to be great or accomplish great things. But we can all work to the limit of our power, meet and master the problem of the hour, and be thankful for our blessings. The resources are inexhaustible, and "To whom much is given, of him shall be much required". This requires a special mental and spiritual preparation, a never ending process, beginning in our heart, to absorb that what we term Masonic Light.

To give light to a Brother, a man must consume himself; display and disperse energy. A Teacher who puts no energy into his lectures cannot attract and gather students. In time all men die, but some rust out while others burn out. Those who burn out may go more quickly, but at least they go gloriously. The Initiate who kneels at the alter may have the candle of his soul ignited by the enthusiasm of those who give him Masonic light, and by touch with that light of new
truth. To give light we must burn. No lukewarm Brother ever inspires the soul of his Brethren to higher endeavors and aspirations. May the gentle illumination of the Masonic light shine into the far places and illuminate the pathway of the Craftsmen of lodges forever. This is a solid Foundation and a Freemason's daily challenge: to have faith which is Wisdom, to implant hope which is Strength, and to practice Masonic Charity which is Beauty. Only by raising our sentiment to its just elevation, can we comprehend Freemasonry's purpose in this world. Let us never defer nor neglect it, because we will never pass this way again. Brethren, keep your feet on the ground and your head in the clouds; if we brought Masonry up-to-date today, it would be again out-of-date tomorrow. I therefore believe, all of us are and remain Apprentices in this Terrestrial Lodge.

I now salute our newly initiated Brother who has just commenced a journey toward more and further Light; who has received as a symbolic honor his lambskin, and who has been invested with a titular honor, to be called "Brother". The highest honor in our Order, then, is no one special title. Each title indicates true accomplishment that is honored in Masonic ranks or titles. If the effort and spirit are high, the resulting honor, whatever its terminology, is the highest honor of Masonry; always bearing in mind: humility and education make a Mason. We must always remember, the chief mission of a Lodge and the members of a lodge is for the mental, spiritual and social improvement of ourselves and others, services to God, the country, the family and humanity; our sole purpose is to initiate good men and make them better! Freemasonry has no other purpose! We work on a spiritual and sublime level!

On this traveling East we pass several doors, each opening upon something very important. To these doors we must have the fitting Key which will open them when needed. Call the doors anything you want.
There is the first door which opens on Courage; it takes a while to make the right key for that, forged with faith and with trust. Then we reach the door called work. This one does not open to any old key; we may have to find just the right one. Sooner or later we will find the right material with perseverance and devotion. There is a very special door called Believing, it does not much matter in what we believe as long as we do, knowing that the GAOTU is constantly with us, and to HIM we all must render that awe and reverence that a created man must give to his Creator. To open the elusive door called happiness we may fashion even a hundred keys in the course of our lifetime, because we all have different standards and demands and wants. To many the search for the right key goes on and on a full lifetime.

The door called Brotherly Love is not a one-way door; it opens outward and inward. This door permits us to unlock ourselves, so that we can be loved, and, more important, permits us to love our fellowman. The key to the door of Learning can be made by anyone. Learning is not wisdom, and it is not entirely in books or in formal education; it is what we derive from living. The most important door of all, which opens upon spiritual understanding only, is Masonic Charity and Tolerance. It takes years of understanding and constant searching to find the proper ingredients to make this sublime key. But once we have made and used it, nothing can deeply trouble us again. For the key of spiritual understanding unlocks the ultimate door, that leads to the same eternal goal, the intimate knowledge of what is good and true and just.

Let us continue to search and find each door with the proper key in our hand and heart that leads to the Mystery of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of GOD.

My Brothers, your individual example as a votary of our Royal Art is one of our free world's greatest strengths. You are members of a lifeline that stretches back to the
beginning of recorded history, a lifeline that brings man out of the dark into God's light. If we walk away from the light, our shadows fall before us. The further we walk, the further they extend the shadows of anxieties, fears, false concepts, if we walk toward the light, the shadows fall behind us and their burden lessens. Finally, if we stand under the light, they disappear. As you stand under that eternal Light, you set an example and you send a message to your fellow men of strength and hope and faith that is the ultimate contribution of Freemasonry to the future of mankind.

In closing, please listen to the Masonic confession of the Honorable Brother Benjamin Franklin:

"Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold or silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another: sympathy begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness and tolerance begets the attitude of a true Mason, and these are the wages of a Mason."

So help us God, and make us steadfast to perform the same!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
American Canadian Grand Lodge
I am the Bible

Just use me I am the Bible,
I am God's wonderful library.
I am always -- and above all -- The Truth.
To the weary Pilgrim, I am the good strong staff,
To the one who sits in gloom, I am a glorious light.
To those who stoop beneath heavy burden, I am sweet rest.
To him who has lost his way, I am a safe guide.
To those who have been hurt by sin, I am healing balm.
To those who are distressed by the storms of life, I am an anchor.
To those who suffer in lonely solitude, I am a cool, soft hand resting on a fevered brow.
O, child of man, to best defend me, just use me.

Author Unknown
Work and Receive
Masters Wages

by
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 30th September 1975 at
"Triangle" Lodge No. 834)
Worshipful Master and Brethren all;

I thank you for your fraternal invitation, and I gratefully acknowledge the honor to communicate with you at this:

"Lodge of Instruction"

At this time, I would like to preface our work with some remarks of general interest.

Every Masonic communication is a day of happiness when carefully prepared and conducted, but only so far as we individually make it so. We are taught to live and promulgate the teachings of Freemasonry in a universal sense, as a science in the original meaning of the word "accumulated knowledge systematized for the purpose of discovering general truths".

To a Mason those truths are the laws of moral and ethical behavior. These are summed up in the principal and most valuable tenets of the Fraternity. Freemasonry is progressive only as the individual Mason applies his knowledge of moral and spiritual principles to his own life and to his community, only as his character becomes "more effective by successive stages". Freemasonry does not classify and codify knowledge of morality and ethics in textbooks, which only scholarly minds would find challenging. Paraphrasing our Past Land Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother H. Dale Walker:

"Our daily life is our playground as Masons!" Freemasonry has epitomized the science or the "Know How" of a purposeful moral life in the image of the builders' art. And especially our "Working Tools" and implements are a
vivid symbol of a universal moral principle. And they are this graphic simplification of the "science" of right living, which has always been one of the chief attractions to the men who call themselves Masons. Therefore we must learn from our personal experience, just how to strike our blows to suit the material we are working on. We have to adjust the force of our stroke, the angle of our blows and the number of them for the different kinds of ashlars.

Thus Freemasonry shall have no more important goal than to mold and inspire each individual who knocks on its door, "of his own free will and accord!"

My Brethren! - You did not honor Freemasonry when you where admitted into the Temple for the first time. Masonry honored you and you are indebted to the Fraternity for this honor, "it can never be repaid in full."

The will to work, act and part outlines a principle which is especially applicable to the endeavors of a Freemason. Responsibility is the obligation one is accountable for and the fulfillment of which we must squarely accept. To respect and honor this educational process is to be mature, to implement and fulfill it, is to be a true Mason, and for each Brother to do more than his share is to be noble - Brothers - "to these duties you are bound by the most sacred ties."

When I decided to name this presentation; "Work and Receive Master's Wages" - - it is presented with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something, at least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new increased interest in Masonic education, to establish values and to perceive a deeper meaning of some facets of our Masonic philosophy; ever bearing in mind, on the volume of our Masonic life these bright words are written, from which on every side blazes an ineffable splendor: duty and work, truth and faith, relief and charity.
 Thoughts are the parents of deeds. We are generally careful about our actions and sometimes too careless about our thoughts.

How to live is a problem each of us must solve: shortly, let your moral life be right and all will be well! How? Man cannot work without tools. In material or operative building as well as in moral or speculative building, one of the most important tools is the square. The instrument called the Square in operative building has its counterpart in moral building, the faculty called the Conscience. As the Square is applied by the operative to his work, so are we to apply our conscience to our work of life building. In this sense we remain Apprentices throughout our whole life. In the Lodge we are directed for Light to what are called "The Three Great Lights and the Three Lesser Lights": they are briefly, Revelation and Creation. Through these, every Brother receives the light to guide him in his work as a Mason and builder of the Temple. Through them the Eternal Spirit communicates with the spirit of man. Creation is a loving nurse to the mind of man. At every turn it invites his latent faculties into action.

We remain first of all Apprentices when we clothe ourselves with the badge of a Mason, a symbol of innocence and purity; for innocence is a shield to virtue, and purity disarms temptation. With our Gauge we measure our time to the respective duties of life, giving to each it's due time and attention. Our Gavel enables us to reduce the irregularities of pride, passion and prejudice within our heart, so that we may become like unto a perfect Ashlar.

We are always Apprentices and taught to serve, working freely to the great plan of the Divine Architect, burning with the fervency that overcomes all difficulties, and zealously producing from the seeds of Truth imparted to us in every Degree, fruitful works of Charity, Brotherly Love and Truth.
As Apprentices we are not satisfied with faith and belief only. As we mature in Masonry we seek the light of knowledge, education and experience. Then we pass on the degree of Craftsman, and passing onward, the Craftsman is raised to the Lodge of the Master. But we still remain Apprentices, particularly when we are to square our actions in accordance with the dictates of our Conscience; when we apply the Level of humility to our heart and build on the everlasting rock of Truth, and constantly test our life work by the Plumb Line of uprightness. Let us gratefully acknowledge we are permanently apprenticed. And let us never neglect nor defer to adorn ourselves with an attentive Ear, a silent Tongue and with a faithful Breast.

My Brothers, I now ask you three serious questions:

1. What will you get out of Freemasonry?
2. What induced you to become a Master Mason?
3. What are a Brother's Wages?

What will you get Out Of Freemasonry?

A thought provoking question of this type can only be answered in a personal way. Every worthwhile endeavor we put our hands to, should remind us, that we will get from it as much as we give to it. If masonry only knows something other men do not know, then we have it. If it is a ring, a tie tack or a lapel pin, then we have it. If it is more than this, we can have it, but we must seek it. We must give of ourselves. "You will get out of Masonry in direct proportion to what you put into Masonry". I have heard it a thousand times and have probably repeated it a like number of times.

Is it true? - Have you received as you have given to Masonry? As for me, I have received a thousand fold more in friendship, in learning and in my faith than I have
contributed. However, both are incalculable, so I will say I was lucky. I could test the truth of the saying in many places.

When I was raised, the first effect of Masonry on me was to give me a social outlet other than that of the Government or the Army. I had fellowship with people who welcomed me as a Brother. They invited me to work with them. They welcomed me to their organization and gave me a place in the organization. I soon learned more and became a part of the ritual team. I was receiving in a much greater proportion than I could give.

I discovered that Masonry transcends language barriers, where the saying "to travel in foreign countries, to work and receive", was a reality; where former wartime enemies became closer than friends, they were and are Brothers.

As a soldier, at a post with only few military personnel, I found the fellowship at the local Lodges as heart warming and hospitable as any I had experienced. They also found work for my temporarily idle Masonic hands and I again found the Brotherly affection I had known in Masonry.

Here I have been elected to serve my Brothers. From local work we have become part of the Grand Lodge and through it received membership in the United Grand Lodges of Germany. I made many close personal friends across this country and even across the world. In the years of privileged service I have been honored by being permitted to obligate hundreds of Brothers. They have included mechanics, house painters, a major, merchants, clergymen, doctors, teachers, members of the armed forces and men from many other occupations. All these men have two things in common: they are men and they are Masons. All of this began because I was told what I could get out of Masonry. Here in the Lodge I found the beginning of Masonic wisdom and knowledge and I believe it is my duty to pass it on to others.
Since my portion is great, I owe a great deal. It is like all love: the more we give away, the more we receive. My Brothers: What do we get out of Freemasonry? The Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God. It is available to all who do as I have done. We must all try to give in direct proportion to what we receive.

*What Induced You To Become A Master Mason?*

This is a question we often hear asked, and often hear answered. But, I fear, it has become routine. We may hear the question and answer with our ears but not with our minds. Let us stop and ponder for a moment on each part of this-answer, for each part has its own significance for us. "That I might obtain the Master's Word" . . . Thousands of pages have been written and thousands of hours filled with speeches on the ancient and modern mysteries of the Master's Word. Some of the Secrets are reserved for the Lodge room; others are at your command through the Grand Lodge Library or other reading, research and discussion. My purpose is to concentrate on other parts of the answer, parts which demand more immediate action.

"Travel in foreign countries, work and receive Master's wages," and be thereby better enabled to support myself and family". . . These are restrictive, if not somewhat selfish motives. But looking at it from the positive side, we discover that the words travel in foreign countries tell us that the Master Mason of the Middle Ages was one of the first of common men to be concerned with the world at large, more than any comparable group. Unlike others, the Master Mason traveled to wherever the cathedrals and castles were being built.

The great cathedrals he built were the highest aspiration of the civilization of which he was so important a
part. His reward was not alone in wages but also in the glory of the great structure which he built. We Masons have long known that we are involved in the whole world and that the eyes of the world are upon us.

To digress for a moment from the philosophical, let me remind you that this "travel" is a real thing today. I urge you to travel and to visit the Craft as you do. How much better our relations will be if more Masons exchange visits. How much better it will be if sojourning Masons will take advantage of their travel to affiliate locally.

Our Grand Lodge permits dual membership, unlike many other Grand Lodges that try to hang onto their members. The building of King Solomon's Temple was an international effort. That Temple was the expression of the faith of the entire nation of Israel and the cooperation of her neighbors. Certainly in today's world "no man is an island'. We as Masons are committed to the general welfare in so many ways and have so much to offer.

"And contribute to the relief of distressed worthy Master Masons, their widows and orphans". These last words define, in rather limited form, our duty and privilege of charity. We strongly believe in mutual aid. In past years, on the farm or in simple village life, mutual aid was a real thing. You clearly knew who deserved help and what they needed. But today, the simple human needs may be hidden under a haystack of forms and questionnaires or buried in computer programs. No longer do many of us raise our own food or any part of what we eat. We cannot help ourselves, much less help others or share with them. We are all locked into a vast and impersonal system. One of the great challenges to Freemasonry is for us to tear down that vague curtain of impersonality which threatens all of us. Freemasonry is most emphatically a man-to-man relationship. Our organization is one of the world's most democratic and most flexible. Our officers change every year. Nobody can
build up a dynasty or an extended vested interest in a job or title.

Those friendly handshakes, that eloquent title "Brother", are indelible trademarks of our Craft. Our Lodges and Grand Lodges are merely pipelines or mechanisms through which we channel this brotherly love and focus it on the needy. There are other and ample evidences of our charities to our selves. Our charities to others are equally important and far more significant to the world at large.

A man's value to the world is in direct proportion to the unselfish service he renders. In the heart of every true Mason there is something, call it instinct, principle or what you may that does not permit him to be so well satisfied with those things he does for others. That is why all members of the Craft now living, or those who shall live, and shall owe a debt of gratitude to those who devote their lives to the teachings of Masonry.

When we talk about speculative or Free Masonry, we are automatically faced with a third challenging question:

*What Are A Brother's Wages?*

What do we hear about ourselves when we sit on the sidelines or elsewhere in a Lodge Room? Are we not continually being told to keep busy? We are Craftsmen, which is another name for working men. A set of tools and an apron are handed to us and the opening ceremonies are one long reminder to us, of our duties and functions. The Worshipful Master is there to see that we get work and keep at work and make no trouble about it.

He draws designs for what we are to do on his Trestle board. But are not the majority of the speeches delivered from the East and directed at us? And do not they nearly
always exhort us to be busier than ever, or else expatiate on our duties?

Recently I fell to thinking about this, one night, after Lodge, and after I reached home about midnight. While meditating, the clock struck Low Twelve; and Low Twelve you know is not the time when we pick out the cheer fullest subjects to think about. Now, I shall not deny that for a little while I fell into a mood to croak at things, such as wondering what a Brother gets out of the evenings he spends away from home doing Lodge work. It came across my mind that as a matter of fact the great and cheerful subject of wages occupies about as much space in the Temple as the serious subject of the work we have to do. I also thought that we are Free Masons and that if ever the spirit seizes us after listening to orders, instructions and speeches from the East, we can get up in the side lines and talk back at the East on the subject of wages. Please do not misunderstand me: I made up my mind to think about the wages of a Master Mason, and that is a very cheerful subject, and payday is a real holiday.

You may reply to me, the work we do in the Lodge is real work, but they do not give us any real corn, oil or wine; and this almost sounds as if no man could question it. Wages are that which the Craftsmen own in the things they make and no Lodge has a moral right to expect its members to work for it unless it pays them their wages if any be due. What are the wages of a Master Mason? Let us forget about the language of symbolism and emblems, because the wages we receive are in every full and actual sense, completely real. I shall not recite the complete list of wages paid, but remind you of only a few of them.

First: The honor and satisfaction of being a full member in an ancient, honorable, worldwide Fraternity.

Second: As a regular Lodge worker you have learned by heart and therefore have in your permanent possession
the Ritual, which is worth a very high price, because of the language, the wisdom, the beauty in it.

**Third:** Where two Masons meet, though they have never seen each other before, are at once friends and Brothers, because they have traveled the same road and received the same Light in Masonry, which you have.

**Fourth:** You find in the Lodge itself, a large group among whom you find associates, companions or close friends, with whom you are united into one sacred band or Society of Friends and Brothers.

**Fifth:** Whatever your Lodge and Freemasonry accomplishes, a part of it is your own; because Masons compose a Lodge and you are a part of it.

Sixth: You have a social security of another kind from that offered by any government but of as high a value if you are unfortunate, relief will come; and if you pass on, your descendants will not be forgotten.

Seventh: We have the enjoyment of many social and regular communications. Therefore when the Master sends us out to work in the morning, or in the beginning of the Masonic year, let us reply that we will go, if at night we receive wages of this kind.

Worshipful Master and Brethren all! All who are satisfied with the answers given are invited to embark upon our Masonic ship, the greatest and best, and the most solid trawler!

For one thing Masons have developed a case of mental allergy to the words greatest, best, most. There are no books or formulae to explain or describe the "wonder" of our Masonic message and no one makes his journey alone.
Therefore, we must conclude that in seeking the greatest, best and most, we see much humor and gentleness in the littleness of many greatest, best and most things, and feel much happiness and fraternal understanding in discovering the beauty and importance of small things. Our Masonic ship is a very special kind of ship, a treasure ship, it's wealth is measured in a unique collection of tenets, virtues, symbols and tools, a testimonial to a very special group of passengers, linked together by their cable-tow and a mystic tie. The crew of this Masonic ship has been carefully investigated prior to being hired by a unanimous secret ballot. They are the backbone of this ship, and without disparaging or belittling the brave captains, if only the worshipful and illustrious captains get all the credit for the glories of the journey, this would unjustly and seriously disparage all the others, navigators and wardens, crewmen and deacons and stewards, deckhands and craftsmen whose names are carefully recorded in the log books and passenger lists. They are artists, the builders, the poets and thinkers, the promoters and servants who have always been happy to "sign on and in" for any part of the journey for a low pay, high esteem kind of fringe benefit. Not all took part in every trip. Some have signed in only occasionally. Others have chosen to remain in the background. Each in his time, and his way has contributed his share of greatness to the full measure of our treasure and to our mutual enrichment and enhancement.

On the bridge, preparing to sail into the next decade, we recall the words of some of our famous Right Worshipful Commanders: "Brotherly Love" by Right Worshipful Brothers H. Dale Walker and Louie Conine: "More Light from Masonry" by Right Worshipful Brother Gordon Greenwood; "A Stronger Jurisdiction Through Knowledgeable Brothers" by Right Worshipful Brother Burton L. Clyde: "Let Us Think, Speak, and Act Masonically by Right Worshipful Brother Gunther Gall: "Solidarity" by Right Worshipful Brother Burton L. Clyde.
All aboard, Brothers! You cannot win tomorrow's game with the points you made yesterday. And the Bell of Hope, Faith, and Love, tolls loud and clear, we are called from Refreshment to Labor!

/s/ Hugo Thomas

Hugo Thomas Deputy Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Masonic Brotherhood

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at "Nahe Temple" Lodge No. 824 on 20 March 1978)
MASONIC BROTHERHOOD

(Presented at "Nahe Temple" Lodge No. 824 on 20 March 1978)

Worshipful Master Grand Lodge Officers past and present,

At this time, while communicating in a consecrated Temple, a house of Light, dedicated to virtue, benevolence and Freemasonry, I am grateful to you. Worshipful Brother Montry Allamon, for inviting me into your truly well governed "Nahe Temple" Lodge No. 824; and I humbly acknowledge the honor to share Masonic fellowship with all Brothers here in attendance at this Lodge of Instruction. I would like to preface our work with some remarks of general interest.

In the beginning a candidate must indicate his willingness to absorb all the lessons taught in the Degrees. He must acquire and cultivate the spirit of Brotherhood, and this requires special qualifications. In a larger and more important sense they determine a man's fitness to remain a Mason. They are the qualifications of a Mason, not merely of a man who desires to become a Mason. They always remain in force; therefore we do not out grow them when we pass the ordeal of the ballot. By a candidate's qualifications is consequently meant what values or worth he may possess to fit him for a place in the fellowship of Masons. While Freemasonry remains true to its own fundamental principles and exercises due and proper care in the selection and training of its candidates it has nothing to fear of the future. We may not experience any great membership gains, but our strength, our influence and our usefulness do not depend upon mere numbers, but upon the quality, the loyalty and the devotion of its active members. It is a great danger that some lodges with membership problems are sometimes
tempted to let down the bars and to accept as candidates men who are unqualified for membership. We cannot afford carelessness in the screening of our candidates. Encompassed in such a favorable climate Brothers ought to grow Masonically; they ought to always remember the Masonic phrase they repeated on the night of their Initiation, "art or arts, part or parts, point or points of the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry"; arts mean the knowledge or things made known, parts the degrees in which Masonry is divided, and the points the rules and usages of our Order. By the same token Brothers of longer standing membership will grow in stature, provided they make the required efforts. However, Brothers who freely admit personal shortcomings in measuring up to the high standards of Freemasonry are numerous. These searching's of the conscience must consequently lead to higher levels of life and conduct. One Brother will go back to the phraseology of the petition he signed; another Brother is somewhat awed by the thought that he owes an immeasurable debt to the two recommenders and avouchers who signed his petition; still another Brother will consider his Lodge's high opinion of him must be sustained, because he was honored with a unanimous ballot. He might wonder whether an investigating committee would recommend him again should he petition anew.

These mental interrogations indicate, the Brother is trying to make sacrifices and performs duties that he may have previously shunned. To the Brother with regrets because he has been a passive, inactive member, one can order the antidote of steering the opposite course; there is always room in the Lodge set up for Brothers who are constructive with their suggestions, who are desirous of having and receiving more light, who promote peace and harmony, and who are willing to go far beyond the line of duty to repay in part at least their voluntary assumed duty to Freemasonry. The teachings of our fraternal Order demand the best that is in us. They demand the sanctification of our
lives, the purification of our souls and the ordination of our spirit, but it is by our actions that the world shall know us. Our actions are our mark upon our work just as surely as were those left by our ancient Brethren upon the stones of the great cathedrals.

My Brethren: you did not honor Freemasonry when you were admitted into these consecrated walls for the first time. Masonry honored you and you are indebted to the Fraternity for this honor, it can never be repaid in full. The will to work, act and part outlines a principle which is especially applicable to the endeavors of a speculative, that is a Freemason. Humility and education is our obligation we are accountable for and its fulfillment we must squarely accept. To respect and honor this educational process is to be mature, to implement and to realize it, is to maintain and support our specific Masonic way of life, and for each Brother to do more than his share is to be noble. Brothers, "to these duties you are bound by the most sacred ties".

When I decided to name this presentation:

*Masonic Brotherhood.*

it is presented with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something, at least achieve its primary purpose the stimulation of a new increased interest in Masonic education, to establish or rather revive values and to perceive a deeper meaning of some facets of our Masonic philosophy, ever bearing in mind that a Lodge meeting is called for the sole purpose of promoting the growth of our own spiritual life and of our fellowmen . . . and for no other purpose!

Masons are Brothers by a double tie and among Brothers there can exist no invidious distinctions. A king is reminded, that although a crown adorns his head, yet the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and is no better than that of the meanest of his subjects. Men in inferior stations are taught to love their
superiors, when they see them divested of their grandeur, and condescending to trace the paths of wisdom, and follow virtue, assisted by those of a rank beneath them. Virtue is true nobility, and wisdom is the channel by which it is directed and conveyed. Wisdom and virtue distinguish Masons.

If I may pay a fitting tribute to a thrilling exemplification of Masonic Brotherhood in a realistic and sincere adjustment of one human being to another, and not as a matter of sentiment. I am reminded of the Apostle Peter, who in his first epistle advised the laying aside of all malice, hypocrisies and evil speaking, exhorted: "Honor all men. Love the Brotherhood and fear God." Brotherhood or genuine caring for Brothers is our potential and powerful tool to build a better world. The Honorable President Brother Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed it all too well in a prayer: "Grant us Brotherhood, oh Lord, not only for this day, but for all our years; a Brotherhood not of words, but of acts and noble deeds".

More than ever before I am convinced that Freemasonry has given us a new opportunity to promote the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. Heaven knows too well, how much we need to do this. Oh yes, I realize, that the trouble with opportunity is, that it always comes disguised as hard work. This opportunity of a Brother inculcates his responsibility to the Craft in general and to his own Lodge in particular. "There is no right without a paralleled duty". And you cannot practice Masonic Brotherhood without knowing the basic structure and functions of your Lodge, its local problems, its various projects and activities; without realizing the importance of regular Lodge attendance and willingness to participate in Lodge work both within and without the walls of the Temple. Therefore, let us prove worthy to the fulfillment of our obligation to our Brothers and fellowmen by the improvement of ourselves and by uniting our collective fraternal efforts,
when there are no Masonic prohibitions to prevent it. Many of us doubtless have the ability to keep our immediate surroundings busy in other ways. Some of us, however, I pray, God has tamed to be an apostle and contender for our noble precepts and valuable tenets.

I see Masonic Brotherhood in a realistic sense, not as a superficial matter of sentiment. Brotherhood is a sincere and realistic adjustment of one human being to another. One may not agree with his neighbor about many things, but I can always be just to him, do him no harm, speak no evil of him and wish him well. Honest differences of opinion should not separate us, nor cause us to hate one another. A soldier on the battlefield does not inquire about the beliefs of his brother as they prepare to make a common sacrifice. It is true this illustration relates to time of crises. But are we not at a crisis point right now?

We all want a better world in which to live. Military, political and diplomatic successes alone have not brought about world peace. Losers in these contests never forget. There is only one way to achieve real peace on earth, and that is through the instrumentality of genuine Brotherhood among all mankind. It is more than a dream, it is our only hope. To realize it, we have got to start some time. Let me put it this way; "All of this leads me to say that God has given us a new opportunity to promote the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Let us not destroy each other's attempt and right to worship God and to strengthen our Brotherhood through listening to unsubstantiated assertions, past shortcomings and current ignorance. Rather, let us prove worthy of each other's confidence even though we have different approaches to the fulfillment of our obligations to God and our fellowman by the improvement of ourselves and our institution with collective fraternal efforts."
We are gathered in this Lodge hall in the spirit of Brotherhood; a friendly gathering of Brothers, each wishing to understand one another just a little better, so that we may walk our ways in peace and understanding and harmony. Some Brothers may be naturally gifted with a strong Brotherhood make up, and all of us benefit by strengthening personal qualities essential to promoting real understanding in our Fraternity. Each time this experience transpires, all Brothers achieve a better appreciation and awareness of fellowship and Brotherhood.

When you put other Brothers first, this reverence and accommodation to others bring forth harmony. It is remarkable how quickly things do change for the better when a person finds that someone really cares. Outstanding ideas are often of little or no value unless the Brothers who are to execute them are properly motivated. This motivation comes when they recognize that their efforts are considered important by others and that others do care about them. It is not always important for Brothers to be included in an effort, so long as they feel that they count no matter what job they perform. This feeling is more important than a merely formal participation; and to be a part of a united effort requires one to absorb peculiarities and mistakes of others without making a profound judgment. Brotherhood in the world is at its best a dream yet to be fully realized. In Masonry it is a fact. The link between each Brother is an eternal bond. That Mystic Tie is our strength!

In the world of Masonry there is a common ground of unity and oneness regardless of a man's state or status. Brotherhood is a treasure. To keep it as the norm and ideal we must not take it for granted. We may never allow anything to cause any Brother or the Brotherhood to suffer, but rather cultivate the highest and best in our Brotherly relations. We share within our Brotherhood the best of life as well as the worst; and we always make every Brother feel welcome and
when we have visiting Brethren let us extend the right hand of fellowship and fraternal love.

Sometimes, being weak, frail mortals, a Brother may slip, stumble, fall or even fail, but none of us should ever be guilty of casting stones. And if ever we are so tempted, I pray the stones will be too heavy to pick up. When kind admonitions of correction or sympathetic words of wisdom are needed, we must always do so in the name and spirit of Masonic charity and treat each Brother as we would want to be treated, sharing in his sorrow, misfortune, weakness, strength, triumphs as well as failures; laugh with him and also weep with him. Our strength may never turn into arrogance or pride of spirit which would certainly destroy ourselves and our Masonic Brotherhood.

Whatever the need in the life of the Brother, I hope we have and will have trust with each other to come to the Brother's rescue. This may mean counseling as well as consideration. It may mean listening and advising. Masonic Brotherhood ought to be a system of competition. To climb upward is never a race: and the desire to climb upward ought to be responsible action as well as right motivation. In this context let us not take ourselves too seriously; there is above all the joy of bringing the light of happiness, of truth and understanding into a dark world. And we may never forget our sense of destiny as Brothers.

The world about us and the world within is one. Masonry continues to influence the world about us as Masons everywhere practice Masonic Brotherhood and friendship. We can be and should be builders of a better world and a better tomorrow. It begins with each as an individual, then as Brothers and then through the Lodge.

One final comment on two subjects so intimately interwoven with the topic of this presentation; the young and the old Brother. Freemasons are summoned, not only
by definition, to cultivate and educate the new and the young Brother in the spirit of fellowship, friendship, unity and harmony. As he begins his journey we must take personal interest in him. He is uncertain and, therefore, needs strength and most of all guidance, understanding and support. Never let him stand alone; his future successes are in his present education, orientation and acceptance. Those who are assigned to him in the memory work should also help in communicating, within the limits of each degree, a sound educational process of understanding, knowledge and awareness. The memory work is important but it can only be as effective as is the step by step understanding. It is not enough to memorize. We must relate, educate, stimulate and concentrate on his understanding and illumination.

In many Lodges there is a wide age difference. It is here that we need to exercise tolerance and Masonic Brotherhood. The younger Brethren have genuine respect and consideration for the elders. Wisdom is a treasure; strength is a blessing; enthusiasm is a great asset but it must be tempered with patience and prudence.

The older Brothers of a Lodge have often been the pioneers, the Pilgrim Fathers in the struggle for establishment and beginning. The younger Brothers would do well to seek their counsel and gain wisdom from their experience. The attitude of the "now generation" that the "old generation" are not with it is a tragedy. Men gain wisdom and truth from the past, and to live only in a "now situation" in the present day, offers emptiness, not wholeness of life. This kind of consideration ought never to exist in any Lodge, or in any Masonic organization. The young as well as the Older Brother ought to complement each other and add to the dimension of life with each other. We must seek from each other those lessons and that spirit which adds to life, not detracts from it.
Masonic Brotherhood, as I see it, is carved, marked and engraved on the symbolic Five Masonic Points of Fellowship.

First: When the necessities of a brother call for my aid and support, I will be ever ready to lend him such assistance, to save him from sinking, as may not be detrimental to myself or connections, if I find him worthy thereof.

Second: Indolence shall not cause my footsteps to halt, nor wrath turn them aside; but forgetting every selfish consideration, I will be ever swift of foot to serve, help, and execute benevolence to a fellow-creature in distress, and more particularly to a Brother Mason.

Third: When I offer up my devotions to Almighty God, a brother's welfare I will remember as my own; for as the voices of babes and sucklings ascend to the Throne of Grace, so most assuredly will the breathings of a fervent heart arise to the mansions of bliss, as our prayers are certainly required of each other.

Fourth: A brother's secrets, delivered to me as such, I will keep as I would my own; as betraying that trust might be doing him the greatest injury he could sustain in his mortal life; nay, it would be like the villainy of an assassin, who lurks in darkness to stab his adversary, when unarmed and least prepared to meet an enemy.

Fifth: A brother's character I will support in his absence as I would in his presence; I will not wrongfully revile him myself, nor will I suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it.

In closing, let us pray that the glorious gospel of our blessed God may motivate our worthy endeavors by promoting Freemasonry. The mystic tie of Freemasonry is
Masonic Charity and Masonic Brotherhood, which springs from pure hearts, good conscience and a sincere faith in God. Masonic Brotherhood that knows no limits is nothing less than the Love of God operating in the hearts of Freemasons. The agape of God, that is his unlimited love, has no beginning and it has no ending, our Masonic Brotherhood should be no less!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Freemasonry’s
Responsibility to Society

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at the Semi-Annual Communication of the ACGL Bad Kissingen, 14th Nov. 1981)
Freemasonry's Responsibility to Society

(Presented at the Semi-Annual Communication of the ACGL Bad Kissingen, 14th Nov. 1981)

Worshipful Master and Brethren all,

The rank of Past Grand Master is associated with many happy and delightful experiences, not the least of which is the privilege of having been found worthy to present this paper in a place dedicated to virtue, to benevolence and to Freemasonry.

I hope that nothing I am about to say will be allowed to mask the sense of privilege which I feel of being able to engage with the best minds in contemporary Freemasonry and to address so respectable an audience as this Grand Lodge, which I salute as a faithful guardian of the fundamentals of our noble Order to whom we are bound by every tie of gratitude and for whose virtues we feel every sentiment of admiration and esteem.

This communication breathes that true Masonic spirit which permeates and actuates the smallest group of Brethren just as much as it does the larger assemblies. Let us, therefore, be instrumental in the advancement and education of the Craft, whose work is to bring goodwill into the community, to uplift mankind and to have an impact upon the life and the character of men and Masons everywhere.

Brethren, it is not my intention to enter into an elaborate disquisition concerning Masonry. That task far exceeds the limits of my abilities; I shall only venture to submit to your serious consideration a few observations.
Those words are not an example of 20th century modesty or understatement; and I will hasten to reveal they are, in fact, the opening words of the Oration given by Brother William Preston himself in 1772, when he introduced the first of his famous Masonic lectures. All the same it is this spirit that the following thoughts, suggested by our Grand Master in late October, are offered on the subject of:

"Freemasonry's Responsibility to Society"

and is dedicated to the Brothers of the American Canadian Grand Lodge.

By a long process in which speculative Masons have drawn upon material from former times, from the freestone masons, the Volume of Sacred Law and from ancient sources unconnected with either, is little short of amazing. By a long process of refinement, by adding and discarding system has been developed which despite all the anomalies and anachronisms inevitable in such growth, is nevertheless surprisingly harmonious. We ourselves compass the structure and the curriculum of our Masonic Temple; let ourselves be the Temple, which shall stand in great proportion unto all eternity. This requires, however, a lifelong educational process to become intellectually fitted to comprehend and practice such alleged responsibility; the rough ashlar must be trued, squared and polished for its appropriate place in the structure of the Masonic edifice. All ethical forces at man's disposal are a Mason's working tools. Morality, friendship and fraternal love are such forces which first unite and then cement goodwill in society. Our task today, as ever, is to make men better, more tolerant and consequently happier.

Word fashions come and go. Slogans are widely used to put across a point, to convey an idea, sometimes to cause a thought. Most of these have political or commercial origins and are used to promote an individual's interest or to sell the public some bill of goods offered by a business. Even
Freemasonry is not immune from modern sloganeering. Change sometimes seems to become fetish; some advocate a special Masonic image. And even such serious topics as "human rights" of "the future of our Society" carry the implication of change and we are in grave danger of being coerced into sweeping changes purely as a sign of the times. They are too self evident to speculative Masons to react ostentatious about their practical application or to proclaim them from the housetops. Yet, the challenge becomes apparent, a challenge toward off approaching danger due to misinterpretation.

I do not construe this as indicating that we should shun all changes, or that we should cease our efforts to constantly seek improvement. But I do believe that we should abandon no standards until we are morally certain that we have replaced them with better and more effective ones, and I pray the basic principles of Masonry will always escape the ravages of changing times.

Webster's definition for "responsibility" is synonymous with obligation, duty and accountability, and encompasses many facets of the way of life which we adopted when we became members of the Order. Wherever Masonry flourished the highest standards of living have been obtained; and wherever it has been cast out, the standards of living have immediately gone down, civilization has deteriorated and the freedom of the people abolished.

I believe the great work of Freemasonry is to raise mankind to a higher realization of the beauty of truth, the importance of human freedom, the building of character, the glory of service in every good and charitable cause. Deeply convinced that the world of tomorrow can be a better one than that of today if the minds and hearts of the people are regenerated, Masonry has ever sought to build not only temples, but also character, thereby strengthening the moral fiber of its votaries. It is in memory of those who made the
supreme sacrifice in order that we might have freedom to worship, freedom to think, freedom to live as Free and Accepted Masons.

Our contribution to mankind down through the centuries has been significant, whether it be in the fields of government, education, literature, medicine, music or almost any other area we could name. This is not so much because of any direct involvement, for such would be contrary to our high principles, but rather is the result of individuals practicing Masonic precepts in their daily lives. The precepts and teachings of our Order in seeking tolerance and personal liberty for all and a desire to be better men and citizens have been instrumental in the formation of our free nations, where common duties inculcate commonly shared responsibilities. In this process we never measure our progress by the degrees we have received, rather than the degrees with which we throw our influence into applied Masonic teachings and education. It is not possible for anyone to be great or accomplished great things. But we can all work to the limit of our power, meet and master the problem of the hour, and be thankful for our blessings. The resources are inexhaustible, and "to whom much is given, of him shall be much required". This requires a special mental and spiritual preparation, a never ending process, beginning in our heart, to absorb that what we term Masonic Light.

Benjamin Franklin said: "We gave you a republic, if you can keep it"; expressed Masonically: we gave you your working tools, keep and use them wisely. I realize that the trouble with responsibility is that it always comes disguised as hard work. And it begins with our responsibility to the Craft in general and to our own Lodge in particular. "There is no right without a paralleled duty". And we cannot practice responsibility without knowing the basic structure and functions of our Lodge, its local problems, its various projects and activities; without realizing the importance of regular
Lodge attendance and willingness to participate in Lodge work both within and without the walls of the Temple.

Don't expect perfection in a man just because he is a Mason. If you do, you will be disappointed. Masonry makes men better, but no human agency makes them perfect. If he is a Mason, you have a right to presume he is a fairly good man, but do not condemn Masonry, even if a few Masons turn out bad. Even the great Teacher himself had a Judas. The aim and purpose of Masonry is to receive none but good men, keep them good, and make them better, judge the Institution not by a few failures but by the average of its successes. The average is high and it consequently gives standards to its members, but it cannot be an infallible guide.

When the world criticizes Freemasonry, it may be saying: "What you say you are, and what you really are fills me with doubt. Your preaching and practice are unrelated". Maybe the world is wrong to criticize us. Only you can answer that! Guilty or not guilty! Preaching is not enough. Reciting a creed, religious or otherwise, is not enough. We need to go beyond the quoting of old clichés! We need to dream the impossible dream, to be willing to march through hell for a heavenly cause.

There is really nothing wrong with what we preach from the East or from the sidelines. The real hang-up comes from what we are and do, not from what we say we are. I can say I love God and I believe in God, but when I say I have faith in God, then I have strength to move mountains. I can say I love Masonry, I believe in masonry, but when I say, the worlds will be better for this what I do, then I reach the unreachable star; the unreachable star of love and universal Brotherhood; the unreachable star of genuine commitment on the part of the entire Fraternity; the unreachable star of a new world where all men can breath free without fear.

There are periods of time when Masonry goes its way in an atmosphere of calm assurance. The national standard
of morality is high. Masonry continues in her pursuance of Masonic teachings and principles, a commitment to excellence.

There is, however, no let down in the eternal search for more light. There is no recess from the work of masonry. But at such times, the Mason labors in a spirit that finds its counterpart in the general national spirit. There then comes a great change in the moral tone of our countries. Old beliefs, tried and true patterns of human behavior are described as old fashioned. Religion itself is challenged. Masonry is training for such conditions. The present efforts of the past must be used effectively against the false philosophy of the present. What we have done in the past is commendable. But conditions demand that we do more; and conditions increase responsibilities. It is imperative that we be more than just members of the Masonic Fraternity. We dare to tackle the toughest of jobs; we pity the sleeper and the indifferent; we pity those who merely join something, those who give up and say that it can't be done.

There is a bit of quotation that I cannot vouch for as to its origin, but I remember Robert Kennedy using it over and over. It is this:

*Some people see things as they are*  
*and ask, why?*  
*I dream of things as they are*  
*and ask, why not?*

If you want a better world, work at it. If you want a better Lodge, work at it. If you want a better community, work at it. . Why not?

We modern day Masons too are craftsmen and builders, and if our labors are to contribute significantly to that, ideal, philosophical empire which is not only our Masonic dream but the hope of mankind as well, and if our actions are to
mark our work with a standard of excellence, then we must pour our devotion and steadfastness into the mortar.

We too must, by precept and example, strive with every fiber of our strength and persuasion to add substance and power to the spiritual aura surrounding our lives and the life of our Brothers, our Lodges and Grand Lodges. There is a need for a revival of spiritual self, a rededication to the unfoldment of inner self, a giving of self and of spirit.

Our life is a single but highly complex cosmic structure and we must look closely and with serious heart at the edifice we have entered, if we listen with understanding we will hear a sound made up of the beating of human hearts, and hear the nameless music of men's souls. If we look we will begin to dimly see the soaring outline of the building itself of many forms and shadows.

Surely the work of no ordinary builder. Can you see the mighty pillars, cast in the form of the bodies of our Brothers who have sacrificed themselves in the name of truth and justice, and their endless rows forming a bulwark?

Can you see the cornerstones from which all else expands, and see there our Masonic fathers surrounded by our young men, our Brothers of tomorrow? Can you see in the spans and arches above, the joined hands of all men, interlocked and strong, and hear in the heights of the lofty dome the gentle music of the dreamers of the world?

And can you see that the mystic house is not yet finished. It is still building and not being built upon, and we realize that the work must always go forward. The building must be united.

It seems a simple realization, yet the profound feeling of it brought forth a Moses and Jesus Christ, a Buddha and St. Augustine, a Darwin, Anderson and Einstein. These great axial thinkers become creators of transcendent values and created a world of universal thought which today is our most
precious human heritage. They speak to us with the sole purpose of helping to create that kind of world, "of that state of perfection at which, we hope, being the rough ashlars we are to arrive, by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God". It is a rugged and difficult pathway. God will supply the blessings; but we ourselves have to come up with the endeavor.

My Brothers; your individual example as a votary of our Royal Art is one of our free world's greatest strengths. You are members of a lifeline that brings man out of the dark into God's light. If we walk away from the light, our shadows fall before us. The further we walk, the further they extend, the shadows of anxieties, fears, false concepts. If we walk toward the light, the shadows fall behind us and their burden lessens.

Finally, if we stand under the light, they disappear. As you stand under that eternal Light, you set an example and you send a message to your fellowmen of strength and hope and faith that is the ultimate contribution of Freemasonry to the future of mankind.

In closing, please listen to the Masonic confession of the Honorable Brother Benjamin Franklin:

"Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold or silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another; sympathy begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness and tolerance beget the attitude of a true Mason, and these are the wages of a Mason".

So help us God, and make us steadfast to perform the same!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Communication

Tonight is Lodge, the friends I'll meet
   Have all been tried the same
And each one that I stand and greet
   Knows Mankind's own true aim.

Tis Lodge tonight, the Work is there
   Laid out for all to view
Craftsmen assemble, pair by pair
   To make their Ashlars true.

Lodge is tonight, the Summons shouts
   Come join our happy band
Keep harmony in and discord out,
   Rejoice - ye upright men.

Lodge is tonight, and Brothers all
   We'll meet with spirit free.
Bound by ties and governed by law
   And faith and charity.

Bro. L. Sherman Brooks
The Genius of Freemasonry

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at "Eifel" Lodge No. 855 on 29 July 1975)
Worshipful Master and Brethren all:

For your fraternal invitation I am grateful and I duly acknowledge the honor to communicate with you in your well-governed Lodge of which I am a member, and to conducting a Lodge of instruction. My Topic:

"The Genius of Freemasonry"

Symbolizes both, the spirit which prevails within the portals of this Temple and which motivates the members of this Lodge in their daily conduct and actions who have been found worthy for admission.

Every great leader who has ever risen among the sons of men has been possessed by one master thought that has gripped the people like a passion. Socrates had a key-word: the Immortality of the Soul; Buddha: the renunciation of life; Dr. Martin Luther, the German reformer had a special password; the freedom of the Individual, or how can I obtain God's mercy; Jean Jacques Rousseau, the French revolutionary declared: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

Now the greatest leader who has ever led the hosts of humanity, now, Freemasonry came with its master thought, glorious and thrilling, not world shaking but certainly world transforming and its password is:

"Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of GOD"

And to follow this magnificent and imperial command is one of the numerous privileges it grants us. With this way of life it inspires us to fulfill our mission, to announce to the people of our time that we can correct wrongs only, as we hear these words, accept these teachings and apply them to
our every day's life. With this persuasion and uplifting force we must feel Freemasonry's presence in our joy and its comfort in our pain and its genius in our mind.

One of the great secrets of Masonry is, it is one facet of its genius, that it makes a man aware of the divinity within him, where from his whole life takes its beauty and meaning, and inspires him to follow and obey it. It is the new inner attitude and habit of thought with regard to the worth and use of life. Every man has a train of thought on which he rides when he is alone; and the worth of his life to himself and others, as well as its happiness, depends upon the direction in which that train is going, the baggage it carries. Masonry puts that inner train on the right track, freights it with precious treasure, and starts it to the Grand Lodge above. What other or higher ministry can it render to a Brother?

Adhering to the example of Grand Master Hiram Abif, such is the ideal of Freemasonry, and fidelity to all that it demands, that we give ourselves to it, trusting the power of truth, the reality of brotherly love, and the sovereign worth of character. For only as we incarnate these ideals in actual life and activity, do they become real, tangible, and effective. God works for man through man and seldom, if at all, in any other way. He asks for our voices to speak, for our hands to work and act here below, with persuasion, power and enthusiasm, with clean hands and charitable hearts.

I am neither learned nor famous, but we all together are summoned to be loyal and true of heart undefiled by evil, faithful and helpful to our brethren. Then our life will be a capacity for the highest thoughts, the noblest deeds. Let us make it a pursuit of the highest, an eager, incessant quest of truth; a noble utility, a wise freedom, a genuine service. Through us the Spirit of the genius of Masonry may grow and be magnified and glorified. Only thereby no voice
of distress reaches our ears in vain and no hand seeks our aid with out response.

Our spiritual concept as speculative or Freemasons inculcates those noble attributes such as personal responsibility, personal power of judging, the will to believe, to work, act and part. Responsibility is the charge one is accountable for, and the fulfillment of our social responsibility has long been expressed by the world wide traditional Golden Rule of goodwill. The basic admonition has been propounded in its own phrasing by each religion of the world; Christianity: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise"; Islam: "No one is a believer, until he loves for his Brother, what he loves for himself; Judaism: "What is hurtful to yourself, do not to your fellowman."

Our actions and habits create the genuine nature of our Fraternity, what it actually stands for, and what it will realistically achieve. As a general habit, each of us is obligated in his daily life in the midst of many privileges, to give more thought to the inevitably related personal responsibilities.

We have the privilege of membership in our Lodge, and the associated responsibility of displaying the principles of Freemasonry in exemplary daily lives. And thereby we have the privileged opportunity of contributing to the welfare and growth of this "Brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of GOD".

We have the privilege of building a better life and a better world, and the inherent obligation of building that life upon the tenets, promulgated by our Masonic philosophy, the teachings of the Prophets of Judea, of the Great Master of Nazareth, and other revered teachers.

Some forgotten rhymester has aptly cautioned us of this basic human and Masonic obligation with the simple lines:
My life shall touch a dozen lives,
before this day is done;
Leave countless marks for good,
Ere sets the evening sun.
So, this the wish I always wish,
The prayer I ever pray;
Lord, may my life help other lives
It touches along the way.

What is the genius of Freemasonry, Brethren?
What is it that has drawn men to it through the years?
Its appeal has been almost universal. Among its followers we find men from all walks of life, scholars and men whose educational advantages have been limited. Kings and statesmen have been proud to accept that simple title: Master Mason. What is the source of its magical power? To some it might be its power to attract and hold the minds of men akin to religion. Though not a religion, it is deeply religious. Others might point to the philosophical character of its degrees. The teaching of Freemasonry as exemplified in its degrees is drawn from the noblest thoughts of the greatest teachers of the ages: those immortal truths through which men have grown in moral, spiritual and intellectual stature.

Still another group might suggest that its appeal and its strength lie in its practice of Charity and Brotherhood. Undoubtedly each accounts in part for the appeal of Freemasonry. But what do they all add up to? Isn't it good old-fashioned idealism? Deep down in the innermost conscious of all men is a love and appreciation of the ideal. In some secret recess of his mind, seldom exposed to public gaze, he cherishes some idealistic thoughts, some dream of
a better world, when truth and justice, tolerance and a host of other simple virtues will make of this world a temple fit abiding place for the Great Architect Of The Universe.

To that idealism Freemasonry gives expression, idealism common to all men regardless of their station in life or their educational background. Herein lays Masonry's secret and its power.

Should Freemasonry lose that idealism, like Samson when his locks were shorn by Delilah, its powers would be gone, and its appeal would become impotent. Therefore, if we preserve our Fraternity as a vital forward-moving institution, it behooves us to preserve that idealism. This is our primary responsibility as Freemasons.

The thought that membership in the Fraternity carries with it responsibilities of a high order is implicit in every degree. The Entered Apprentice learns "he there stands an upright man and mason, ever to walk and act as such before God and man". Often we are reminded that duty is with us always, inflexible as a destiny. This thought of personal responsibility and of duty is essential if we are to preserve the genius of Freemasonry and Freemasonry perpetuated to serve future generations, it will be reflected in the speech and conduct of individual Masons.

It is easy to be enthusiastic in the Temple. However, Masonry can work only through active Masons outside the Lodge room. Through Brothers who are willing to serve with no thought of reward but in their love for the Fraternity and what it stands for.

The genius of Freemasonry, the source of its power to attract and hold men as it has done down through the centuries and is doing today, is its inspiring idealism.

The Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God is one of our most important lessons. It takes unity, cooperation, understanding, harmony and, above all, the will
to progress, the desire to work and share, to join hearts and hands for the enhancement and strengthening of Masonic Brotherhood. We are living in unprecedented times. Our precepts and our convictions are needed as never before. And with that need comes a great opportunity to be of vital service to our Order, to all mankind. We must be leaders and achievers. We must take the initiative and move forward.

Progress depends upon you, and upon me. Together we can achieve it! Freemasonry appeals to us by its fellowship. Next to our family, and the House of God, it is the most blessed influence in our life. Its simple and profound faith, its wise and practical philosophy, uniting the wisdom of love with the love of wisdom, illumines our mind as its genius of fraternity warms our heart. Masonry appeals to us as an agency for the organization of moral faith, practical brotherhood, and social idealism, the worth and power of which we have not yet realized.

In a day when the brotherhood of this world is broken, our ancient and noble Craft has an opportunity, the like of which it has never known before, to use its influence and power to spread that fraternal righteousness without which the future will be as dark as the past.

Scarcely a Masonic discourse is pronounced, or a lecture given, that does not teach two extremely profound principles, the love of God and the love of our fellow man. That is the very spirit of Masonry, its light and power, its basic and the apex. Upon that faith it rests, in that faith it lives, and by that faith it will persuade and win.

Masonry was not made to divide men but to unite them. It asks for tolerance and for fraternity. Therefore, all through the ages it has been, and is today, a meeting place of differing minds and a prophecy of the final union of all reverent and devout souls.
Against those old sectarians who substituted intolerance for charity, and persecution for friendship, and who do not love God because they hated their neighbors. Masonry made perpetual protest in a voice now becoming, hopefully, the eloquence of the world.

A vast change of heart is now taking place in the world, by reason of an exchange of thought and courtesy, and a closer personal touch. The various sects, so long estranged, are learning to unite upon the things most worthwhile and the least open to debate. That is to say, they are moving toward the Masonic position. When they arrive, Masonry will view a scene which was prophesied from the beginning. Then Masonry, having fulfilled a pan of its sublime, prophetic mission upon earth, will rejoice. It will then write the eternal verities of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Moral Law, the Golden Rule, and the hope of a life everlasting.

Today this great Fraternity, with its plea for liberty, equality, and fraternity, is worth a great deal for the safety and sanctity of our countries.

Some day, when the cloud of prejudice has been dispelled by the searchlights of truth, the world will honor Masonry for its service to freedom of thought and liberty of faith. There will come a day when the barriers of race, creed, and habit which separate men today, will be wiped away.

When the spirit of this Order has its way upon earth, as it surely will, evil, injustice, and every vile and slimy thing that defiles humanity will skulk into the dark, unable to endure the light of Freemasonry.

Heavy responsibility rests upon each officer and Brother of our Lodges. Those who accept any office must make up their minds that personal sacrifice is going to be necessary and that they must bear their share of the burden
of carrying on the affairs of the Lodge in which they hold office.

Let each of us who have been honored with election to a position of trust in our great Fraternity conduct himself, in Lodge and in public, so that honor and respect will be given to the Masonic image, a larger number of the civic leaders of our country will be inspired to join in the membership and labors of Masonry, and the Fraternity become, once again, a leader in spreading the moral principles for which we stand in our countries, that sorely needs such leadership at this time.

One man living a life of brotherhood is worth countless lectures of brotherhood! Practical brotherhood, if it has any meaning at all, means that all men, regardless of race, creed or rank, shall have the opportunity to live well and in equality. The world is perishing for lack of brotherhood, and though we have the great ideal on our lips, it has not yet found its way into our hearts and minds.

The present great service which Masonry, by its principles no less than its history, can render to the world is to estimate a man by his character and worth as a man. A blind, unreasoning rancor must give way to the light of intelligence if we are not to live in a welter of wrangling hatreds and hideous conflicts, a future which no one can contemplate without dismay.

It is generally known by the outside world that Masons are bound together by the strong ties of love, of reverence, and of duty, and that Freemasons are men of integrity, men whose lives are directed by the Great Lights in Masonry.

The Masons have girded the globe and, in the words of Homer, an ancient Greek poet, "have seen many cities and learned the minds of many men". We know how diverse are the people and how hard it is to persuade them all to practice brotherhood.
As Freemasons we have learned to be patient, persistent, generous, faithful and charitable. We do not expect or discern a second Renaissance eventuating from space exploration. From all the futility around us in this our troubled world, we turn to those who, by whatever faith or creed, hold aloft the banner of liberty and fraternity. More inspiration may be found here at our meetings than at the United Nations' World Capital, which most of the time is a Tower of Babel.

It takes no great philosopher to discover that the course of steady progress is that of moderation, and the middle road which Masons personify and try to exemplify in their daily lives. As Brothers we travel widely, observe, carry with us our message, and live with fair-minded people our way of thinking and conduct. Thereby we are obligated to act as ambassadors whose records are unblemished; whose ritual is modest, simple and dignified; whose steady optimism outlasts political prophecies of doom and cheap posturing. This my Brothers is another facet of Freemasonry's genius.

This is our lesson: it is that the world must be convinced to follow our example and turn to Brotherhood, decent living, obedience to law, charity and the practice of the eternal verities. Ours is a noble, impressive ritual. As Masons we have been, for generations, a quiet but potent force for tolerance, avoiding extremes, practicing and preaching our common humanity, as Franklin, Washington or the Prussian King Frederic the Great and others were primarily motivated, when they blazed the way in the troubled world of their time. How well we carry out our obligations, how well we demonstrate in our lives the effectiveness of Masonic teachings, will always be the measure by which the outside world judges Masonry.

The habit of speaking well of our Brothers, of having a just concern for the happiness and welfare of our Brothers, of having the proper respect for the opinions of others, and
our unyielding belief in the goodness of GOD, are ways in which we communicate Masonry.

The proof of our Masonic way of life is in our deeds, and it is by deeds that Masonry is made known to the non-Mason. Ours is the obligation to transmit Masonry pure, unsullied and undefiled. Everyday we are revealing this immeasurable universal force:

"The Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of GOD."

In closing each of us should always remember the answer to the first questions in the Entered Apprentice Degree:

"Whence came you?"

"What came you here to do?

/s/ Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Deputy Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Re-Obligation

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 21 February 1975 at "Berlin 46"
Lodge No. 933 ("Reunion and Re-obligation Night")
Re-Obligation

(Presented on 21 February 1975 at "Berlin 46" Lodge No. 933 ("Reunion and Re-obligation Night")

Worshipful Master and Brethren all;

As grateful as I am for the confidence the Worshipful Master, my friend and Brother, John E. Hobbs, has shown in me by his friendly invitation in giving me the pleasant opportunity of formulating an address, suitable for this memorable and solemn occasion of a:

Reunion and Re-Obligation Night

I may offer you my sincere appreciation for the favorable sentiments with which it abounds and the trust reposed in me. But I can also assure you, that I accepted with some reservations, having made suitable proficiency in my medical profession I must confess, the human brain is a wondrous organ that starts to work the moment you are born, and never stops, until you stand up to speak.

Frankly, the prospect of having to address you on this auspicious occasion and before such competent Brethren of real merit and knowledge is quite difficult, because it is a peculiar and different thing to develop a presentation that, hopefully will be meaningful, and can do sufficient justice to the dignity of this day of Truth and Light.

My Brothers; how can the language of the heart be communicated into the language of the pen or put in words, and give justice to my desire to express my pleasing sensibility for your favor and esteem, and to share Masonic fellowship with all the Brethren of this well governed and honorable:
Berlin 46 Lodge No. 933

My poor vocabulary fails to express the true emotions of the heart when attempting a dialogue with friends and Brothers that have blended with the Brotherhood of history and repeated the same words at the sacred Altar of obligation, that were pledged faithfully by the great and Honorable Washington and Franklin, but also by Frederic the Great here in Berlin, and so many Brothers who have traveled the same road before you and me, and received the same Light as we did. The idea and revelation that this sublime act makes us Brothers one with the other and with the greats of all ages and with the faithful and capable Brothers of this highly reputed Lodge staggers my, granted, limited abilities, as does it enrich and enhance my solemn vows and my obligations.

The gentle and noble art has worked its sweet mystery, when it joined in Friendship and Brotherly Love the hearts of so many votaries of our royal art, especially within our American Canadian Grand Lodge Lodges, and a humble medical doctor, whose greatest award is and ever will be, to be considered by all of you as a true and faithful servant and a worthy Brother.

This address is presented with apologies for its omissions, but with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something; at least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new increased interest in the subject:

Re-Obligation; a Freemason's privilege and honor.

to re-establish values and basic fundamentals and to perceive an updated image of our Fraternity.

When first we were introduced and initiated into the Mysteries of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons we were taken
by the right hand, conducted to the center of the Lodge for the benefit of prayer. Before this great and important undertaking we invoke the aid of deity:

"Vouchsafe Thine aid. Almighty Father of the Universe, to this our present convention, and grant that this candidate for Masonry may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful Brother among us. Endue him with a competency of Thy Divine wisdom, that, by the influence of the pure principles of our Fraternity he may be better enabled to display the principles of Holiness, to the honor of Thy Holy name."

Thus being invested with the working tool of prayer, on our further progress we had to pray for ourselves. And speaking of prayer, I cannot help but remind you that prayer is frequently used in our business sessions as well as in the ritual of each degree. We do not hesitate to ask for guidance and help when needed; and we are informed very clearly what to do and where to go for our help when we have exhausted all of our own resources. Yes, my Brethren, prayer is one of the most useful tools at our disposal, "to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied" and to strictly adhere to our solemn vows given at the Alter of obligation.

There is in this word "obligation" itself, a point which has a meaning of its own. For at the root of the word is a reminder that he who accepts an obligation ties, or binds, himself to something he is to have as a sacred duty. We bound ourselves to a regular Lodge and did so in view of two duties we are expected to perform. One of these is our duty to be a good and faithful Mason, and the other is our duty to be a true and worthy worker in the Lodge. In accepting that obligation we did certain things. What it was we did, others could not see, because we did them within ourselves; we thought, felt and decided deep down in our own soul what afterwards we promised. It is therefore, that the obligation which ties us to the entire Fraternity is a Mystic Tie. We had
it in our mind, which we were obligating and rededicating ourselves to the Lodge and to Freemasonry in general. And now we are sustained and reminded, that the Lodge and the worldwide chain of Brotherhood were obligating themselves to us. For we could not have an obligation that bound only one. We were making our own promise to the Lodge, which in turn made a promise to us, and the Master gave us a pledge of his friendship and Brotherly Love on behalf of the Lodge. In this double tie is the other side of what is meant by the Mystic Tie: It is Mystic because it is in the soul; it is a Tie because it binds us mutually together.

This Mystic Tie is a "union of the hearts" and implies an intellectual allegiance to a common Masonic tradition, an awareness of a philosophy of life which is universal, an underlying conviction that Brethren, who share their spiritual unity, enable us to find a wise and satisfactory base for common actions and decisions. The dynamic of Masonic fellowship is not the mutual profession of a creed or agreement in matters of Lodge organization and procedures. Fellowship is of the spirit and the heart, and not necessarily a meeting of the minds. Men may disagree, but must respect each other and work together. Quoting Voltaire: "I disagree sharply with your opinion, but will defend your right to voice your opinion with my life."

The dynamic of Masonic fellowship, as I see it, transcends an agenda or differences of opinion. It restrains a man from imposing his own personal views upon another as a condition for common action. Our union of the hearts is an adequate base for any communication, whether it is a Lodge meeting or a Grand Lodge Communication. Whatever Freemasonry hopes to accomplish in the world must first come to pass in the spirit of individual Freemasons. No Grand Lodge can promote understanding and unity if these qualities are not operative in its constituent Lodges. Modesty, Brotherly
Love, willingness to cooperate, and an unremitting devotion to Masonic ideals will win. This, however, requires, building up and cultivating that *Greatness Within* us, so peculiar for the votaries of our Order, who call themselves the Sons of Light. To labor to keep alive in our heart that little spark of celestial fire called conscience, and never waver from the purpose, we must be "aggressively active", or name it "militant" if you please, because throughout our lives we are involved in a competitive system, providing due consideration is given to others and the moral laws be obeyed. None should be discouraged, but pray, plan and permit each of us to *Rededicate* ourselves to the Greatness Within our Order. Masonic history very clearly proves that this Greatness within our organization does exist if we remain active, progressive, determined and properly use our working tools, never deviate from our obligation and use an overdose of enthusiasm. All duly obligated Masons are participants in this competitive system. We adhere to it with time and effort, also money -, and the *Dedication* and *Re-dedication* of ourselves. Our goal is not power and authority, certainly not ranks or titles.

Let's roll up our sleeves and go to work, some of us silent and contemplative, or aggressively active. The giving of ourselves is probably the greatest of all, as it results in the exemplification of our most valuable tenets: Friendship, Relief and Truth toward all mankind. We cannot, and do not want, to change the world, but we can make it more human with an unpretentious unity concerned with those mutually acceptable precepts by which we desire to live together. Our minimum canon in compliance with this *Re-dedication* is based on the occidental order to do what is humanly right, in order to protect human rights. One might easily say this sounds "*reactionary*". I have no fear of everyday catchwords, because this order to which I refer, in fact expresses nothing
more, than a development based on the intellectual heritage from antiquity and the Christian religion.

Worshipful Master and Brethren all;

We shall always consider the members of this good Lodge as our friends and Brothers, as we have learned it in the Trowel lecture. May every Brother, whom we have met or thought of this day, feel our steadfast affection. May we receive Freemasonry's gift with thanksgiving and never forget for what purpose they are given.

We know you and your Officers and all Lodge members will exemplify these qualifications. We thank you for the challenge of this place, and as we leave it, may we go to our various stations and places with a deeper sense of dedication, that we might share with others that, what we found here: the Brotherly Love which fills our hearts; the Solidarity which molds our lives; and the drive which makes us act. May we become more Re-dedicated citizens of worldwide Freemasonry and at last see the dawning of a world of a Brotherhood of Men in the words of the great King Solomon as he Re-dedicated the Temple, the final sentence of his prayer:

"That Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even for the place of which Thou hast said, Thy name shall be there, and Thy name is here! Amen!"

/s/Hugo Thomas (Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Land Grand Senior Warden
American Canadian Land Grand Lodge
Reunion and Re-obligation

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 30 April 1975 at "Cornerstone" Lodge No. 836)
Reunion and Re-obligation

(Presented on 30 April 1975 at "Cornerstone"
Lodge No. 836)

Worshipful Master of this honorable and well governed Cornerstone Lodge No. 836 and Brethren all:

I greet you well and I am very proud to bring you fraternal greetings from our Land Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Gunther Gall, from the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodges of Germany, Most Worshipful Brother Friedrich Heller and his Deputy, and certainly from all elected and appointed American Canadian Grand Lodge Officers.

For your fraternal invitation and your warm reception I am most grateful, and I offer you my sincere appreciation for the pleasant sentiments with which it abounds. As grateful as I am for the confidence reposed in me by your dynamic Master of the Lodge, Worshipful Brother Clyde Goodbread, of formulating a keynote address, suitable on this auspicious and memorable occasion of your "Reunion and Reobligation Night", I can only hope this presentation will be meaningful to so distinguished an audience, and can do sufficient justice to the dignity of this day of joy and Light.

On the volumes of a Masonic life these bright words are written, from which on every side blazes an ineffable splendor: duty and work, relief and Brotherly Love, truth and faith.

It is frequently said, that the purpose of Freemasonry is to take good men by the hand and to make them better, which we all subscribe, but in doing so, Masons have an even nobler goal, they strive for greater achievements. Our Masonic spirit must be transformed into an acting center of
Light, whose rays or emanations pervade both, the Universe and this world. For that is the Light for which all Masonic journeys are a search; in which we see the true meaning of the necessity of recovering the world. We are all duly prepared to fulfill our mission by the mode of preparation and tests of purification in the various Degrees. Each of us has made at least three declarations of a most serious and solemn nature in the process of becoming a Master Mason, and kneeling at the Altar each has assumed and subsequently re-affirmed in a most dramatic ceremony, a vow of broad and binding nature. Each of us has enjoyed the expressed confidence of all who considered our qualifications for membership, and found worthy in having and receiving Light, more Light, further Light.

The word Light as Masons understand it is the center of our philosophy. It signifies understanding, guidance, and help in time of trouble, Faithfulness and education. "Let there be Light" is our daily password as Initiates, as Fellows of the Craft and as Master Masons." "Let there be Light" is the interpretation and exemplification of the theme of the year of our Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Gunter Gall: "Let us think, act and speak as Freemasons".

Ordinary light scatters in all directions, each particle going its own way. In another form of light, the Laser light, the particles work together, thus giving them the power of united effort. This light, with the ability to cut through metal, is called coherent light.

My Brethren: Are we allowing the light that is within us to really manifest as coherent light or is it dissipating as ordinary light? Freemasonry at least teaches us, how to use and exemplify that inner light. How we use it, is the choice of the individual. A dictionary's definition of coherent is: "logically consistent". If we make our lives logically consistent with the Truth we know, consistent with the Light that has been conferred upon or communicated to us, we can make
the Light within us coherent. If we think unkindly about a neighbor, part of our light is obscured under such thought and its power is reduced. When we see a need and fail to respond to it, the light is dimmed more. Careless speech brings more darkness. When all our thoughts and actions are accurately corrected and adjusted by the Square of virtue and wisdom, by the plumb of Justice and love, and by the Level of humility, our light is coherent, which will overcome all obstacles in its path. To be coherent, logically consistent, all that we think, say and do, must be in perfect harmony with the will of God. Only Brotherly Love can be expressed through and by us: unworthy thoughts and passions must be dismissed and subdued, not dwelt on, or entertained.

We cannot serve two masters. The attempt to do so dissipates the light and power within us. Let's make our decision now and rededicate and re-enlist ourselves to serve Freemasonry with freedom, fervency and zeal, as we have learned it in the Entered Apprentice lecture.

Thoughts are the parents of deeds. We are generally careful about our actions and sometimes too careless about our thoughts. How to live is a problem each of us must solve: shortly, *let your moral life be right and all will be well*. How? Man cannot work without tools. In material or operative building as well as in moral or speculative building, one of the most important tools is the Square. The instrument called the Square in operative building has its counterpart in moral building, in the faculty called the Conscience. As the Square is applied by the operative to his work, so are we to apply our conscience to our work of life-building. In this sense we remain Apprentices throughout our whole life. In the Lodge we are directed for Light to what are called "The Three Great Lights and the Three Lesser Lights": they are briefly, Revelation and Creation. Through these, every Brother receives the light to guide him in his work as a Mason and builder of the Temple. Through them the Eternal Spirit communicates with the spirit of man. Creation is a loving
nurse to the mind of man. At every turn it invites his latent faculties into action.

We remain first of all Apprentices when we clothe ourselves with the "badge of a Mason", a symbol of innocence and purity; for innocence is a shield to virtue, and purity disarms temptation. With our Gauge we measure our time to the respective duties of life, giving to each its due time and attention. Our Gavel enables us to reduce the irregularities of pride, passion and prejudice within our heart, so that we may become like unto a Perfect Ashlar.

We are always Apprentices and taught to serve, working freely, to the great plan of the Divine Architect, burning with the fervency that overcomes all difficulties, and zealously producing from the seeds of TRUTH imparted to us in every Degree, fruitful works of CHARITY. BROTHERLY LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

As Apprentices we are not satisfied with faith and belief only. As we mature in Masonry we seek the light of knowledge, education and experience. Then we pass on the light of knowledge, education and experience. Then we pass on the degrees of Craftsman, and pressing onward, the Craftsman is "raised" to the Lodge of the Master. But we still remain Apprentices, particularly when we are to square our actions in accordance with the dictates of our Conscience, when we apply the Level of humility to our heart and build on the everlasting rock of Truth, and consistently test our life-work by the Plumb Line of uprightness.

Let us gratefully acknowledge we are permanently apprenticed. And let us never neglect nor defer to adorn ourselves with an attentive ear that gathers in the treasurers of wisdom and experience; with a "silent tongue", that preserves peace and commands respect, and with a "faithful breast", that loves truth and lives true.

Our wages as Master Masons cannot be measured by any standard by which the value of intrinsic things is
measured. They are not paid in silver or gold, in ranks or titles, save that most noble rank; "my Brother". Our books, therefore, are balanced in heaven and our wages are measured only by the value placed upon us by the one who has received them. This requires a spiritual motivation, or faith. But faith is not mere belief, faith is action, acting on the fundamentals of what we believe is right, and faith without work is dead.

Our Lodges are not something separate and distinct from their individual members. The Brothers are the Lodge. These Lodges are not a machine which can be started, aimed into a certain direction, and then ignored. They must be perpetually motivated through more Light from Masonry. I am convinced that all the Brethren fully realize the extent to which their individual and combined efforts and activities, affect the image and reputation of all Lodges within which they operate and work. We as individuals are Freemasonry. What we individually and jointly accomplish, determines the extent to which the great teachings of our Masonic heritage will be put into practice. Every concerted effort or combined action we perform, no matter how significant in itself adds to the stability of each constituent Lodge in this Jurisdiction, because such united efforts are required to absorb mutual understanding and respect, and the ability to learn from everyone.

Then we shall attain and exemplify that noble goal so eloquently expressed in the Theme of the year of our Land Grand Master: "Let us think, act and speak as Masons".

Let us take the positive attitude that seeks to know and serve all members. Let's appreciate the social and educational value of Freemasonry, and the tremendous potential of our idle legions. Let's re-enlist them, re-involve them, reactivate them. We can close the gap between promises and performance, if we will. To do so will serve the interest of our Fraternity, the needs of our communities,
and the teachings of our ancient Grand Master and his successors in the Oriental Chair!

My Brother: we shall ever pledge our sincere support to your respective Lodges in the spirit, so eloquently expressed by Brother Edwin Markham:

"There is a destiny that makes us Brothers;
none goes his way alone,
all that we send into the lives of others,
conies back into our own"

In this spirit let us now resume our labors according to the designs laid down upon the Trestle board....

/s/Hugo Thomas (Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Deputy Land Grand Master
American Canadian Land Grand Lodge
More Light in Masonry

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at the District (7 & 8) Meeting on 28 June 1975 in Schweinfurt)
More Light in Masonry
(Presented at the District (7 & 8) Meeting on 28 June 1975 in Schweinfurt)

"As pilgrims, each Brother moves
Across the sands of time;
And gently GOD each one removes
Unto that Land sublime."

Right Worshipful Brother Jess Minton,
Very Worshipful Brothers Bob Everett and Alva Reed
(District Masters of the 7th and 8th Masonic Districts),
Worshipful Masters, Past Masters, Wardens, Officers,
Brethren All:

I greet you well . . . Brothers of:

Truth and Friendship Lodge No. 828
Bamberg Acacia Lodge No. 832
Cornerstone Lodge No. 836
Pyramid Lodge No. 869
Freedom Lodge No. 873
More Light Lodge No. 874
Spessart Lodge No. 875
Hands Across The Main Lodge No. 879
North Sea Armed Forces Lodge No. 829 (in absentia)

I am happy and highly honored to bring you the warmest fraternal greetings from our Grand Master of the American Canadian Grand Lodge, Right Worshipful Brother Gunther Gall. Due to his urgent commitments in conducting other Masonic Communications, I am privileged to represent him at this combined District Meeting of the 7th and 8th
Masonic Districts. This is the proper time and place to express my sincere appreciation for your kind invitation and to conduct our labors in the spirit of our Grand Master's Theme of the Year:

"Let us think, act and speak Masonically".

The District Masters have chosen a striking theme for this District Meeting:

"More Light in Masonry".

A meeting? Yes! And I personally classify these meetings as Masonic workshops of utmost educational significance.

One great peculiarity about Freemasonry is that it will stand investigation; the deeper the research, the more extensive the knowledge of its hidden art and secret mysteries, the more highly it is appreciated. A man who merely takes his degrees in a listless, careless sort of manner, who remains a mere spectator at all lodge meetings and considers the customary refreshment at the close as the best part of the proceedings, may think that Masonry differs little from other societies. But the man who dives deeply into Masonic literature, takes a lively interest in every part of the ceremony, and learns the origin, meaning and moral bearings of its symbols, cannot possibly fall into such an error. To him Masonry has a refining and elevating influence not to be found in the ordinary run of societies. To bring his influence to bear on every member of the craft, and to direct them to the systematic study of Freemasonry, should be the great aim of every true Mason who has the welfare of the Craft and his Brethren at heart.

Our Fraternity does not need to create a new structure for Masonic education. We have a well performed structure. It is sound and attractive, and even more; it is timeless in its style. Perhaps we shall have to confess that we have not been attentive to this as we should have been. We are
sometimes so busy building additions, look outs, thereby neglecting the central edifice, but we should be aware of how basic it still is to Masonry. To every Brother the three degrees of Freemasonry are the fundamental structure of that spiritual house. They are the unified base of Masonic education; they are this Trinity of education and as such, cornerstones of our structure for enlightening our Brothers.

There are three things with which each Brother in his more serious and reflective moments knows himself to be concerned: GOD, MAN and DESTINY; our three degrees deal with these great concerns in the order given.

Every Degree in Freemasonry is a station on the road home; it is a challenge we must meet and an opportunity, and this opportunity is not an arrival, it is only another point of departure to a more noble and glorious goal, or name it destiny if you please. All of us, here below, are on certain bases, where neither rank nor titles are important; they might be in some instances, of certain value and some administrative necessity. "The internal and not the external qualifications of a man are what Masonry regards." Some of us are waiting for someone to bat us further; to some we must offer the ever present choice between indolence and initiative, but life's rules are fairer. In life there is an inner score board where every effort is credited to our record, and "our records are balanced in Heaven". There is always one thing yet to do. Admonished to direct our steps through life by what we find in the Volume of Sacred Law, we come across this directive:

"Study to show thyself approved unto GOD? A workman that needs not to be ashamed... (II Timothy 2:15)

"More Light in Masonry"... encompasses the whole spectrum of Masonic education; expressed Masonically: as duly obligated Fellows and Masters of the Craft we have indicated what we most desired... more and further Light, and we received all of it that can be conferred upon or
communicated to us. And he who has the key, will interpret all according to the Light he possesses. In our constant search of Light in Masonry, we try to transmit the divine mysteries and symbols to those who are apprenticed, who passed the Middle Chamber and were finally found worthy to assemble in the unfinished Sanctum Sanctorum; to those who practice our most valuable tenets and who are not enslaved by empty trappings of words. We all agree, the wisdom of man is but the reflection and image of that of God. His wisdom caused the material world to be made real after his type, by His Logos, which is His Word, and His Word or Commandment was: "Let there be Light!"

Our Masonic spirit must be transformed into an acting center of Light, whose rays pervade both, the Universe and this world. For that is the Light for which all Masonic journeys are in search; in which we see the deeper meaning of the three Degrees. We are all duly prepared to fulfill our mission by the mode of preparation and tests of purification in the various Degrees to receive that Light we most desire, which engenders and is engendered only through "More Light in Masonry", the theme of the year of Right Worshipful Brother Gordon Greenwood in 1971, and which primarily inculcated more Masonic education. But who is educated? An observing person will note that some who laboriously work their way through college, showing a diploma for their efforts and some outward signs of culture, lack general culture and show no real marks of education; others with an average education or less, apparently knowing less but reading and thinking more stand out as the more intelligent, the better balanced and the more really educated. One can readily conclude that the wisdom of the world is not always with the learned or so called educated; often it is found in the perceptive common sense of the man in the street. Literacy does not necessarily carry with it the ability to read. That man is educated who puts to the best use what he does know in reference to the
particular environment of which he is a part. This is a fundamental aspect of education.

It is not illiteracy that is the greatest danger to our Fraternity, but it is the half literate, the people who can read but who do not think, who constitute the greater danger. Henry David Thoreau, America's famous poet and philosopher, expressed it well when he wrote: "A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful but beautiful while his knowledge is sometimes worse than useless besides being ugly". Which is the best man to deal with, he who knows nothing about a subject, and what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he who really knows something about it, but he thinks he knows all? My desire for knowledge is intermittent, the highest we can attain to, is not knowledge but sympathy with intelligence."

Solon (638-558 B.C.), one of the wisest statesmen of ancient Greece, confessed in one statement the final mark of an educated man: “I grow old learning still.” It is another way of saying that education is a continuous learning process. After all, the truly educated are the self educated, a lifelong process that is never complete. We are accumulating knowledge at a prodigious rate. No one will ever know more than a very small fraction of the knowledge in existence today but he who would educate himself will want a sound of knowledge of as much of it as possible. An important part of this education will be to acquire the ability to discriminate, to contemplate, and to choose, to meditate and to think. This is the road to wisdom and understanding: "Get knowledge, but with all thy getting, get understanding, get wisdom". Common sense indicates that some kinds of knowledge are more essential than others. He who believes to be educated, has his work laid out for him on life's trestleboard. The span of his life will be too short to graduate from the "college of life".
The answer to the question of who is educated must always be a relative one, "I grow old learning still!" do we really recognize and live up to that particular short part of the charge "that you will conform to the principles of the order, by steadily persevering in the practice of ever commendable virtue!" A serious personal responsibility, a summons, a charge and I firmly believe all our Brothers, if found worthy, are always ready and willing to obey this summons, and we are reminded to assist them in this educational process, to stretch forth our hands, to whisper wise counsels.

Our individual attitude or reaction to personal responsibility and education is largely a matter of habit of thought and practice and the impact of our environment. If we tend to refuse to recognize or heed the call of responsibility, habit quickly takes over and enables us to be indifferent to our obligations. The result is, that we become irresponsible and our character is so known and identified. The actions, habits, character and destiny of each Brother are of deep concern to every other Mason. It is what each individual Mason truly is, that creates the genuine nature of what the Masonic Order really is, what it actually stands for, and what it will realistically achieve. Dr. William James (1842-1910), the "Galilei" among psychiatrists, stresses the personal consequence of our power of judging with the generally known summary: "Sow an Action and you reap a Habit; sow a Habit and you reap a Character; sow a Character and you reap Destiny."

Each individual's responsibility is as large as his ability, and for as long as he lives. He fails to meet his inherent obligation, if he moves to choose out on the one hand, or to retire out on the other.

The Will to believe, to work, act and part, outlines a principle which is especially applicable to the actions of Masons and to Freemasonry.
Responsibility is the obligation or Charge one is accountable for, and the fulfillment of which we must squarely accept. To respect this responsibility and educational process is to be mature; to implement and fulfill it, is to be a good Mason; and for each Brother to do more than his share, is to be noble.

These are the choices that time demands of all of us. This is the inherently involved concern of every Brother.

My Brethren . ."to these duties you are bound by the most sacred ties."

/s/ Hugo Thomas
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Deputy Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Judge With Candor...
Admonish With Friendship

by
(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 3 March 1977 at
Pyramid Lodge No. 860)
Judge With Candor...
Admonish With Friendship

(Presented on 3 March 1977 at Pyramid Lodge No. 860)

My Brothers:

I thank you for your fraternal invitation, and I sincerely acknowledge the honor to communicate with you at this Masonic Education Night. One of the most pressing needs of Freemasonry today is the need for further light and more Masonic education within the Craft.

“Judge with candor,
Admonish with friendship”
is the topic of this Lodge of Instruction.

Before we start this Communication, ask yourself some questions - just for a moment.

Before you enter this Holy House of Light, ask yourself in your innermost heart; am I duly and truly prepared?

If you will listen you may hear an inner voice saying: "It is a Brother desiring admission".

Can you enter this unfinished Sanctum Sanctorum tonight as, indeed, a Brother?

Have you divested yourself of envy, jealousy, deceit, hypocrisy, intemperance, and put on the robe of Brotherly Love?

Can you stand before the Holy Altar, which recalls to your mind, memories of bygone days, and looking into the eyes of your Worshipful Master, extended a greeting to those about you; can you behold your Brother?
Can you enter the Lodge tonight with a desire not only to receive but to give?

Should you entertain a spirit of enmity in the slightest degree for a Brother in this Lodge, go on in. take the hand of that Brother in yours, talk it over with him in the Fraternal Spirit that you should, and watch the mists disappear and the sunlight of Masonic Brotherhood illuminate your heart and his.

Just try it. Brother. You will not be disappointed.

The noblest work of GOD is man, and the Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry are His handiwork of man's highest nobility.

Unless, then, you claim to be a Mason, good and true, I beseech you to turn back and do not enter. But if your ambitions and aims are the high calling of the Brotherhood of Man, as taught throughout the ages by the Fraternity of Free masonry, and sanctified in nature and revelation by the approval of the Great Architect of the Universe.

"Enter here;

for within, you will find that,

Which you seek"

We readily admit the world is affected by Masonic ideals. From time immemorial. Masonry has stood for the highest ideals of civilization; and wherever Masonry has flourished, these ideals have come nearest to realization and the highest standards of living have been obtained. Wherever Masonry has been cast out, the standards of living have immediately gone down, civilization has deteriorated, and the freedom of the people abolished.

Don't expect perfection in a man just because he is a Mason. If you do, you will be disappointed. Masonry makes men better, but no human agency makes them perfect. If he is a Mason, you have a right to presume he is a fairly good
man, but do not condemn Masonry, even if a few Masons turn out bad. Even the great Teacher himself had a Judas.

The aim and purpose of Masonry is to receive none but good men, keep them good, and make them better. Judge the Institution not by a few failures but by the average of its successes. The average is high and it consequently gives standards to its members, but it can not be an infallible guide.

In this world of ours we are confronted with our daily human shortcomings; even personality conflicts among Brothers are sometimes reported. This is deplorable, but Freemasonry has provided us with the antidote: our Masonic way of life, as outlined in the various lectures of the degrees, and its practical application in our daily conduct. But we must try hard.

No one succeeds at anything without really trying, and the Mason who keeps on "trying", e.g. attending Lodge regularly, observing, learning and accepting responsibilities, cannot help but succeed in becoming a better Mason, and consequently a better man in other contacts, such as at home, his work, his community, his Lodge.

Perhaps it is too easy to lose enthusiasm for Masonry, but if we do, there is nothing to take its place, many of us overlook the benefits and advantages we become accustomed to accept as Masons. Perhaps we don't know a good thing when we see it, as no other association among men has as much to offer as Masonry.

If you have lost or temporarily misplaced your old enthusiasm for Masonry and your Lodge, start today to recapture it, for your own benefit! When you are enthusiastic about Masonry and your Lodge, you will enjoy the work and the Brotherhood, and your Masonic Brothers will enjoy you, too.
How comforting it is to rely on the moral principles inculcated in our cardinal virtues.

Some authorities think of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice only as moral principles, the use and value of which is Masonically taught. The consensus, however, is that they are symbolic in that their meanings can be extended beyond mere definitions. Thus, Temperance is usually taken to mean care in the use of stimulants. Masonically it means far more, just as it did to Socrates, hundreds of years before it was woven into Freemasonry. Temperance means caution in action, speech, thought, feeling, judgment, life and living.

Fortitude implies physical bravery, but Masonically it means moral courage far more than physical.

Prudence is not only the selfish determination of "what is good for us" but the use of common sense, reason, logic, in meeting any problem.

Justice, a civic concept, is Masonically allied with that without which it can not really exist, mercy. Justice is a strict interpretation of the law which is an expression of the greatest good to the greatest number. Mercy is actually a tampering with, as well as a tempering of justice, and implies, that in special cases, justice is insufficient. This moral dilemma of philosophy is not indicated ritualistically, but is implied by the fact that the cardinal virtues do have a symbolic as well as a moral meaning.

It should be objection sufficient to exclude any man from the society of Masons, that he is not disinterested and generous, both in his acts, and in his opinions of men and his constructions of their conduct.

He who is selfish and grasping, or censorious and ungenerous, will not long remain within the strict limits of honesty and truth, but will shortly commit injustice.
He who loves himself too much must need to love others too little; and he who habitually gives harsh judgment will not long delay to give unjust judgment.

He who is intemperate and abuses the required moderation in drinking alcohol of abusing other drugs, and then, through his necessarily loss of self discipline, brings discredit on a Lodge or the fraternity, subjects himself to Masonic trial, or cannot be found worthy and well qualified to become a Brother.

As Fellowcrafts we are charged to develop a new character, to change our own ego, if necessary. But character is a total. Character is like an acrostic, read it forward, backwards or across, it spells the same thing. However, that what it spells can change, and does. It is never quite the same today as it was yesterday, or will be tomorrow. For character is a total. It is the sum of the thoughts you think, your habitual attitude toward people and events. Luckily, each of us has a chance to improve his score, this total.

No matter how slow a start you may have had in thinking constructively, in living purposefully, in being unselfish, in helping others, in consciously undertaking to be a better person, you can change your total dramatically. Your life is like an unfinished portrait. No matter how dissatisfied you may be with the picture, remember it is not yet finished. The brush is still in your hand.

Some 2,400 years ago, Pericles of Athens, who laid the philosophical cornerstone of Democracy admonished his people "Fix your eyes on greatness and character". We of this day must fix our eyes firmly at all times upon the essential ingredients of a dynamic fraternity. Only through a dynamic "Brotherhood in Action" can we make sure that we remain the master of our own and the world's destiny.

Remember that your brother can not be your enemy. While sometimes things may occur that will seem to pull you
apart and the weeds of malice and hatred may try to take root in your heart, the cement of true Brotherhood is indestructible, for it is made of true brotherly love.

If you do not have that kind of love in your heart there is something definitely wrong with you and you should proceed to enlighten yourself as to the real fundamentals of true Brotherhood.

The question of Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a challenge and requires a Masonic answer: "I am my Brother's keeper." Facing responsibility as a Freemason is groundwork for a better life. Brothers who need brothers in daily life are the luckiest in the world.

Everything in Masonry tends to strengthen man in his duties to God and his fellowman, to fortify his will against temptation and evil, and to preserve his most precious jewels: Faith and Fidelity. Yet it is also graciously cognizant of the frailty of human nature and man's proneness to error.

Our life is a great and solemn dispensation. And this is a solid foundation and a Mason's daily challenge, to have Faith which is Wisdom, to implant Hope which is Strength, and to practice Charity which is Love. Only by raising our soul to its just elevation, we can comprehend the purpose of this earth.

According to the ethics of Freemasonry, it is made a duty, obligatory upon every member of the Order to conceal the faults of a brother, that is, not to blazon forth his errors and infirmities, to let them be learned by the world from some other tongue than his, and to admonish him of them in private.

So there is another but a like duty of obligation, which instructs him to whisper good counsel in his brother's ear and to warn him of approaching danger. And this refers not more to the danger that is without and around him than to
that which is within him; not more to the peril that springs from the concealed foe who would way; lay him and covertly injure him, than to that deeper peril of those faults and infirmities which lie within his own heart, and which, if not timely crushed by good and earnest resolution of amendment, will, like the ungrateful serpent in the fable, becomes warm with life only to sting that bosom that has nourished them.

Admonition of a brother's fault is, then, the duty of every Mason, and no true one will, for either fear or favor, neglect his performance. But as the duty is Masonic, so is there a Masonic way in which that duty should be discharged. We must admonish not with self sufficient pride in our own reputed goodness, not in imperious tones, as though we looked down in scorn upon the degraded offender, not in language, that by its harshness, will wound rather than win, will irritate more than it will reform; but with persuasive gentleness that gains the heart, with the all subduing influences of "mercy unrestrained", with the magic might of love, with the language and the accents of affection, which mingle grave displeasure for the offense with grief and pity for the offender.

This and this alone, is Masonic admonition. I am not to rebuke my brother in anger, for I too have my faults, and I dare not draw around me the folds of my garment lest they should be polluted by my neighbor's touch; but I am to admonish in private, not before the world, for that would degrade him; and I am to warn him perhaps from my own example, how vice ever should be followed by sorrow, for that goodly sorrow leads to repentance, and repentance to amendment and amendment to joy.

/s/ Hugo Thomas

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas

Grand Master

American Canadian Grand Lodge
Equal Rights and Opportunities

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at the "Galilei" Lodge No. 810A on 29th August 1977)
Equal Rights and Opportunities
(Presented at the "Galilei" Lodge No. 810A on 29th August 1977)

My Brothers

It is a single honor and real pleasure for me to be invited to actively participate in this Masonic education night, in a Lodge, where Masonic Light of our American Canadian Grand Lodge illuminated the pathway of the craftsmen first, and thus becoming a light-tower for all 42 constituent Lodges in the following years. It is knowledgeable pride in this Lodge and the willingness to come to its assistance wherever the necessity might require it.

In recent weeks I have reviewed my thoughts to determine where increased emphasis be placed during this communication to deal with problems of the day. As a result, I have concluded that our principal concern should be directed to carry on the sound and profound admonition:

"Masonic obligations inculcate equal rights and opportunities"

Word fashions come and they go. Slogans are widely used to put across a point, to convey an idea, sometimes to cause a thought. Most of these have political or commercial origins and are used to promote an individual's interest or to sell the public some bill of goods offered by a business. Even Freemasonry is not immune from modern sloganeering. Change has become a fetish, the in thing, the thing to do; some advocate a special Masonic image. And even such a serious topic as "the future of Freemasonry" carries the implication of change and we are in grave danger of being coerced into sweeping changes purely as a sign of the times.
"Equal Rights", "human rights" are further re-modernized slogans; too self-evident to speculative Masons to react ostentatious about their practical application or to proclaim them from the housetops. Yet the challenge becomes apparent, a challenge toward off approaching danger due to misinterpretation.

Webster's definition for "obligation" is synonymous with duty, responsibility, vow and accountability; and "opportunity" inculcates convenience, occasion, season; an opportunity is a conjunction of possible, with probability of success, advantage or gratification.

And "equal" classifies: of the same degree with another or with each other, as in magnitude or value, neither greater nor less; having the same rank, rights or importance; meeting on the level, uniform in operation under equal laws - What more can I say?

The needs of modern living encroach upon both our personal and public lives with ever increasing demands, with multiple activities competing for every available moment. Unfortunately, it is often Freemasonry which suffers and does not receive the attention it merits in this competitive situation. Freemasonry is heir to a great legacy but we must always remember that an institution is only as strong as its foundation, a chain as strong as its weakest link.

We want to select only those promising strong links forging the mighty edifice as strong today as in times past. The structure's foundation must remain as firm as it once was. Each and every Mason must look in his heart for the answer. Our contribution to mankind down through the centuries has bee significant, whether it be in the fields of government, education, literature, medicine, music or almost any other area we would name. This is not because of any direct involvement, for such would be contrary to our high principles, but rather is the result of individuals practicing
Masonic precepts in their daily lives. The precepts and teachings of our Order in seeking tolerance and personal liberty for all and a desire to be better men and citizens have been instrumental in the formation of our free nations, where "common obligations inculcate equal rights and opportunities".

I do not construe this as indicating that we should shun all change, or that we should cease our efforts to constantly seek improvement. But I do believe that we should abandon no standards until we are morally certain that we have replaced them with better and more effective ones, and I pray the basic facets of Masonry will always escape the ravages of changing times.

In opening this section of my presentation you may have noticed I began by thanking our Creator. For I am aware that had it not been for His greatness and goodness, and the prayers you offered upon my request, I would not be able to deliver to you in person this topic today...

It has been said that out of pain and suffering the souls of men are rewarded with a greater understanding of the true value of things. And I am fully aware that it was Another's spirit that guided your prayers that affected my thoughts which I offer you for consideration, meditation and contemplation. Yesterday has passed; with the yesterdays and today behind us, we must now look ahead to many trying tomorrows. Experience and increased results should be our goal for every tomorrow.

An institution comes into being because it has something of great value to contribute to society. It exists as long as it adheres to its original design and continues to make its influence for good felt in society. It has always been the work of Masonry to keep before the world those lofty teachings which give meaning to life, which reflect the divine nature of man, and which give dignity and worth to the
individual, in equal proportion. Freemasonry was never intended for the masses we are a selected and receptive group of equals. It is an institution with nothing to sell to the general public, no public welfare.

Each man who desires admittance comes of his own free will, promoted by a favorable opinion conceived of the institution, and uninfluenced by mercenary motives. And we ask for nothing but to let us continue in our time-honored and proven ways to go about our business quietly, and to do our good works: to belong, to measure up, to be accepted in the company of one's peers; to know, that what they are doing is just, right and true; to be a part of a great institution whose precepts have been tested by the fires of times, while practicing equal rights and opportunities for centuries.

We are proud, that in all of history. Freemasonry has never broken with its past; never spilled one drop of blood for opinions' sake; which, in spite of its latent power, has never dominated or controlled anything by block voting; whose adherents are secure in the knowledge, that happiness is not complete unless it is shared, to share and pass on those great eternal truths that he has discovered.

Let us pray to God that it is His will that our Order stands upright as it was since time immemorial. And having prayed let us muster our numbers and all other Masonic organizations and put our combined good resolves into meaningful action.

Benjamin Franklin said: "We gave you a republic, if you can keep it". I paraphrase his statement Masonically: We gave you your working tools, keep and use them wisely, ever remembering, our common obligations inculcate equal rights and opportunities. When we pledge allegiance to Freemasonry, we are really demonstrating the spirit of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth in the spirit of the Three Great Lights. Only a symbol or a slogan? Not so: but rather
the visible sign of the power to nurture and sustain our invisible Mystic Tie; they are the Charter of our spiritual liberty, our reverence to the Grand Lodge empowering us to bring men to Light, who would have otherwise remained in perpetual darkness; to make this world a land of the free and the home of the brave, with integrity, pride, hope, love of God. That is our Masonic equal right and daily opportunity. George Washington expressed it all too well in his farewell address: "The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts; of common dangers, sufferings and success. Every portion of our country, and of our order -, finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving this union of the whole".

The Craft does not pretend to take a man any man and make him good. Rather its purpose is to take a good man and try to make him better. In so doing, the result cannot help but benefit society as a whole. For that reason, Freemasonry is, and should be, exclusive in nature. Only those found to be worthy of the honor should be admitted. To be a member of the Order is a privilege, not a right, and should be ever so.

There is no substitute for quality, with or without equal opportunities. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, we read that there is a time for all things. Freemasonry is more than Just an organization. It is a state of mind, and as such, it is timeless. Freemasonry is indeed in the pursuit of further Light "a time for all seasons".

Truly, to comply with these demands means a revolution in our way of life and thinking. Does not this mean a privilege! And the greater the privilege the more important is the responsibility. Governments and their institutions can legislate against poverty or discrimination, - racial or otherwise; a Mason’s task is improvement and tolerance. We
reach refinement through endurance; perfection is God's work.

I, therefore, protest those who campaign and petition and parade for individual rights but have no tolerance for the rights of those who oppose them. I protest those who profess to champion peace and equal rights, but resort to terror and violence.

I protest broadcast commentators and journalists who feed the flame of fear by allowing rumors, guesses, speculation and conjecture to masquerade as facts. In short: I protest those groups and individuals who champion any system at variance with the basic concept of equal rights and opportunities.

The symbolic Sword pointing to the Naked Heart illustrates that justice will sooner or later overtake us, and although our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, yet - these are our equal rights and opportunities.

Finally, my Brothers: I believe, that Masonry can not continue to live, only because of the esteemed place which it has held in bygone days, but must gain new life by virtue of its contribution to the present generation and the plans it makes for the next.

I further believe, that the opportunity for putting into practice Masonic teachings has never been greater and that telling the world what we have done is not nearly as important as promoting excellence of purpose in a revolutionary world that needs our guidelines for stability.

And I further believe, that true men will continue to make application to our Fraternity, if traditional Masonic philosophy, based on belief in God, Country and the Brotherhood of Man, is made visible in the lives of all our Brothers.
There is one supreme victory for each Mason. It is the satisfaction which he must feel, when he has taken the message of the obligations to his heart, when he banishes all evil from his life, when he is free of guile and jealousy and when he recognizes in his Brothers men who are striving, as he is, to faithfully discharge their duties to God, to country and to all mankind within the length of their Cable-Tow.

May God continue to bless our Masonic obligations and vouchsafe the equal rights and opportunities contained therein.

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
On

MASONIC

JURISPRUDENCE

By

(Dr.) Hogo Thomas, Past Grand master
American Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented at the District Workshop of the 1st and 5th District on 7 January 1978)
Masonic Jurisprudence
(Presented at the District Workshop of the 1st and 5th District)

Distinguished Grand Lodge Officers;
Worshipful Sirs, my Brothers:

Permit me to express my deep appreciation to Very Worshipful Brother Gunter Furst for his kind invitation to actively participate in the District Workshop for the privilege accorded me to present a paper on this special subject of:

Masonic Jurisprudence
particularly what constitutes a Masonic offense and certain Masonic penalties?

I admire the confidence of the District Master of the 1st Masonic District he reposed when he assigned this task to me, the most obvious perhaps being my preference to invest my abilities and my knowledge in the medical field rather than in judicial endeavors. None, however, should take this statement verbatim: I am deeply convinced of the necessity of Masonic laws and a strict adherence to them; I am too familiar with our laws to appreciate their main purpose, to preserve that general uniformity of character and design which constitutes the true universality of our Institution. And they are equally important for the prosperity of the Order, and for its capacity of keeping up with the progress of the age. At this time, I will not even attempt to compete with many brilliant Masonic scholars on Masonic Jurisprudence: Albert G. Mackey; Louis B. Blakemore; J. Edward Allen; Sir William Blackstone; Robert Ingham Clegg, to name but a few "stars". But it is their spirit which motivated me to present this paper.
First, let me offer you some general remarks. Every Master Mason is obligated to abide by the laws, resolutions, edicts and decrees of his Grand Lodge, the By-laws of his lodge of which he is a member, and to uphold, maintain and support the ancient usage's and customs of the Craft. It is impossible to abide by any laws if we do not know what they are. In a foreign jurisdiction a Mason is amenable to its laws, as well as those of his own jurisdiction. In this duality of allegiance Masonry follows the civil law; thus, an American residing abroad is amenable to the laws of the nation in which he lives, but is also expected to obey the laws of his own nation. Neither is a Mason from Texas exempt from the laws of the Grand Lodge of that state merely because he happens to be sojourning in Massachusetts or Germany.

The laws of Masonry, like the laws of nations, are both unwritten as "common law" and written law. And the foundations of Masonic Law are to be found in the "Ancient Landmarks" or unwritten law and in the "Ancient Charges" or "General Regulations", the written law.

Some brief comments:

The "Ancient Landmarks" are thus stated to be those foundations of the laws of Masonry which are not subject to change and consist of the laws, usages and customs which have existed since the time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Had the Grand Lodge which first adopted the "Ancient Landmarks" provided more definitive explanations it would have saved much trouble and confusion for those newer Grand Lodges which came later. Apparently, however, they were so well understood and practiced then, that it was not thought necessary to codify them. The Landmarks Mackey lists 25 have been reduced to print and made a part of the written law in many jurisdictions. Nothing can be subtracted from them or added to them, and we are bound by the most solemn obligation of duty to transmit them to our successors.
The code of the "General Regulations" as set forth in Anderson's Constitution of 1723 and adopted shortly after the formation in 1717 of the First or Mother Grand Lodge in England, is considered as the universal written law of Freemasonry. Together with the Landmarks they constitute the foundation on which the whole superstructure of Masonic law is erected, and make the science of Masonic law. It is unnecessary to itemize these General Regulations, i.e. the Old York Constitutions of 926, the Constitution of King Edward III of 1327, the four Regulations of 1663 until 1720, and finally the General Regulations of 1723. In general it may be said that the Ancient Landmarks are concerned with the individual brother and his Lodge and his brethren; the General Regulations with the conduct of the Craft as a whole. The latter permit their own alteration by Grand Lodge, - the Ancient Landmarks do not. It is, therefore, of real importance that Masons desiring to understand the laws by which the Craft is governed and the legal standards by which Grand Lodge measures its laws, resolutions and edicts, should study both; and the Grand Lodge has an inherent power and authority to make new regulations, or to alter these, for the real benefit of our ancient Fraternity, provided always that the Ancient Landmarks be carefully preserved.

The Ancient Landmarks and the General Regulations may be regarded as bearing the same relation to Masonic law as the provisions of the Magna Charta bear to modern constitutional laws. Just as the Magna Charta specified some of the inherent rights of men which all laws of all governments should consider and respect, so the Landmarks crystallize in words the inherent characteristics of Masonry those fundamentals which make Freemasonry, and without which it would be something else.

I will now omit to commence a treatise on the subjects that relate to the qualifications of candidates, their method of application and admission, or rejection. Symbolic
Freemasonry recognizes nothing beyond the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Master Mason and Past Master; according to the progress they have made, they acquire certain rights and prerogatives; and according to their obligations specific duties devolve upon them as individuals. These applicable laws, including the nature and prerogatives of constituent Lodges or the Grand Lodge, as their representative capacity will not be the subject matter of this presentation.

Law in Masonry is so much more a matter of the heart than of the head, so much more concerned with setting forth conduct than in assessing penalties that to thoroughly comprehend it, we must be willing to revise our ideas of law as we understand the enactment of legislatures.

It is peculiar to the subject which is now about to be treated, that the division of wrongs in the profane world is not admissible in, or applicable to the system of Masonic jurisprudence. In Freemasonry, every offense is a crime, because in every violation of a Masonic law, there is not only sometimes an infringement of the rights of an individual, but always, super induced upon this, a break and violation of public rights and duties which affect the whole community of the Order; and this is the very definition of a crime. It is a settled axiom of Masonic law, that every offense which a Freemason commits is an injury to the whole Fraternity, if in nothing else, at least in this, that the bad conduct of a single member, or a lodge reflects discredit on the whole institution. The discredit and shame, therefore, that is brought upon the Institution by the misdeeds of its members, is an important element to be considered in the consideration of every Masonic offense. That is to say - that all private wrongs to an individual are public wrongs to the Order. There is a division of Masonic offences which is well worthy of notice. You will find them listed, together with all other matters of Masonic jurisprudence, in Section 4:00, Code, American
Canadian Grand Lodge. Worshipful Masters! "Cause it to be read in your Lodge, that none may pretend ignorance of the excellent precepts it enjoins".

Let me briefly reflect on just a few of them:...

- cruelty to one's inferiors and dependents, uncharitableness to the poor and needy, and a general misanthropical neglect of our duty as men to our fellow beings, exhibiting itself in extreme selfishness and indifference to the comfort or happiness of all others, are offenses against the moral law. And therefore Masonic crimes;

- injustice in every form in which one man can do wrong to another is a Masonic offense;

- disobedience and want of respect to Masonic superiors, and the bringing of private piques or quarrels into the Lodge are justly considered Masonic offenses;

- a want of courtesy and kindness to the brethren, speaking callously of one behind his back, or in any other way attempt to injure or slander him, is each a serious violation of the precepts of Freemasonry, and an offense.

*Loyalty* is an essential qualification in Freemasonry and only those who cheerfully conform to every lawful authority are accepted. Disloyalty in any form is regarded as a serious Masonic *offense*.

To be loyal is to be faithful to one's obligations, to be faithful to our leaders, and show faithfulness to obligations. Let us give a little thought to one's obligations; not only to friends but also to the solemn obligation you and I took while we knelt at the Altar. Perhaps, it would be well for us to do a little reviewing of these obligations, especially the phrase "I will speak no evil", or "I will not wrong, cheat or defraud". Have you ever had the heartache of some unkind person speaking evil of you just for spite, jealousy, or perhaps just to irritate you? This type of person is not loyal to God,
his home, or even to himself. When we find it necessary to speak of another person it would be wise for us first to put ourselves in that persons place and then ask ourselves if those words were or are kind: Are we being loyal to our obligations? Be faithful and loyal to your convictions. The chief glory in the crown of manhood is loyalty. Take a tip and be loyal. Everyone knows how to express a complaint, but few can utter a graceful compliment. It's a matter of practice. If everyone sweeps up his own front door the whole world will be clean.

I could go on and on - it is sufficient to say that whatever is a violation of fidelity to solemn engagements, a neglect of prescribed duties, or a transgression of the cardinal principles of friendship, morality and brotherly love, is a Masonic offense, and renders the offender liable to Masonic punishment.

In this context I must, however, bring to your attention, that it is not a Masonic offense for a brother not to attend lodge or to obey a summons- "health and business permitting". In every lodge everywhere, there are members who remain inactive except for remitting their dues payments. This appears, on the surface at least, to be inconsistent with that dynamism one would expect from a member of our fraternity; the facts are that some members, for better or worse, actually appear to remain passive in their Masonic activities. These Brothers are as vital to the well being of Craft Masonry as those who devote many hours to the work of the lodge. We must never lose sight that without the financial basis to operate derived principally from dues and fees, very few lodges could maintain a viable program, or even provide the "setting" for the active members to conduct their affairs. In this sense, it is not necessarily derogatory to be termed a "card-carrying-Mason" if by that term the implication is conveyed that the brother concerned is in good standing and is supporting the lodge by his regular
dues payments. So the simple fact a brother may be inactive, while very unfortunate indeed, cannot automatically place the brother in a disparaging light. He is just as much a Mason as the brother who attends regularly, votes, and holds office; he is just a different type of Mason. Some Masons are more motivated than others; some love ritual and instruction, some love administrative work, some just enjoy sitting on the sidelines and watching others perform, and some even enjoy participating so long as they can criticize. To each his own. Masonry has something for everyone. And there are brothers who remain very active for a period of time, and then, for some reason best known to themselves, simply display what appears to be a lack of further interest by not attending or participating in the lodge's affairs. What happens to cause these brothers to retire from active attendance or for not obeying a summons I cannot say, but I accept it in good faith. Were we to question the motivation of every member, and attempt to determine for ourselves just what constitutes an "acceptable" response to such summons, we would not be recognizing the fact that every member is the best judge, whether we personally think so or not is irrelevant, as to the proper allocation of his time in accord with our Masonic teachings. Only a brother can best determine what constitutes "business" for him, and how his time should best be allocated to attend to such business. Remember always that the term "health and business permitting" is not restrictive to one's personal commercial endeavors, but applies to anything a brother rightfully considers as his business. Domestic affairs and duties are in this category, and blessed is the man that remains home to preserve his domestic tranquility if his family cannot or will not put up with his absence at lodge. Unfortunate, but it must be respected. In short, we must endeavor always to respect a brother's excuse, whether we consider it to be valid, acceptable, or anywhere below that evaluation. We may not like it, but we are dealing with mature human beings and
Brothers who received the same light as you and I did, and fortunately they are eminently human. Education is the only answer here. After all, in Masonry we are constantly dealing with Brothers, good, upright men with their own human traits and inclinations. Masonry does not have the authority to mobilize its members simply by issuing orders or expecting them to obey commands. We do not think in military categories! Our only real source of control over our membership is that exerted in the form of the Mystic Tie, that mysterious force which enables us to respond immediately because that force does not exist and causes us to respond, to acknowledge our duties, and to view Masonry in that favorable light which has enabled it to expect such response from its members, but always voluntarily!! Motivate the Brother concerned; pay him a personal visit to attempt to get the answer. Each man's answer is to him, personally valid. We can only change men's views or opinions by understanding this vital fact. A man's excuse is personally valid, until he can be convinced by himself, that the excuse is not valid. Do not force a Brother against the wall, respect his answer first, and then attempt to make him see things your way, but give him the genuine respect he should enjoy as a brother, whether you think he deserves it or not. Summing up this issue into one sentence, "Do ye unto others, as ye would have others do unto you!" You just cannot beat the Great Light when it comes to wisdom in brief.

Many civil laws are provided with measures of enforcement and penalties for infringement. Masonic law in this jurisdiction knows but three penalties: reprimand, definite and indefinite suspension and expulsion or Masonic death; to these other Jurisdictions have added censure and exclusion. These Masonic penalties for serious infractions of Masonic law may be ordered after a Masonic trial and a verdict of guilty, but the punishment is usually made to fit the crime, and mercy is much more a part of Masonic than of civil law. Infractions of Masonic law resulting
in trial and punishment are rare, compared to the number of Masons, the vast majority of whom are so willing and anxious to obey the laws that "enforcement" is seldom required. But this requires basic mental qualifications.

I suggest to consider carefully the fact that while a man is born with some qualifications, there are many which he can acquire for himself; he can qualify himself by deciding to do it, by will, determination and practice, by patiently learning this great and ancient art of Freemasonry, permitting himself never to be discouraged by either time or difficulty. Our goal is: to make men better. Of all descriptions pertaining to Masons these are the most applicable prerequisites for mental qualifications: good character and to be free born. Good character connotes being honest and truthful, devout and charitable, thoughtful, loyal and respectful of others and of oneself. Moral concepts and moral behavior must be learned, molded at an early age through adulthood, with training and self-discipline; and then become a way of life just as Masonry is a way of life. It is, therefore, inappropriate for a Mason to sponsor a man for membership in our Order merely because he knows of nothing against him. He should know him well enough to know his philosophy of life, his good character. And we still number among membership qualifications the requirement to be free born. But, how else could we be born, since today we have neither slavery nor serfdom? Our Order requires that a man be free born in every sense of the word, wholly answerable to himself, not under obligation to give an account of himself to others, nor required to divulge to relatives or to business, political or religious superiors every thing he does. Otherwise it is impossible for him to keep his Masonic obligations. The Investigating Committee is our first line of defense. Let it be vigilant and alert and successfully resist all attempts to relax our traditional moral standards, or the consequences may be fatal to the Lodge and the Brother concerned.
You will note, among the Masonic penalties is not noted the "Admonition", although I'm tempted to briefly comment on it. According to the ethics of Freemasonry, it is made a duty obligatory upon every member of the Order to conceal the faults of a brother, that is, not to blazon forth his errors and infirmities, to let them learned by the world from some other tongue than his own, and to admonish him of them in private; to whisper wise counsel in his brother's ears and to warn him of approaching danger. And this refers not more to the danger that is without and around him than to that which is within him; to that deeper peril of those faults and infirmities which lie within his own heart, and which, if not timely crushed by good and earnest resolution of amendment may bring harm to the Brother. But as the duty of admonition is Masonic, so is there a Masonic way in which that duty should be discharged, never admonish with self-sufficient pride in our own reputed goodness, not in imperious tones, not in harsh language that will wound rather than win, will irritate more than it will reform; but with persuasive gentleness that gains the heart, with the all-subduing influences of "mercy unrestrained", with the magic might of love, with the language and the accents of affection, which mingle grave displeasures for the offence with grief and pity for the offender. This and this alone, is Masonic admonition. I am not to rebuke my brother in anger, for I too have my faults; but I am to admonish in private, not before the world, for that would degrade him; and I am to warn him perhaps from my own example, how vice ever should be followed by sorrow, for that goodly sorrow leads to repentance, and repentance to amendment and amendment to joy.

On the subject of Suspension, deplorable as any Masonic punishment, I will briefly touch the sentence of **Definite Suspension**, a verdict which is exercised in December by many Lodges when some Brothers are subject to suspension for non-payment of dues. By definite suspension is meant a deprivation of the rights and privileges
of Freemasonry for a fixed period of time, which period is always named in the sentence. By the operation of this penalty, a Freemason is for the time prohibited from the exercise of all his Masonic privileges. His rights are placed in abeyance, and he can neither visit Lodges, hold Masonic communication, nor receive fraternal relief during the period for which he has been suspended. - But he is still a Freemason!

I endorse the many fine comments made by Masters of Lodges and Masonic scholars on this subject, particularly Brother Jess' SOP in his last November MAD-Bulletin. However, it is urged that every Lodge investigate thoroughly each individual case before actually suspending a Brother. There is too often the possibility that a Brother is in a financial bind; and many are too proud to make their hardships known, although this is not the attitude a Brother should take; he has the right to confide in his Brethren that he is in need of assistance. Did we instruct him so before he left the area? It is always possible to investigate thoroughly these cases across the miles? Did we make every possible effort to ascertain if a Brother is not letting himself be suspended merely because of his financial inability to pay? I do not mean those few Brothers who deliberately fail to pay their dues because of coldness and indifference to the Lodge. No, no, - but I am referring to the 80 percent who have lost contact with their lodge; where we have no valid up-dated address; who were never trained or instructed how to travel in foreign countries; who never received a lodge communication. I could go on and on - the manner this serious subject is dealt with and discussed in some lodges makes me sick and distressed. But I will not hesitate to publicly correct an often-observed misconception or rather misinterpretation; that is "We need their dues to meet with our Charity goals". Yes, but this goal must be primarily directed on the needs of the Lodge.

It is to be borne in mind that Freemasonry is not to be entered in the hopes of personal gain or advancement. Our
aim is to cultivate a brotherly feeling among men and help the distressed and afflicted Brothers to the extent of our ability. But it cannot be too strongly emphasized that Blue Lodge Masonry is not a benefit society, although the practice of Masonic charity is a fundamental virtue. There are other excellent Masonic Bodies founded for monetary charity.

We should also remember that Freemasonry originally was not designed to confer degrees. This function was incidental to its main objective which was to enable men to meet together in friendship and brotherly love. This still should be the main objective of every Mason and his most important task should be the building of a chain of friendship which will make of his brethren a Temple of living stones. Only the individual Mason can make this come to pass but he must have an inspired leadership in order to do so.

Brothers of the Lodge: be sure in each case before final action is taken on suspension.

All Masons, whether members of Lodges or not, are subject to the infliction of any Masonic penalty when found to merit it after due trial. Resignation or withdrawal from the Order does not cancel a Mason's obligations, nor exempt him from that wholesome control which the Order exercises over the conduct of its members. The highest of all Masonic penalties that can be inflicted on a member of the Order is expulsion; it has been often called a Masonic death in its all-encompassing consequences. An important question remains to be discussed, which refers to the penalty of suspension or expulsion from a Masonic allied body. They do not affect the relations of the punished Brother to a Symbolic Lodge. But a sentence from a Lodge carries with it, of necessity, the same sentence from every appendant body. The concordant bodies are not and cannot be recognized as a Masonic body by a Lodge of Master Masons by any of the modes of recognition known to Symbolic Masonry.
In closing this presentation, imperfect and with all its omissions it must of necessity be, just one final comment on this subject, perhaps it can serve as a small guideline.

As the Lodge is opened with the rising sun, in the name of the GAOTU, and closed at its setting in peace and harmony, so, if you have any animosity against a Brother, let not the sun sink in the west without being witness to your reconciliation. Early explanations prevent long continued enmities.

The golden ladder of charity that must be climbed to reach the summit is the rung of grace. Grace is often doing for another being, kindness he doesn't deserve, hasn't earned, could not ask for, and can't repay. Grace offers man what he cannot do for himself. The unwritten creed of many is that God is under obligations to them, but grace suggests that we are under obligation to God. To live in that consciousness is to live by grace. When you possess the gift of grace, you see the needs and hear the hearts of others through an inner awareness. And within every Freemason should be found the gift of grace towards all mankind. The unconscious grace of knowing your Brother's need before he speaks and your mindfullness of that need will be as little light to dispel his darkness, if all Freemasons act as little lights to each other and to humanity at large, we can never taker on our path. Always remember that from your light, another may be ignited. All our little lights together will form a brilliance comparable to a sunburst at noontime.

Masons look for the good in life - and praise it! What value is it to dwell upon the negative aspects of the otherwise wonderful lives which are our good fortune to live! The philosophy of positive thinking is by no means an exemplification of the "head in the sand" syndrome. It is, simply stated, the prototype of the basic Masonic belief in a Supreme Being. It is a specimen of our knowledge that by practicing and teaching the four natural virtues of antiquity;
i.e., fortitude, prudence temperance and justice, together with the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, that the ills of the world may be tempered, if not cured.

Finally, my Brothers, allow me the liberty of quoting the Apostle Paul as this sums up my feeling on how everyone, including myself, should conduct himself in his Masonic life.

Paul said:

"Study to show thyself approved unto
  God and the brethren,
  a workman that needeth not to be
  ashamed of the way he deals with the Truth".

And so mote it ever be!

/s/ Hugo Thomas

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Our Relations with the Concordant Bodies

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented to the Brothers of the American Canadian Grand Lodge on 9th July 1977)
Concordant Bodies
(Presented to the Brothers of the ACGL on 9th July 1977)

My Brothers of this or any other Jurisdiction:

I gratefully acknowledge the honor to share Masonic fellowship with all of you at this Masonic social get-together. Without the guidance and assistance of my good friend and Brother Dusty Rhodes, we would have some problems to find this fine place.

And this reminds me of a little story I witnessed a while ago: I am sure you have heard about the two friends who ran into each other in front of the psychiatrist's office. "Hello", said the first. "Are you coming or going?" "If I knew", his friend replied, "I would not be here." We are lucky! We know why we are here. We also know, no one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

Freemasonry is a bridge, a connecting link between men which conveys agreement on certain moral principles, ideals and philosophies designed to improve their lives. It bridges the gap which exists until men gain the light of knowledge that comes through the Masonic experience. It is not a panacea. It does not claim to cure all the ills which plague mankind. But when men do follow Masonic precept and example more likely than not, a lasting tie of brotherhood and understanding will evolve.

Nothing yet devised by man has been perfect; even great bridges have fallen. But if men do practice our tenets of friendship, truth and Masonic Charity, or name it relief, as Masonry advocates, then a benevolent alliance between men will endure like the best-engineered bridge and provide the most rewarding and fulfilling life.
We do not favor unoriented progressiveness. We feel, human planning for the future based on the needs of mankind must develop, which is not feasible without conscious clarification of the norms which constitute our mutual existence. Some of these norms are our fundamentals; they represent cornerstones of our Masonic edifice, of our Lodges and of the individual Freemason.

You see: finding enough to talk about is not a difficult matter at this July meeting; awakening renewed interest in the symbolic Lodge among those who have lost touch through activities and attendance at other Masonic or affiliated gatherings; aim to emphasize more strongly the cement of brotherly love so members will come back again to enjoy co mingling with their fellows and family members.

When I decided to name this presentation, "Which way to go? Our Relations with the Concordant Bodies", I had the sincere hope, that it might accomplish something, at least achieve it primary purpose: the stimulation of a new interest in truly achieving Masonic greatness only when we have found true Brotherhood and a certain affinity with the Fatherhood of God. And then we can truthfully join in the universal refrain:

Show me the way, not to fortune and fame,  
Not to win laurels or praise for my name,  
But show me the way to the hearts of men,  
And they will say: My Brother, come in!

In the beginning let me make clear my position, I should rather say our position. And in this context I owe a debt of gratitude to many valuable ideas of mutual agreement and for the commonly shared energy and concern
on this subject to Most Worshipful Brother Robert A. Martens, Grand Master of Wyoming.

Is it possible for a Brother to find true satisfaction in the activities and fellowship of his own Blue Lodge? In other words, can a Mason find the ultimate in the Ancient Craft of three degrees? Our answer is wholeheartedly in the affirmative. Although the beauties of our Mystic Art are not restricted to the Symbolic Lodge one can find supreme happiness there. When you come down to the fine point, is not the real test, the kind of Masonic life lived, not the number of degrees acquired?

Consider also another phase of this question. Look over the Brother Masons who have completed 25 and 50 years of faithful service in their Blue Lodges without attaining membership in other Masonic bodies. In the mellowing process of the years they have been enriched in fellowship and Masonic knowledge and feel amply rewarded.

I have tried in my Masonic profession to uphold a high standard. I have never consciously spoken a word or written a line of which any man could be ashamed. I have never put a word into print which I could not show to my Brothers and my family and be proud to show it. I have never written a line which at the moment of writing I did not absolutely believe to be true.

My Brothers: "... The President of the United States is the "First Citizen" but as a citizen has no more right, power, privilege or honor than his humblest neighbor."

The additional degrees and Rites of Masonry can make their fortunate possessors better Masons than they might have been without these experiences and additional teaching. But none of them can make a good man more a Mason then he was when he was raised to the Sublime Degree.

Symbolic Masonry is the heart and soul of all Masonry, and the wiser a Mason becomes in any of the concordant
bodies, the longer he lives and learns within them, the more convinced is he of the primacy of that which is given the initiate when he is raised to the Sublime Degree.

It is because of these facts that there is one Freemasonry in this country. There are four recognized, desirable and admirable branches of the universal Masonic tree, but the trunk and roots thereof are Symbolic Masonry, to which all Masons of whatever affiliation or degree must belong.

So, it is proper that these concordant or allied Masonic needs have come not from within the body of Ancient Craft Masonry but rather that it has formed the foundation, from which the Appendant Bodies could grow.

It is doubtful that anyone would take serious issue with the objectives of these Bodies. In addition, here is a desire among many Masons that cannot be stated as an objective which these Appendant Bodies may be filling. This is participation. It is definitely needed to maintain interest in Masonry or anything else for that matter.

What I am saying is that not nearly enough is done in the average Lodge, under its existing structure, to keep its members busy and interested. But, my Brethren, there is another side of this picture that we must recognize. There are men who might be active in their lodges if their time, energy, and talents were not diverted by these Bodies and the more Appendant Bodies in a given Jurisdiction the greater the diversion.

After all, we must remember that collectively we have the same ultimate goal: to make good men better, the quarrel we have sometimes with each other is how we persuade a member of one or more orders to divide his time. How we get him to assign his priorities. It really is as simple as that.

I would like to relate the so-called problems between the Appendant Bodies and the Blue Lodge to a business
situation wherein we are in reality trying to barter with a customer (member) to retain his account (time) from our competitors (appendant bodies). One of the main problems we have sometimes is an overblown sense of authority with which either side regards the other Masonic organization. Yes, we are the final authority and we do have the power to perhaps influence certain things, but we are dealing with mature men, who for a good percentage are successful in their field of endeavor, and they do not lightly take to being ordered about, in their private affairs. How much better it is to lead than to order. President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "If I have to order a man to do a task, he will only stick as long as I have him scared, if I have convinced him that the task is just and right, he will stay through hell and high water."

I am an eternal optimist, and I have to answer, the appendant and concordant bodies are good for Masonry and generally help tremendously to strengthen it. We must face realities that some bodies appear more glamorous, some have sharp employees and for all purposes, full time ambassadors and are better organized to promote their programs. They actively solicit and promote to our membership and the public at large while we operate on an ever-changing basis from year to year with new leaders coming along to take their reigns of command.

Some good, some bad, some indifferent and some not capable of exercising strong and capable leadership. This then, reduces the problem to the level of Masonic Leadership, a topic which has been well covered many times, and yet is intertwined to the point that it becomes inseparable.

After all, we have the candidate first; we initiate him and guide his progress for a period of three months and upwards. What impressions do we make to instill our philosophy and doctrine in him? We know what the Shrine, Scottish Rite, York Rite and Eastern Star will do. We, in many
instances, choose to lay the decline to Blue Lodge interest and membership at their door step and yet have we considered the competition of service clubs, school events, and last and certainly not least, that which to me should be most despised of all, television. We often fail to inspire our initiates to a point where an easy chair and fancy Television programs can be equated with an evening of Masonic fellowship. Brethren, acknowledging the problem at this level, makes us aware that our Masonic appendages are not the problem. At this point, I believe that, they are in reality, carrying the load of growth and mere survival. Yes, unquestionably, we have applicants for membership who have as their goal, membership in the Scottish Rite and York Rite and the Shrine, but never forget we must have them first. If they are good men, I do not feel they should be denied, for if we do our ritualistic work, show fellowship and interest and involve them, we will make good active members of them. All too often members move on and become active in the other bodies for the simple reason that there is where they are offered the opportunity to actively participate.

Let's examine the average lodge in this Jurisdiction. The membership roster will show forty resident members. Twenty members attend each regular meeting. Where are the others? All at Chapter, Rite meetings. Shrine Ceremonials? Hardly, my brethren, for these bodies meet but once generally each month and rarely conflict with the Blue Lodge meeting night. Evidently we must have a program to get these missing members involved. Whether it be lectures and degree work, or committee assignments. Our task did not end when we raised that candidate. We, of a necessity, must keep him an integral part of our lodge work. If we do not, we cannot complain if the other bodies seize the opportunity and do involve him, his interests, and his time.

I do not agree with the trite old saying. "We need more Masonry in men, not more men in Masonry," I believe we just happen to need more of both. An organization which is
atrophy cannot long stay viable. By our lack of leadership, too many Masons have substituted the 24 inch Television Screen for the 24 inch gauge.

It is incumbent upon us to learn to turn their attention to their mother Lodge and realize the fellowship they are missing. Yet, again, it will take more than opening, degree work and closing to keep their attention and participation. Our strong lodges are the ones with good interesting programs at least once a month or whenever they do not have degree work. They are also the ones who are proficient in their degree work.

I can speak only of my knowledge of Masonic organizations in this Jurisdiction, but I am sure it does not vary too much in others and stateside. The Brothers in the York Rite, Scottish Rite and Shrine see that the members are involved and committed. There is degree work, degree teams and practices in the Rites, and to face cold hard facts, a dangling hope, the carrot of reward in terms of recognition with honorary degrees. A contradiction of Masonic principles? Perhaps yes, but also most effective.

In the Shrine there is that pageantry and costuming which appeals to the boy ever present in all men, coupled with this are the charitable causes, and on and on. But to belabor the point, the man is active and feels useful and needed, instead of setting back knocking these people, let's learn from them. Let's set the craft to labor. We need the leadership to present interesting programs and to see to it that our Blue Lodge members become involved.

The first impressions you make are important, if you are interesting and actually interested in your friends, knowledgeable and able to communicate, your friends will stay. Even if your glamorous sister does solicit them; if you have built a good base for a long friendship, they will not forget you. Do not be a square, but encompass them.
I must beg your indulgence: maybe this is too frivolous an approach, but it really does state the problem. Glamour and attention are tough competitors, but an active interest in and participation by our brethren will rekindle their interest.

One point, strictly sales promotion, and yet a misnomer, which I believe we can and should correct through the Rite Bodies. They are not the higher degrees, but only further, broader or explanatory degrees. And we gratefully acknowledge, these Bodies never interfere, or even try to do so, in Grand Lodge or Lodge business.

I am going to have to confess or perhaps express my gratitude and thanks to be able to say that at least within the American Canadian Grand Lodge, this has presented no problem for us. We have been accorded the most courteous and sincere cooperation that could be asked for. I personally am a great believer in face-to-face meetings whenever possible. I realize that our small membership, small number of lodges, and many Masters of Lodges and most Grand Lodge Officers are actively involved in the work of our appendant Bodies; and this fact makes my personal task in this regard much easier. The Appendant Bodies realize, I know, that the decline of membership in many Grand Lodges must ultimately be reflected in their own growth curve. In personal visits with their leaders, their concern has been stressed. It may have been, that in times past we received occasionally only lip service from them, but their awareness of the problem of a general decline which is about to overtake them, also has changed this attitude from a passive to an active interest in Blue Lodge Masonry.

They are all Blue Lodge Masons; and as such they are all under the Jurisdiction of their various Masters, and of course, the Grand Lodge.

The task for us is what it has always been, to work in a spirit of reverence, harmony and love, and to give of our
talents freely, with no thought of personal gain, toward the realization of our hopes and dreams for a better world.

The answer to the question posed is a clear, YES'; the Concordant Bodies do and will continue strengthening Masonry.

Be not too hasty to make unfavorable remarks on our Brethren in these orders if they are active and participating where they are, and vice versa, for as I said at the beginning, we all strive for the same purpose: To make good men better.

And remember also, as it was so aptly said by Henry David Thoreau, in his book, "Walden": "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer, let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away" ... of his own free will and accord!

/s/Hugo Thomas

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American Canadian Land Grand Lodge
Tribute to the Order of DeMolay

by

Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Dedicated to the special class of initiates on 5 March 1977 in Kaiserslautern, Germany
A Tribute To The Order of DeMolay

(Dedicated to the special class of initiates on 5th March 1977 in Kaiserlautern)

There is nothing too good to wish you
But this wish I hope may come true;
That all the sunbeams you've scattered,
Reflected, may shine back to you.

Greetings and Salutations my young friends, to this your special initiation class.

Vital to every man is a sense of real purpose in life. The operative Mason becomes a real master builder when, beyond earning his wages for cutting and setting stones, he snares the joy, in the inspired sense of achievement that comes from the realization that he is building a great cathedral.

Without the vision of his ultimate goal, and without the pride in the individual contribution he is making toward the noble finished product, the magnificent building that will be so great a source of inspiration, without this vision and this feeling of dedication, the worker is little better than a robot, or a zombie.

All too few of us today have a sense of deep pride in our jobs, and all too few of us are dedicated to building for generations yet unborn. All too few of us are building for our sons and daughters, the generations that tomorrow will be running the world.

From the moment of birth, the healthy baby begins a seemingly endless series of aimless twitching, which as weeks
go by, takes on a semblance of purposeful activity. If the new born child is too quiet, a firm but friendly pat or two will trigger a cry of pain and the activity of life begins.

Growing up is a constant refinement of uncoordinated muscular activity into purposeful or effective motion, learning to eat, to walk, to use the hands, to train our muscles to do the million of things that are a part of human life.

The mind, too, grows in the same way, but far more subtly. The child must first learn to take care of himself, and then learn to live with others. No child should grow up without an awareness of the necessity of purposeful activity to sustain life. No child should mature without developing a sense of ultimate responsibility both to himself and to his Fellow man.

Too many of the young people of today are floundering, they have the inner urge to do something, but they do not know what to do. Many have so much handed to them, with so little restraint, that they are just bored or fractious.

Our youth groups, DeMolay Boys and Rainbow Girls, have a great potential. They give our young people something to do and guidelines for doing. It is obvious that the rioters and the hippies are not from families with Masonic background. The basic tradition of Freemasonry is the joy of the builder not the frustration of the destroyer.

What does our youth expect?

Regardless of popular rumor, today's young people are not lost to all virtue and constructive endeavors. In many cases it is manifestly obvious that youth has thoroughly digested some of the most profound lessons of humanity. Young people are rejecting and condemning many old forms of hypocrisy and intolerance which justly ought to be so rejected. Unfortunately, in the eyes of many of the young, formal fraternities have assumed the inaccurate image of
being hopelessly ultra-conservative, anti-youth and prejudiced. In addition, many of today's youth perceive that such organizations simply do not want them. From the outside, traditional Masonry often seems to have built in, its own defensive wall to keep young people and their ideas as far away as possible.

Regardless of the image problem, however, youth still needs Masonry as much or more than it ever did. Where else is there a potentially better vehicle for the ever-essential fact is that Masonry still holds the key to the imagination of youth? Fortunately, that key rests in Masonry's most fundamental concept, the concept of world brotherhood, fraternity and tolerance.

Brotherhood is probably the most powerful word in the philosophical vocabulary of today's youth. We have developed one of the most active and participating generations in history. To excite the interest of today's young people, no organization needs to do more than say, "We are helping others. You can join us and have a meaningful role in making this world better!"

To join and simply "belong" is not enough. There is too much attractive competition for one's time. Youthful membership in anything must promise relevance, active participation and demonstrated mutual respect. What a young man wants from Masonry cannot be separated from what Masonry needs for itself. To help give perspective to its crusades, youth needs Masonry. To help give crusades to its perspective, Masonry also needs youth. I do not know who the first Mason was. I do know, however, the first great DeMolay was Frank S. Land; and I know what a Mason and a DeMolay are now, today, tomorrow. They are the perfect representation of love; a love that goes hand in hand with kindness, courtesy and respect.

Freemasonry and DeMolay stand for kindness for those in need, and to assist and support today's youth in worthy
Masonic youth organizations, its kindness is, sitting through a long meeting, but enjoying it as they watch the efforts their knowledge and guidance have wrought; it is seeing the faith and hope they have helped instill. And knowing that through their kindness, they have brought together many new friends.

It is courtesy for their neighbors, it is stopping to help a stranger along the way, lighten their load and add a smile.

It is respect for our fellowmen, and thus set a precedent for all mankind. This, and much more is, what Freemasonry and DeMolay are.

In closing permit me to leave you with the following:

From far and wide we came today,
To honor our Boys of DeMolay.
Boys they are with hearts of gold,
But men at heart a thousand fold.
One for all and all for one,
Like soldiers who have a battle won.
In colorful dress large and small,
They stand before us proud and tall.
Hearts are filled with what we see,
This day of joy will always be.
A day we are so proud to say,
"God bless our Boys of DeMolay,
and let us salute Youth in Masonry.

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thomas
Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Tribute to the

Order of The Rainbow for

Girls

by

Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented on 3 October 1976 at the Institution of Liberty Assembly L. T.Order of the Rainbow for Girls, Hanau Germany)
A Tribute To The Order Of The Rainbow for Girls

(Presented on 3 October 1976 at the Institution of Liberty Assembly L. T.Order of the Rainbow for Girls, Hanau Germany)

Yea,

I have a goodly heritage.

Psalm 16:6

Beloved Supreme Deputy in Germany of the Supreme Assembly of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, Esteemed Grand Worthy Advisor of Germany, Very Dear Mother Advisor, Lovely Worthy Advisor. My Brothers of our common Masonic Path.

We, the members of the American Canadian Grand Lodge, are indeed in a delightful situation to thank you for your kind invitation to assist you in the Institution, the Initiation and the First Installation of Liberty Assembly, Order of the Rainbow for Girls here in Hannau.

We consider it a happy privilege to be with you and to bring greetings of the 42 Masonic Lodges under the American Canadian Grand Lodge, which are comprised of some eight thousand Masonic Brothers residing throughout the world. We assure you that the American Canadian Grand Lodge is endeavoring in every way possible to help and assist, and to cooperate with our Masonic youth organizations and all other Bodies of Masonry. We assure you of our good will and our
hope for success in your labors. I am proud to stand here as a servant of our Grand Lodge, supported by my Grand Lodge Officers and the Brothers, and to confess that we are cooperating in every way possible. And speaking of cooperation we must feel our Order's presence in our joy, its comfort in our pain, and its genius in our mind. As active workers in our Order, with an overdose of enthusiasm, we, you, shall convince the world at large of the true meaning of Rainbow.

At your initiation into the International Order of the Rainbow for girls, founded on April 6, 1922, by our revered Reverend W. Mark Sexson and first started in McAlester, Oklahoma, you have entered a new world. Symbolically and spiritually you have been reborn. This started the moment you became a Rainbow girl. And as you progress in knowledge your vision will broaden; you will become more vitally alive then ever before; you will become more aware of your fellowman, you're family, your church and your country. Your whole life will become richer, more precious; and you can decipher the beauty of the world as symbolically encompassed by the seven rainbow colors. Let your light of Faith, Hope, Love and Truth shine upon this rainbow, because we ought to be reflectors of the Light we most desired.

Years ago, when I was first invited to attend the Order of Rainbow for Girls, I just wanted to know what was going on and why it seemed so attractive. Every time I have attended since then I learned something new and different. I understood why everything had to be just as it is and I let Rainbow have a real place in my life. My association with Rainbow Assemblies has taught me a great deal. I have learned to speak in from of people with more ease; I feel closer to God and I can talk about Him to others with more comfort and enthusiasm. From Love, I learned to give of myself, to help others when ever possible and it has helped me understand Rainbow Love. Religion taught me more about God and how
to confess my belief. I understood the part the God plays in a Rainbow life. Nature has taught me to appreciate the flowers and trees, and all of the beautiful out-of-doors. Immortality has helped me accept the thought of death, although it still scares me to a degree. Fidelity has shown me that if I want others to trust me, I have to earn that privilege. Patriotism has given me a new respect for the flag, and our countries, and the role of a boy and girl. Service, like Love has made me give to others who need my support.

And I must admit, there are still many things I do not understand. I hope, in time, that I will learn and understand even more. I am glad that I still have things to learn, because it gives me a special goal. I wish that all girls could be Rainbow sisters, because it probably gives them a clearer understanding of God, life and womanhood.

Rainbow makes it much easier to adjust to new surroundings. I cannot imagine our life without Rainbow, and I would not want to be without it.

Have you wondered "Why we devote time to our Masonic youth organizations?"

The answer is simple. These young people are an inspiration to us; they warm our hearts with their truthfulness and rekindle our hope in the future. Where else lays the future but with young people? God's blessing must surely rest upon them. Our DeMolay boys of today might well be Masons of tomorrow, our Rainbow Girls of today might well be the wives of these boys in the future. Our young people are a wholesome, fun loving, impressionable group that will reflect the character of their elders.

Therefore, as Masons, it is our responsibility to set a living example that is above reproach. We must be a guiding light, free from deceit, dishonesty and immorality. We should endeavor to exceed, if possible, the enthusiasm of these young people, we must, through active, religious participation, show our sincere belief in God.
These young people are seeking the same truths in life as you and I. If this were not so they would not be active in our organizations that are dedicated to righteous living, honoring God, Home and Country. We all believe that by working together with these young people our future will be assured.

Regardless of popular rumor, today's young people are not lost to all virtue and constructive endeavors. In many cases it is manifestly obvious that youth has thoroughly digested some of the most profound lessons of humanity. Young people are rejecting and condemning many old forms of hypocrisy and intolerance which justly ought to be so rejected. Unfortunately, in the eyes of many of the young, formal fraternities have assumed the inaccurate image of being hopelessly ultra-conservative, anti-youth and prejudiced. In addition, many to today's youth perceive that such organizations simply do not want them.

Regardless of the image problem, however, youth still needs Masonry as much or more than it ever did. Where else is there a potentially better vehicle for the ever essential communication across generations? The exciting fact is that Masonry still holds the key to the imagination of youth. Fortunately, that key rests in Masonry's most fundamental concept, the concept of world brotherhood, fraternity and tolerance.

Brotherhood is probably the most powerful word in the philosophical vocabulary of today's youth. We have developed one of the most active and participating generations in history. To excite the interest of today's young people, no organization need do more than say, "We are helping others. You can join us and have a meaningful role in making this a better world!"

To join and simply belong is not enough. There is too much attractive competition for one's time. Youthful membership in anything must promise relevance, active
participation and demonstrated mutual respect. What a young man wants from masonry can not be separated from what Masonry needs for itself. To help give perspective to its crusades, youth needs Masonry. To help give crusades to its perspective. Masonry also needs youth.

After all, what does Rainbow mean to a Brother of the Masonic Fraternity:

Rainbow . . . the universal symbol of hope and optimism, of faith and eternal truth;

Rainbow . . . that gracious thing, born of rain drops and the light of sun shining through adverse skies;

Rainbow . . that echo from heaven, emblem of our own resurrection, emblem of a bright and better land;

Rainbow ... a glorious kaleidoscope of endless enchantment, where the universe seems like turned inside out;

Rainbow ... a touch of reverence to our Heavenly Father; a symbol of Truth and Light, and Liberty.

These are the vows which I communicate to you, to this newly instituted Liberty Chapter, in belief of all members of the American Canadian Grand Lodge. We greet you and wish you well!

May the bell of Hope, Faith, Charity and Liberty, toll loud and clear when this Chapter and Rainbows' are at work or at refreshment. Thank you very much with Rainbow Love!

/s/ Hugo Thomas Hugo
American Canadian Grand Lodge
When was the last time you went to see a Rainbow Girl at prayer? When did you last show a Jobie just how much you care?

When did you give a friendly shake to the hand of a DeMolay? Regardless how long, its too long. Why not do it today?

For here is the future of there Masonic Lodge, In these youngsters who meet in our halls.

They are looking for guidance, Let us not ignore their call.

In us they see their future and it depends on what they see, As to whether they’ll drop out and leave us,

Or go on into Masonry.

*Margie Harned*
I am Freemasonry

I was born in antiquity, in the ancient days when men first dreamed of God. I have been tried through the ages, and found true. The crossroads of the World bear the imprint of my feet, and the cathedrals of all nations mark the skill of my hands. I strive for beauty and for symmetry. In my heart is wisdom and strength and courage for those who ask. Upon my altars is the Book of Holy Writ, and my prayers are to the One Omni-potent God. My sons work and pray together, without rank or discord, in the public mart and in the inner chamber. By signs and symbols I teach the lessons of life and of death, and the relationship of man with God and of man with man. My arms are widespread to receive those of lawful age and good report who seek me of their own free will. I accept them and teach them to use my tools in the building of men, and thereby, find direction in their own quest for perfection so much desired and so difficult to attain. I lift up the fallen and shelter the sick. I hark to the orphan’s cry, the widow’s tears, the pain of the old and destitute. I am not church, nor party, nor school, yet my sons bear a full share of responsibility to God, to country, to neighbor and themselves. They are freemen, tenacious of their liberties and alert to lurking danger. At the end I commit them as each one undertakes the journey beyond the vale into the glory of ever-lasting life. I ponder the sand within the glass and think how small is a single life in the eternal Universe. Always have I taught immortality, and even as I raise men from darkness into Light, I am a way of life. I am Freemasonry.

Ray V. Denslow.
A Tribute to the Scottish Rite

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at a Reunion of the American Military Scottish Rite Bodies on 2April 1977 in Wiesbaden)
A Tribute to the Scottish Rite
(Presented at a Reunion of the American Military Scottish Rite Bodies on 2 April 1977 in Wiesbaden)

Venerable and Wise Master;
Commander and Master of Kadosh,
Distinguished and Illustrious Sirs,
Ladies and Sisters,
My Brothers of the American Military Scottish Rite Bodies,
NATO Area, under the auspices of the Supreme Council of
the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of
the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America,
considered and recognized as the Mother Council of the
World.

With a pleasing sensibility I accepted the invitation extended to me by my esteemed friend and faithful working District Master, your Venerable Master, Very Worshipful Brother Gunter Furst, to share Masonic fellowship with you at this Reunion.

What a meaningful time of the year: the Passover and Easter message is in and around us, the spirit of the Chapter of the Rose Croix is governing our thoughts and words, and we are reminded by the symbol of the Rose Croix to be steadfast in our obligations we have taken at the sacred Alter as Brother, irrespective for what degree.

Let me offer you my sincere thanks for the favorable sentiments with which your kind reception abounds. But I also can assure you, that I accepted with some misgivings. Frankly, the prospect of having to address you, on this auspicious occasion is quite frightening, because it is a peculiar and different tiling to develop an address that.
hopefully, will be meaningful to so distinguished looking an audience, as I now have before me.

As the first servant of our American Canadian Grand Lodge, I am, however, grateful to pay a fitting tribute to the Brothers of the Scottish Rite Bodies and to salute you in behalf of all Brothers who hail from our Grand Jurisdiction. Our salutations are broadcasting common basic principles and fundamentals: the guiding light of God's tender loving care, the hope of immortality, and the triumph of Truth and justice over the evils of darkness, intolerance and ignorance. Oh yes, I know, the all encompassing rituals of the Craft are some times described as the vestibule of Freemasonry. I do not agree with this misnomer. Light, more Light and further Light are our fundamentals, a speculative inspiration; they are expressions of an idea, of a peculiar way of life, a reminder; "To improve myself in Masonry", as pronounced in the Entered Apprentice Degree's Proficiency. And the top in Freemasonry is an accomplishment and not a degree. Our degrees are a station on the road "home"; they are an opportunity, not an arrival, and in that, another point of departure.

All of us are on certain bases; some are waiting for someone to bat him further; to some we must offer the ever present choice between stagnation and initiative, but life's rules are fairer. In life there is an inner scoreboard, where our efforts are credited on our records; and our records are balanced in heaven.

This address is presented with the sincere hope, that it will accomplish something; at least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new or increased interest in my topic:

"An active Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of the Almighty"
A striking theme, which reminds me of a little story. When the teacher asked: "Boys, can you tell me one great difficulty George Washington had to face?" Jimmy's hand shot up as he announced: "Yes Sir, he couldn't tell a lie," I sympathize with Jimmy. "An active Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of the Almighty", this simple credo will work like magic, as man kind moves toward the new day; and it was the Sovereign Grand Commander and Past Grand Master of California, Most Worshipful Brother Henry C. Clausen, who reminded us to return to the intuitive Masonic admonition that is more ancient than any practiced reason and logic: let brotherly love prevail!

At this time of the year. Brothers all over the world observe the Passover services, the Maundy Thursday Observance and the Easter Sunday Ceremonies. I will not attempt, nor is it my ambition, to compete with the great and brilliant achievements attained by so many outstanding Brothers of your Bodies: Brother Albert Pike and Brother Henry Clausen may stand for all of them.

It is very evident that our universe was designed to work. If the material universe embodies a working design of the Great Architect of the Universe, surely He meant that laws governing the highest level of His creation would be adequate. And there is a Freemasonry in and around us which provides us with the necessary tools and intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge. It exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and we know that these virtues abound and give to our life its real meaning, its highest beauty and joy. Without it there would be no Brotherly Love, no Mystic Tie, no Masonic Charity, and the eternal light with which Masonry fills the world, would be extinguished. But nobody can physically see or touch the Masonic spirit, unless we are practicing it in our daily lives, as "an active Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of the Almighty", not only on Passover or at Easter time, but throughout the year.
In the book of the prophet Zechariah we hear the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying: "not by night, not by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts". I want to share with you a little bit of history in the beginning, so that you might get the setting or the feeling of what I want to share with you.

In the year 596 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King, carried away his first captives into Babylon and in 586 B.C. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, he also carried away the sacred treasures of the Temple and of the royal palace, and the precious jewels of Judaism. He died in 561 B.C., thank God.

In the year 538 B.C., Cyrus, the Persian, conquered Babylon, and in the first year of his reign issued a decree that the children of Israel should return home. And so to the leadership of Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David was entrusted this unusual task of again building the destroyed house of God. Under his leadership the Temple was rebuilt, started in 520 B.C. and four years later formally dedicated.

The words of the prophet Zechariah together with those of the prophet Haggai and also those great giants Hehemiah and Ezra were responsible for the re-establishment of the uniqueness of the Jewish faith. The community began to prosper again. It was not by might, and not by power, but by an active living Brotherhood guided by the spirit of God. And this, as for our own time, the divine spirit was the inspiration and it must be in our time the source of inspiration for both, the spiritual and the secular life of old people the world over.

One of the chief problems of our modern governments has been the use and the misuse of power. The voice of God, which ought to be the inspiration for peoples' minds, has now become quieted. And so you find existing all over the world all kinds of contradictory philosophies of governments,
and this has kept our present world in a perpetual state of confusion. We have less happy and free people today than we have ever had in the history of the world. Too often we do not have any mutual attempts of understanding each other. And we have to do some careful thinking too on our own countries, the interpretation and misinterpretation of law has provided for us a kind of permissiveness that has provoked so much disorder and troubles.

Now is the time that we begin to think things through, and think through carefully the things which made our nations great! Let us just pause for a moment and contemplate upon what those great Brethren who helped to mold and shape the fortress for Freedom in our countries, have left us by taking the lessons, which they learned through divine providence by the square and the level and the plumb, and wrote into that marvelous set of rules, the Bill of Rights, which is the most glorious set of rules for free men, that free man has ever dreamed, codified the only set of rules by which men can live free and enjoy the freedom that they ought to.

And yet these great leaders were the kind of men who constantly reminded its citizens that no government can function without the inspiration, the guidance and the restraint of formal religion.

Yet, these great Brothers challenged us, and that is the only way we can awaken people's ideals, and help them to show some sense of what is worthwhile in living. Let us not forsake our institutions, for they alone are the custodians, they alone are the ones who will keep the fire and the light of freedom burning in the hearts of men.

Benjamin Franklin, in 1787, three years before he died, addressed a meeting of the Constitutional Convention in session thusly: "I have lived a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs the affairs of men. We have been assured, that
except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain who built it. I firmly believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political or any other building no better than the builders of Babel". Not by might, not by power, but by an active living Fraternity and by the spirit of the Lord, we shall succeed.

H.G. Wells, you might remember, wrote this very potent sentence: "As soon as a man thinks he is God, he begins to act like a devil". And the blood stained pages of history are an absolute proof of that statement. For when men have felt themselves most powerful they have destroyed the best in men.

By God's spirit in dwelling and motivating our lives, we realize those spiritual values such as love, honesty, search for truth, the principles of moral rectitude, loyalty to that which is best, that which has permanence, that which is the ultimate. "Not by might or by power, but by an active Brotherhood and by the spirit of the Lord."

Masonry, my friends, has might, and this has been one of its great distinguishing characteristics. It has might because it insists in its devotees the permanence of belief in an Infinite Creator. Each one of us has values in His eyes. And He watches over us with the same loving care as the fondest parent does of its child.

The Volume of the Sacred Law on an altar ought to be to us a constant reminder at all times, that from Him and Him alone come all the blessings that we enjoy in life, and to Him and to Him alone we owe our primary allegiance. This is so basic and this is our might.

Freemasonry and this Brotherhood has power, the power to change men's lives to make good men better, to renew that spiritual building that must always be constructed and build, and built upon by the symbolic working tools entrusted to our care. The power to make and to mold lives.
Each of us has within himself the capability of becoming, and this is the great challenge of all times, that we must all become the best that we can. God wants the whole person, revealing the best that is in that man's life.

Freemasonry and this Brotherhood have God's spirit, and that great spirit is permeated with love, our great concern for each other, and the love of our fellow men. This is the great motivating force of our life, but one of the little side elements in this great experience of Love is, what we call Charity. Look about you, my friends, on these grounds, and there you see evidences that God's spirit is at work in the generosity of Brothers, who have been compelled by an inner sense of love and devotion to those primary things that have meaning and purpose in life, and they have left here examples of their great faith that God's spirit can only be manifested in helping, aiding and assisting those who cry out for our help.

We ought to spend ourselves over and over again in developing other avenues of research, so that we finally might erase those horrible, hideous evils that keep destroying and cursing mankind. We have our challenge for today: "Not by might, not by power, but by an active living Brotherhood and by the spirit of God."

In closing, let us thank God for the challenge of this place, and as we leave it. may we go to our various homes with a deeper sense of dedication that we might share with others that, which we have found here: that love that fills our hearts, those ideals which mold our lives, and the drive which makes us act. May we become stronger, more dedicated citizens of His Holy Kingdom, and at last see the dawning of a world of a Brotherhood of Men and peace, in the words of the great King Solomon as he dedicated the Temple, the final words of his prayer: "That Thine eyes may be opened toward this house night and day, even for the place of which
Thou hast said, Thy Name shall be there" . . . and Thy Name is here; and we always bear in mind:

"Spes mea in Deo est"

"My trust is in God!"

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Hugo Thom as
Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge
Charter Day Commemoration

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented on 1 September 1973 in "Alt Heidelberg Lodge No. 821")
Charter Day Commemoration

(Presented on 1 September 1973 in "Alt Heidelberg Lodge No. 821")

"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation"
Isaiah, Ch.28

Fraternal greetings
To all resident and non-resident members of

Alt Heidelberg Lodge No. 821.

The CHARTER DAY, a memorable day of pleasure and honor, is one of the highlights in the history of each Lodge, and all Brethren gratefully look back across the years, when this good Lodge was brought to Light on the 1st Day of September, 1955 A.D. and 5955 A.L. and received its Charter by the Most Worshipful United Grand Lodges of Germany.

With a pleasing sensibility I share the cordial and fraternal congratulations and best wishes for the years to come with the Land Grand Master of the American Canadian Grand Lodge, his elected and appointed Officers and with numerous Brothers of our common Masonic Faith dispersed all over the world, with all the Brethren of this honorable Lodge.
We respectfully and graciously recognize some Past MASTERS, whose names may symbolize the glory and reputation of this Lodge:

Right Worshipful Peter M. RASMUSSEN
Worshipful Brother Stewart M. L. POLLARD
Worshipful Brother George M. MINOR
Worshipful Brother Elmer C. GEORGE
Worshipful Brother Richard M. McELHINEY
Worshipful Brother William G. STAGEY

We certainly would be remiss if we would not duly recognize and welcome all the faithful non-resident Brothers, residing in the United States and elsewhere, who, through their membership prove their affection with us and this Jurisdiction in general.

An eighteen years' Birthday for a Lodge is neither a long time nor a short time, since Masonry is ageless and our ancient Brethren were working since time immemorial, as writers and speakers are fond of saying. This makes one think of the Hour glass, so reminiscent of the sands of time, which used to be exhibited in most of the ancient Lodges. On a day like this, interest should be revived in bringing back its symbolic meaning.

Among the great things in our life that have brought us a humble pride, is the fact that we are a Freemason and a member of this Lodge.

Our Fraternal organization, older than any government, has more followers than any philosophy. Today we are humbly proud of the three great principles which have made Freemasonry grow since ages. Also, this Lodge, as any other duly constituted Lodge, rests upon these three
important fundamentals: the dignity of work, the importance of Brotherhood and BROTHERLY LOVE, the non-sectarianism of Freemasonry.

Our ancient Brethren discovered the Dignity of Work in the Middle Ages, when gentlemen and ladies refused to work because it was degrading. In the course of their own daily work and not from theory. Freemasons discovered it is true of the nature of things that unless a man works he cannot be a duly qualified man, and that no man can be honorable that preys on other men.

The Fatherhood of GOD means, of necessity, the Brotherhood of Man which inculcates one of our most valuable tenets: BROTHERLY LOVE. Not a Brotherhood of Men who believe in the same revealed religion, or in the same form of government, or the identical principles of a labor union, but of ALL men; - a Brotherhood because of mutual manhood.

Freemasonry's non-sectarianism makes it possible for the Christian and the Jew, the Mohammedan and the Parsee or the Mormon, happily to kneel at a common Alter and, under the name of the G.A.O.T.U., each worship the GOD he reveres, side by side with his fellowmen, in peace and harmony.

BRETHREN: we want you to be so proud of your Freemasonry that you will never neglect your Lodge. We want you to help and support your Lodge by attending, by showing interest, by taking part. The clink of the Trowel should always be heard in some parts of the building. With faith in man, hope for the future of humanity, loving kindness for our Brothers, Masons must always act and teach. Let each do that for which he is best fitted.

There is nothing stronger on earth among men, than the strong grip of Brothers, closely and affectionately on the five points of fellowship.
Thus we will render ourselves worthy of the honor which has been conferred upon us and merit the confidence our predecessors and Brothers repose in us.

Fraternally and Sincerely,

/s/ Hugo Thomas

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, LG JW
Independence Day

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

(Presented in Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861 on 4th July 1973)
Independence Day
(Presented in Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861 on 4th July 1973)

To all the Brethren of "Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861;

Fraternal Greetings!

When we Masonically celebrate a day which is devoted to freedom, INDEPENDENCE DAY or FOURTH OF JULY, we cannot help but note the coincidence between the name of the day and the name of our own Fraternity. We are FREE masons, not Masons; ours is the Fraternity of FREE masonry, not of Masonry, and the history of the Craft makes clear what a great difference there is. We cannot help but feel that it is especially appropriate for us to meet in observance of Independence Day because we ourselves have for so many centuries not only called ourselves FREE Masons, but always have been proud of the fact.

What is the meaning of Free in Freemasonry? There are several answers to that question, and one answer does not always exclude another because they are true at the same time.

When our Fraternity began eight or none centuries ago any man employed in building or architecture was called a Mason. To be a Mason was to be a builder. Among these the Freemasons stood above and somewhat apart from any other gild of Masons because they were architects and the other Masons were not. The architectural craftsmen came for that reason to be called "Freestone Masons," which became shortened to Freemasons.

This is a great philosophy, and if we as a Fraternity take a special pride and glory in helping to celebrate
Independence Day it is because we know that for more than two centuries Lodges in America have trained millions of men to be free men, and that has not been without its effect upon the history of this land.

The ringing of the Liberty Bell was a gratifying but no new thing to a Freemason. Our Masonic Forefathers had begun to ring it eight centuries ago.

Fraternally and sincerely,

/s/ Hugo Thomas

Hugo Thomas

Master
Family Night

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Presented at "Fidelitas" Lodge No. 830 on 3rd February 1977)
Family Night
(Presented at "Fidelitas" Lodge No. 830
on 3rd February 1977)

Brothers and Sisters;

I gratefully acknowledge your kind invitation to take part in this special Masonic communication of this honorable Lodge and to celebrate this "Family Night" in your company.

The French King Louis IX was one of the finest gentlemen of his century and greatly beloved by his people. When he was married he had engraved on the inside of his wedding band three words: "God, Country, Margaret (his wife's name). Those, he said, are my three basic loyalties, and in that order given. I would agree! For that one whose most basic loyalty is not to God can not be trust worthy, either to country or to wife and family. There is a Latin motto: Semper Fidelis; "always faithful", which I would like to examine in a Lodge named "Fidelitas" and Fidelity is itself a God-like quality of life.

As Freemasons, our lives and efforts are tied to three solid mooring posts:

Faith in our Creator, the Almighty God; and this ancient requirement insures that if a Brother recognizes the Fatherhood of God he can readily accept the concept of the Brotherhood of Man.

1. Our duty to and love for our country deserves the support of every man who is interested in the welfare of his mother country and the state in which he lives and respects the worth and dignity of its citizens. We teach and learn the lesson that "righteousness exalts a
nation, but sin is a reproach to any people", and the individual who is untrustworthy in his love of his own country would be untrustworthy to the world, and our life is built on trustworthiness.

2. We charge the votaries of our royal art to be aware of a Mason’s responsibility to his neighbors and his family in particular. And even our ritualistic ceremonies beautifully portray lessons of genuine family life, which reflect growth in awareness from youth and manhood to the maturity of age.

3. Here then lies the challenge: on the cornerstone of our faith in God, Country and Family, spreading bright hope amid the prevailing sense of uncertainty, Freemasons thoughtfully build a social structure based on the practice of Masonic Charity in its fullest sense of human concern and self sacrifice.

Once again I stress also the emphasis, so apparent in the teachings of all the degrees, upon the application of the mind. In the complexities of our modern relationships correct decision making requires profound analytical study, in our Lodges, in our families.

This address, therefore, is not made in pessimism but rather in realistic appraisal and a full and glowing confidence in the success of our efforts when directed by wisdom and devotion.

I am impelled, however, to express one very important caution because of recent trends towards the relaxation of moral values and the erosion of the sacred ties of family life. Let no Masonic brother be deceived into believing, that there now exists a new morality. Customs and usage's of families change, but the moral values refined in the crucible of long human experience under divine inspiration are immutable truths.
I have been much impressed by the definition of Brother George Washington who stated "I conceive the organization of Freemasonry to be an institution dedicated to the Brother hood of Man, the family and the advancement of the human race". I have always sought to dispel some misconceptions of people generally, who are not fully cognizant of the principles of Freemasonry. Our object, in the Lodge and in our families, is, to educate man and to elevate him to the fullest extent in all those faculties of Ills nature that tend to harmonize the human family, and to elevate mankind to the highest attainable condition to which it is possible for human agencies and institutions to raise him.

We are a society of builders, equating the principles required to erect the great cathedrals, to the building of strong temporal structures, or moral fiber, whereby each reflective member is strengthened in character, virtue and morality. Men who are Freemasons take great pride in their membership for many reasons, prominent among which is the feeling that they are a part of a great force dedicated to worthy purposes. It is of course possible for an individual to be singularly devoted to self improvement, but with the knowledge and awareness that one as a part of a brotherhood in which common goals and aspirations are shared, the load is lighter and the objective more attainable. It is the individual member's action and conduct then, which must speak for the worth and dignity of the institution. What a great feeling to be a part of a way of life in which each member in not content with his present state but ever striving for self improvement, and with every member, regardless of location, cheering him on.

We help those who are worthy, but we help none which would in any way imply approbation of misconduct or failure to observe our basic duties to God, our Country, our Family and neighbors. And we have no Secrets, since what is known
by the Craft is also quite well known by non-Masons. All the "known secrets", an oddly contradictory description, are available to our Brothers and non-Masons alike through hundreds of books and publications of Freemasons. If we have "known secrets", do we, by contrast, have "unknown secrets" as well?

We have a few modes of recognition, but if we have secrets that no one knows, how do we know if there are, and what they are? That could be a secret in itself! It is; but a Freemason must reveal it and he does never conceal it, willfully: it is, when he has learned how to make friends and keep them, and above all, how to keep friends with himself and his family; it is, when no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response; it is when he finds good in every faith, that helps any man to lay hold of divine things; it is, when he knows how to pray, to love, to hope, and when he has learned how to give himself, to forgive others, and to live with thanksgiving; it is, when he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow man, with his God; in his heart a bit of a song, glad to live, but not afraid to die.

These are the only real secrets of Masonry, and the one which it is trying to give to the entire world.

In such a favorite climate we form and develop our friendships, we enjoy and wisely spend our family life, always remembering: what we have done in our life for ourselves alone, dies with us; what we have done for others, for our families' remains and is immortal.

This, our Masonic way of live banners the spirit of our "Family Night" we are about to celebrate. Tonight we remember that our Lord has put the beauty in the world, the singing of the birds at dawn, the brilliance of the sun, when white clouds grace the blue sky and Brothers are fidelity.

We rejoice in the 25th Wedding Anniversary of Brothers and Sisters, which makes their heart to beat higher, and
ours to chorus in response to the blessings and happiness that have come to them through the years.

Youth or age is not a time of life, it is a state of mind. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years; people grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope. Youth or age does not refer to a time in life, but to a state of mind, a temper of will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity.

Since time immemorial Freemasons are fond of speaking in symbols and allegories, and a Silver Wedding Anniversary is considered as something very special by the Craft. This Anniversary is symbolically linked together with a Masonic emblem of purity and all perfection, the silver rose: symbol of light, love and life; gratefulness for all love in the past 25 years and for all the love and understanding in the years to come. The presentation of this silver rose is to signify, that we uphold and return to a free evaluation of mankind in the relationship of man-to-man; to show the courage to exemplify love. Is this necessary? Yes! The indolence of the heart is cheap and comfortable. Love is always a risk, but only by taking a risk do we stand to gain. This statement is given with all due respect and with humility: Freemasons are no semi-Gods, they have as many human short comings as any other human being; expressed in good Swabian dialect: All, they too, are just folks. But they are summoned to exercise the power of good. The scale of strength is in the end unimportant, only involvement is demanded. We should not shrink from it, but with that reliable confidence, utilizing every last possibility in these trying times, press forward and risk doing good. This should be understood as an inner obligation. May I summarize quite
simply: in the end it is the individual, the Brother, the family, to whom we look and to whom we exemplify our love.

At this time, I must ask your indulgence. I was asked to present a congratulatory address to our Brothers and Sisters commemorating their 25th Anniversary. I have attempted to do this with a due regard to appropriateness, even at the risk of disappointing possible expectations. I feel, however, it is always a fine duty to confess, and a rather rare custom and opportunity to express thanks. I realize, I am lacking the so called "talent for ceremoniousness", but I do believe I possess a certain medium aptitude for unbiased love. This is certainly not meritorious. It belongs quite simply to Freemasonry and Brotherhood. And love begets gratitude, it is its own reward.

In closing, and before those here assembled will return to their daily lives, may I express this request: Seek and ye shall find forever the original path to your own self; the trinity of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty; the symbolic radiance of the silver rose: light, love and life; the way to your neighbor, yourself and your family, always bearing in mind this Scripture lesson we read in Revelation:

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life. "And so mote it ever be!

/s/ Hugo Thomas

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas

Grand Master

American Canadian Grand Lodge
George Washington’s Birthday

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

First Presentation given February 1975
"A word spoken in due season, how good it is."

(Proverbs 15:32)

Fraternal greetings;

To all of you who celebrate the 243rd Birthday of a Brother, General, Statesman and first President of the United States with us.

The Honorable George WASHINGTON

born on February 22nd, 1732 in Wakefield, Virginia, on the banks of the Potomac river, 38 miles from Fredericksburg, his boyhood home, not too far from Mount Vernon, the stately home of his later years.

Brother George was still a child at his father's Augustine sudden death in 1741, but he was given chores and assignments that we can hardly envision being done by a mere lad. From them, however, he drew the tenacious pattern for his life, and for the way in which he was to serve his Nation so well in later years.

By stern example and admonitions, his mother BALL-WASHINGTON, toned and shaped he six children's personality: discipline and adherence to high principles during their formative years; that the soft and easy not the right way and that they owed a duty to themselves to persist until their goals had been attained, providing due consideration was given to others.
In those demanding years Washington's preparation for life and for living was immeasurably augmented joy his becoming a Mason in early manhood, when lie was Raised on November 4, 1752 in Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, Virginia. How-ever, he wisely used the working tools Freemasonry presented to him, and strove for perfection in everything he under took.

Mainly self-educated, with only a few years of grammar school, like another self-educated, self made man Abraham Lincoln-, he struggled with difficulties outside of himself and within himself as well, and arrived at self mastery. His character and ideals are still a fountain-head for inspiration; his wisdom, his resourcefulness, and his power to inspire area priceless heritage.

Only some two hundred years separate us from that event, yet in that comparatively short period of time the then unknown youth has become a foremost symbol of American manhood and American Masonry.

What is known about Washington goes to prove that when he presented himself at Fredericksburg he had all the qualifications to wear the Masonic Apron. As a youth we know he was making progress in the practice of every commendable virtue before he knocked on the preparation door. That small group of Fredericksburg brothers was not looking into any crystal ball when they adjudged him worth of admission into their sacred portals.

How could they stretch their imaginations to the extent of visualizing this candidate as a world shaking personality who could overshadow so many great figures of history? Humbly we step into accord with our brethren of the Grand Lodge of Virginia in recognizing Washington's faithful step into Masonry. So the young Mason seeing and participating in this celebration must come in a large sense the realization that of the many facets of Washington's character his integrity stands out like a beacon light.
George Washington was a developer of great men; he galvanized every man who knew him. From a wilderness he built a Nation and became its first President on April 30, 1789, and greatest political thinker, laying down the lines of policies with wisdom and tremendous human force that brought out the best in every man who came in contact with him. His leadership communicated itself to others.

Whatever they had of ambition, purpose, personality, he magnified by the tremendous force of his character, by his fathomless reservoir of strength-in-repose. That is why the Rappahannock Valley where George Washington grew up raised up scores of men to high achievements and greatness. Men, who caught his spirit, became imbued with his courage, and charged after their leader into the epic struggle to found and keep a Nation: George Mason, the author of the "Bill of Rights". James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution", James Monroe, the author of the "Monroe Doctrine", John Marshall, Henry Lee. The virtue of Integrity and Fidelity should be a goal of every Mason. When the individual has that in his possession he is truly a builder of his own character.

All the glory associated with the name of Washington is enhanced the more knowledge and research concerning him is brought to light. It will never fade as long as freedom obtains in America.

Brethren, let us continue to honor him, and endeavor to emulate in quality his character.

Nothing that is good in man, or worthy of love and admiration, can ever die!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Land Grand Senior Warden
American Canadian Land Grand Lodge
I Pledge Allegiance
to Freemasonry

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

(Installation Address at the Annual communication of the American Canadian Grand Lodge on 24th April 1976)
I Pledge Allegiance to Freemasonry
(Installation Address at the Annual communication of the American Canadian Grand Lodge on 24th April 1976)

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

(Proverbs 23:7)

Most Worshipful Grand Master,  
Distinguished Grand East,  
My Brothers!

You have elected me Grand Master. Just a few short words, but what a wealth of meaning is contained therein. My vocabulary fails to express the true emotions of the heart when attempting a dialogue with Brothers that have blended with the Brotherhood of history and repeated the same vows at the sacred alter, that were pledged by the great and honorable Brothers, Washington, Franklin or Frederic the Great, and by millions of Brothers who have traveled the same road and received the same Light as we did. The very idea that this sublime act made us Brothers with the greats of all ages enriches my solemn obligations. The gentle and noble art has worked its sweet mystery, when it joined in friendship and Brotherly Love the hearts of so many votaries of our royal art, and a humble Brother whose greatest award is, to be considered by all of you as a faithful workman and a worthy Brother.

Even though it is axiomatic that there is no higher degree than Master Mason, I cannot help but feel down in
my heart a sense of awe and humility, which you have seen fit to invest me symbolically with the responsibilities of the Royal King Solomon.

I realize that there are many other Brothers throughout the world who might stand before you as justly as I do. I can not in good conscience call this honor mine, for a Brother is made, in part at least, of all those with whom he is meeting, acting and parting on the same level. It is impossible to thank everyone who has contributed to my Masonic life, and to mention all those to whom I feel hopelessly indebted. Thanks to all the Brethren who witnessed when I first, second and third time knelt at the sacred alter, and who taught me the principles and lessons of our Fraternity, my Brothers of Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861.

Thanks to all those I have had the privilege of meeting, knowing and working with thereafter; I have been inspired by them all, from the newest Initiated to those who I admire so much in this and other Jurisdictions.

And my thanks to a Brother whom I will never meet again in this Terrestrial Lodge. The one whose spirit is here, who has done so much for unnumbered Brethren; that Brother "extraordinaire" who first dreamed of English-speaking Freemasonry in Germany, and then devoted his life to transform that vision into reality for the benefit of others. Our thanks to Right Worshipful Brother Peter M. Rasmussen will be, to do all that we are capable to insure that his vision continues to grow and flourish in the years to come. Daniel Webster, in his peroration on Massachusetts, in his reply to Senator Hayne of South Carolina, said, in substance: "The past, at least, is secure!"

So far as our Fraternity and this Grand Lodge is concerned, the past is secure, indeed! We have a glorious history in which we take greatest of pride. At this time, we duly recognize and pay tribute to our predecessors in the Grand East.
My sincere thanks are due to all who served this Grand Lodge during its fifteen years history as Worshipful Masters, Grand Lodge Officers or Grand Masters. They have represented this Grand Lodge with distinction and honor, and they have never failed to take on a difficult task when asked to do so. To single out individuals would mean that someone might be overlooked, but through some I was personally blessed in receiving more and further Light from Masonry: Right Worshipful Brothers: Horst Volkhardt, Jess Minton, Lee Loomis, Jim Clark, H. Dale Walker, Gordon Greenwood, William E. Denny, Louie Conine, Burton L. Clyde and our brilliant and dynamic outgoing Grand Master Gunther Gall.

My love and admiration for each of you will remain as long as time itself. You have given me the benefit of your wisdom and clear thinking on Masonic matter, and how to think, speak and act Masonically.

Is it not a wonderful thing to know, that each one of us is not a solitary soul, is not an island. Surely the feeling of other shoulders touching ours, as they make their way to the same far off goal and glorious ideals, heartens us. We can advance quickly today with ease, because other Brothers who preceded us have worn a clear highway for us. We do not have to start at the beginning of things or near it; other Brothers have made discoveries which have been handed down to us. We do not have to find big things for ourselves; just open our eyes and they are there, left us as a priceless inheritance. How can we thank those Brothers of former years who daringly took the tremendous promises of faith into their hands, and had the audacity to risk their whole future and reputation upon the establishment and maintenance of this gentle Grand Lodge, to hand on to us the glorious tradition we now enjoy. What do we not owe to them? The one effective remembrance of them is to catch their spirit in our thoughts, to pass on the same kind of faith, unity and
zeal they had, in the building an active dynamic American Canadian Grand Lodge! We who are living, and as members of the Craft summoned to work, are merely the rear rank of the vast procession of Brothers, winding its way toward the East, and the Eternal Lodge above. There is still work to be done: goals to be attained. They will be attained by the unsung heroes of every generation: the workers who can dream and the doers who can hope: by the men who believe in God, in the Ten Commandments and in our Masonic way of life: by men who believe in our ability and opportunity to be builders. May we be found worthy to have our names recorded in HIS endless book of life as faithful workmen of the Craft.

But we can not live in the past. We must live on the presence and posterity always calls to us from the depths of the future so to live that we may pay our debts both to the past and to our Brothers who preceded us. There is only one way in which this Grand Lodge effectively can celebrate this Annual Communication and the Bicentennial; not in speeches, orations and parades, but in maintaining and supporting the basic principles upon which this great Masonic Fraternity is founded and which are responsible for whatever greatness we have attained. And these fundamentals are our belief and conviction of a Divine Heavenly Father; a belief in the immortality of the soul; and our adherence to the teachings of the Great Light in Masonry open on the altar in every regular Lodge.

Masons are builders and leaders, in those Lodges where leadership is vigorous, so is the Fraternity. Where initiative, imagination, planning and execution of plans occurs; where drive and enthusiasm are encouraged; and wherever possible the last resort of Lodge consolidation is avoided, the Masonic organization flourishes. In these Lodges, the Officers and Brothers plan their work, then work their plan. In other words: good things to not just happen.
Brothers make them happen. Sound, strong, flexible, active, consistent leadership is the secret to success in reaching the goals. We should do our best to maintain it. The time is now! The winds of stress are strengthening, when they are constructively used.

We will use them in the coming year: through District seminars or workshops, jointly sponsored Lodge communications on days of special Masonic or historic significance, through a Grand Lodge Charity Ball commemorating the 15th Anniversary of this American Canadian Grand Lodge.

Masons must dwell together in Unity and exemplify an oneness among all Masonic Bodies and our sponsored Youth organizations. The leadership of each group must work with that of all the others. I realize that this may be a big order, but I am just optimist enough to believe it will be done. The entire family of Masonry works hand-in-hand together, realizing the necessity of cooperation for the good of our Fraternity; I believe we must hang together, or we will hang separately. We must achieve a new and evolving unity in all of the Masonic related bodies. "We have plenty of time to do what we ought to do, but not an hour to spare".

My Brothers, this Annual Communication salutes our state side Brothers in the Bicentennial Year because we are inextricably linked with the forging of this good land, the country of most of our Brothers, in 1976 we will keep alive the Spirit of the Bicentennial abroad through Masonic communications with English speaking Freemasonry in England, Belgium and Germany.

We who labor in the vineyards of Freemasonry are among the most fortunate men alive! We are in the right place at the right time for we possess in our Masonic teachings the building stones with which to erect a house of ethics and character, of integrity and faith. The need was
desperate in 1776 and men of Masonic character met the challenge. The need is as desperate in 1976.

And we shall meet our challenge with a solemn vow, banded in my theme of the year which tolls loud and clear in unison with the Liberty Bell:

"I pledge Allegiance to Freemasonry"

This confession encompasses the teachings of our fraternal order and demands the best that is in us: the sanctification of our lives, the purification of our souls, the ordination of our spirits, it is by our actions that the world shall know us. They are our mark upon our work, just as surely as were those left by our ancient Brethren upon the stones of the great cathedrals.

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry: not alone in respect of its glorious past or its present significance to ourselves and the world; it embodies a continuing avowal of our fidelity to its noble principles and aims. Our pledge embraces devout gratitude to the Almighty for the blessings with which HE endows us. But we ourselves have to come up with the endeavor. It inspires our ardent prayers, that all Master Masons through the ensuing year may hold their hands to their hearts, in testimony of their sincerity to strive on to finish the work we are in.

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry: and as we salute Freemasonry throughout the world, may we never fail to remember and adhere to its fundamentals. This allegiance is our love and devotion, our re-dedication and re-obligation, where youth may find its consecration and age its consolation. Assist me my Brothers, in enabling your Grand Lodge to renew daily our physical strength and Masonic activity, as only you can do!

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry: Masonic precepts will help our Grand Lodge retain our inspiring aspirations while adapting to a new age; this is our commitment to our
Order. Our Masonic teachings are commonly shared energy, they are a protection for good, channeled discipline, work in the yet unfinished Sanctum Sanctorum. And Freemasonry has no image, but every individual Master Mason has an image. I am, you are, we are Freemasonry's image, its spirit and its energy, its conscience and its memory bank. It is apparent to me that the Supreme Architect has set out the duties each of us has to perform, and I have trusted in HIS will with the knowledge that my trust is well founded.

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry: let us today rededicate ourselves to new efforts as Masons. If new difficulties arise, we must only out forth new exertions and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times, let us demonstrate our confidence in our beloved American Canadian Grand Lodge, and in a future that will flow from the glory of the past.

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry: and now I look forward to the trials of each day, and with HIM supporting me, I fear no man's way. In times of prosperity, let us fill our hearts with thankfulness; and in the days of trouble our trust in HIM shall never fail. We must be firm, frank, deeply involved; hide not our light under a bushel basket, but expose to the world our most valuable tenets; humility and education make a Mason!

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry: let it be known to the whole world what our Brothers most desire and as our German speaking Brothers petition the Almighty Father in their native tongue:

"im Licht lass mich wandern, heut' und fur immer; und wenn verloscht des Lebenslichtes Schimmer, lass mich im Lichte gehen, in jenem anderen, das ewig ist. Lass dessen Glanz und Hello durchwirken was ich bin und tu auf Erden; und dann, wenn meine Fusses mude werden und meiner Hand fur immer das Werkzeug meiner Tage niederfallt, bestrahle noch die allerletzte Schwelle!"
And now let it be known how English speaking Freemasons invoke the aid of Deity.

"In light permit me to walk, today and forever: and when the Light of my earthly existence is extinguished, let me continue by aid of that other "eternal Light; may its sparkle and bright ness be interwoven with all that I am, and that which I do on earth; and when my weary feet shall tire, and from my grasp shall fall forever the working tools of live. May that very last threshold be ablaze with the eternal rays of Truth!

And so mote it ever be!

/s/ Hugo Thomas
Grand Master
Reflections - Volume 1

Light in Masonry

Speeches and Writings by
Right Worshipful Brother (Dr.) Hugo Thomas

Volume III
Right Worshipful Brother Donald E. Martin had a collection of Speeches that Right Worshipful Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas had sent him over the past three decades. Brother Donald graciously allowed me to have the use of these documents so that I could include them in the second edition of the ACGL CARE Program CD. After completing working with the papers and creating the pdf file for the disc, I discovered that a previous publication of two volumes of Brother Hugo Thomas’ Writings existed. I proceeded to prepare these volumes for the CD. Obtaining word files of the text from our Brothers in Saudi and using these files; the first two volumes were created, using the same style found in this volume. There are several files in Volume III that appear in the first two volumes and decided that they would be included as they were released as they appear in this volume by the ACGL.

I wish to thank Right Worshipful Brother Donald E. Martin for encouraging me in the undertaking of this project.

I hope that since you have discovered this page and have gotten this far in reading the text above, that you will enjoy reading all of the Masonic Light and think about the sojourn of Brother Hugo.

Let me echo the sentiments of Lodge 950:

“The Lodge again offers these “Reflections” in the sincere hope these will instill in many a greater love and understanding of many of the basic principles of our Fraternity.

To Right Worshipful Brother Dr. Hugo Thomas;

We offer our sincere thanks and heart felt appreciation for sharing “the Light herein contained” with all of your Brethren.”

-Very Worshipful Brother James R. Manuel
Right Worshipful Brother Hugo Thomas

Past Master, Frankfurt On The Main Lodge No. 861
Past Grand Master, American Canadian Grand Lodge
Past Deputy Grand Master, United Grand Lodges of Germany

A True Mason Among All Mankind
# Index  Volume III

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Eulogy

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master

presented at the Semi-Annual Communication of the American-Canadian Grand Lodge
on 12 Nov., 1976
In Memoriam

We read in St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews in the 12th Chapter, Vs.22-23:
"You are come into the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

My Brethren:

We are here assembled in a Memorial Service as Free and Accepted Masons to honor the memory of our departed Brothers who have answered the final Summons to the Celestial Lodge above, who have ceased to walk on earth with us, but we can rejoice that they now walk serenely in that land from whose bourns no traveller ever returns.

We spill a sympathetic tear because of the loneliness we feel through their absence and pour out our love in sympathy to their bereaved loved ones, who are lonely in their absence; yet we rejoice in the memory of the fellowship we experienced while travelling and working in our terrestrial Lodge.

Death has often sounded his dread alarm at the outer door of our Lodge hall. Let us, therefore, pause in the activities of our work to pay tribute to the memory of a worthy Brother who has answered the final Summons of our Creator and entered the Grand Lodge toward which all of us are advancing.

There is a glorious victory and an eternal beauty in the process of death. It is the process of placing the finite hand into the infinite hand of God and being transplanted into the celestial life.
This lesson of mortality and immortality is to teach us on this or any other day, that we ultimately must pass through the darkened door to the end of our quest. In that knowledge we are sustained by this unflagging trust in God and the hope of Immortality. For the Volume of Sacred Laws says, he who believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth shall be saved; and this is the only way, that we are assured of seeing our Brothers again.

Until some great loss comes to us we do not think much about the dead. We are far too busy with the fascinating world. Their day is over; ours is still here. But the GAOTU is too wise to let them slip from our minds, for when Death speaks, there is an instant hush in our hearts; everything else is stilled that we may listen, teaching that, which we do not wholly forget - some discipline of spirit, learning obedience from the things we have suffered, some bewildered understanding of the unutterable tenderness and mercy of God. And breaking into our mortal minds comes the whisper of the voices of Faith - There are no dead. Thus we believe. Thus we affirm. And thus we are certain that we too are slowly but surely drawing near the Celestial Lodge, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. In this hope we bury our dead, sure of the inextinguishable hope of man.

The one effective remembrance of departed Brothers is to catch their spirit in our thoughts, our homes, our business, our treatment of the Brothers in our Lodges, to hand on the same kind of faith, unity and zeal they had in building active faith and Brotherhood.

If we would remember them, let us catch their love of Masonry and live our lives in their same generous manner, proving that it has made a difference, and that, because they died loving our Order and us, we are nobler, with better understanding how life should be lived and spent.

We who are living, and members of the Craft, are merely the rear rank of a vast procession of Brothers, winding its way
toward the East, and the Eternal Lodge above. And if we are yet, still in the shadow, look, how they pass into the glory of the everlasting Light they have obtained; their hands are on the goal; for them the promises, even the best of them, have come true.

Particularly in this hour we memorialize with sorrow the pass: of dedicated servants of Freemasonry, whose virtues will be forever engraved upon our hearts. We extend our sympathy to their Lodges and to their families and friends. In doing so we are reminded of that cardinal principle of Freemasonry which is Truth. It is in the search for truth and light that we, as members of the Craft, learn the lessons of the several degrees as exemplified by the charges and lectures pertaining to each. This great truth of all is our consolation, that God is eternal glory in the realm beyond the skies.

May this thought and our firm belief in Immortality and the life eternal be ever with us to cheer and sustain us, as it cheered and comforted our Brethren, and may we share with their families and friends the words:

They are not lost who find
The sunset gate, the goal
Of all their faithful years.
They are not lost who find
The **Light** of sun and stars -
And God!
Lift up your heads, ye sorrowing ones,
And be ye glad of heart,
For Calvary and Easter Day
Were just three days apart!
My Brothers

Listen to the words of consolation and encouragement of our departed Brothers

"I feel in myself the future life ... You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of the bodily powers. Why, then, was my soul more luminous when my bodily powers began to fail? Winter was on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. I breathe at this hour the fragrance of the lilacs, the violets and the roses, as at twenty years. The nearer I approached the end, the plainer I heard around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invited me. It is marvelous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, and it is history.

And I feel I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I went down to the grave I said, like many others, "I have finished my day's work." But I did not say, "I have finished my life."

My day's work will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare.

It closes on the twilight, it opens on the dawn."

"GAOTU", we know that Thy Spirit has been with us during this Memorial Service, and we pray that Thy presence will go with us as we return to our several Lodges. May Thy comfort and Thy love touch each one here and may the broad mantle of Thy protecting care shield us and keep us ever safe.

Bless us, and keep us steadfast in all those virtues we so admired in our Brethren who Thou hast called and make us the instruments of Thy will that Brotherly Love and peace may pervade Thy entire Universe now and for evermore. And so mote it ever be!"

Fugio Thomas
The Ballot

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented on 23 Nov., 1976
at "Oregon Military" Lodge No. 936
My Brothers:

The BALLOT is a frightening responsibility

Today, times are not really much different as in former decades. We Masons are part of "the establishment".

We still believe in the equal rights of man and the freedom of opportunity. We know that all are not born equal because the Almighty has seen fit, to bestow upon some the ability of genius and on others lesser ability. However, all who seek it, equality of opportunity, will receive it; if one wishes to improve oneself, an effort in that regard can be rewarded. "As a citizen you are enjoined to be exemplary on your civil duties". We have all memorized that statement; consequently we have to live what we have learned.

Certainly, we Masons will not agree on all candidates or propositions upon the ballot, but if we carefully investigate the matters to be voted upon, so as to be knowledgeabley informed in regard thereto, and then BALLOT, we will make our determinations known in the best possible way.

And all Masons, having been obligated through the three degrees in the belief and support of freedom, equality and Brotherly affection, should be able to influence others in matters of right.

We Masons are individuals, who believe in the rights of man and who believe that disagreements, when they cannot be settled by argument and persuasion, should then be resolved Masonically.

The beauty of the Masonic Degrees, the fellowship within our Masonic Lodges, and our charitable efforts are enlightening, wonderful and extremely important, to be sure.

However, we have additional obligations - not the least of which is - to participate in making our fraternal views and
tenets known to those about us by our actions and the way we
govern our daily lives.

Thereby we will become INVOLVED as individuals in those
problems round about us, which we know are right and good.
As we live and act, so will we be known.

Therefore, there is no more important privilege or responsibility
in Freemasonry than the proper use of the ballot, and there is
no more unmasonic act than to abuse or misuse it. Membership
in the Masonic Fraternity is not a right to be demanded by
anyone; it is a privilege to be bestowed or withheld by the
Fraternity.

In accordance with ancient Masonic usage, members are never
solicited. If a person is interested in becoming a Freemason,
he has only to make his desire known to any Freemason who
will be glad to counsel and advise him in obtaining a petition,
providing he is considered a proper person for Freemasonry.
After the petition is filled out, properly signed by a member of
the Lodge as sponsor and the required fee attached, it is
presented to the Secretary of the Lodge and read at the next
stated Communication of the Lodge.

An Investigating Committee of not less than three then is
appointed and charged with the responsibility of determining
whether or not the petitioner is in fact a suitable person to
become a Freemason. At the next stated Communication, the
Committee makes its report.

The ballot is prepared and every member present is required
to ballot.

A unanimous, favorable ballot is required for election.

It is here that each member becomes an absolute dictator, for,
by his own negative vote, he can keep anyone and everyone
from becoming a member of that Lodge and possibly from
ever becoming a member of any Masonic Lodge. It is a terrible,
a frightening responsibility for every conscientious Freemason.
In England today the rule prevails, a man may have three ballots against him and still be made a member, but the Lodge may, if it wishes, demand unanimity.

What is one to do when he does not know the petitioner? In most Lodges, it frequently is true, that very few of the members know personally those who petition for membership. That is one of the reasons for requiring a sponsor who is supposed to know the petitioner and vouch for the fact he is worthy for membership.

Then, as an additional precaution, an Investigating Committee is appointed to make an objective investigation and evaluation of his worthiness. If these Brethren agree he is worthy, most Brethren are willing to rely upon and trust their judgement.

It would be cruel to cast a blackball just because one didn't know the petitioner. We would have very few candidates, if all of us blackballed everyone we didn't know personally. Most of us know only a small portion of the membership of our Lodge, much less all the petitioners. We must rely largely upon the sponsor and the Investigating Committee.

We realize that it is always possible for the sponsor and the committee to make mistakes. When you know that they have, then it is your responsibility to rectify their mistake at the ballot box. But, unless you know for a certainty that the petitioner is unworthy, it would seem proper to trust the judgement of the sponsor and the committee.

Certainly no feeling of envy, ill-will, prejudice, jealousy or vengeance should be permitted to influence your ballot.

Remember, my Brothers, when your Investigating Committee reports favorably on a petition, you should take their word for the petitioners worthiness. If you know something that should be brought to their attention, do so, but do not just ballot against the petitioner because you have a feud going with the Brother who recommended him or with the person petitioning.
Every Brother present at a meeting in which ballots are spread must cast his ballot in this Jurisdiction. Unanimous consent is as necessary from the standpoint of the lodge, as that the candidate comes of his own free will and accord. Therefore, no brother will be permitted by the Master to refrain from balloting, lest at some future time it be alleged that the admission of the candidate was not by unanimous consent.

The privilege of casting a completely secret ballot is a sacred Masonic right. It is a Masonic offense to question a Brother's ballot or to reveal your own. It is improper and out of order for any Brother, prior to or after a ballot, to speak for or against a candidate or petitioner.

The secrecy of the ballot is of great importance, so much so that Grand Lodges have passed strict laws against any member disclosing in advance how he will ballot, or how he has balloted. This is considered a Masonic offense, which subjects the offender to Masonic discipline. The need for secrecy is based on the freedom of choice of the individual brother, it is the safeguard of that peace and harmony and unity for which all lodges strive.

In summarizing the secrecy: It is exceedingly improper and un-Masonic for any brother to make any remark reflecting upon the ballot of any other brother or the motives influencing him. The ballot is and should remain secret. No brother has the right to inquire who cast a negative ballot or why. No one has the right to say how he voted, or why, and a by-law contravening this is void.

The secrecy of the ballot is always inviolable under all circumstances and cannot be discussed or inquired into even by unanimous consent; nor can the Master comment on the result by hint, innuendo, or otherwise. He may only declare it.

The use of a ballot box is universal, and they are so made, that the hand of the brother balloting is concealed as he picks up his white or black bell - or cube - and deposits it in a separate
compartment or in a tube which leads to a drawer below. This is to insure that no one sees the choice and thus inadvertently violate the secrecy of the ballot. To make sure that the ballot box is properly prepared, having no black or white bells in the compartment in which ballots are collected, it is inspected prior to each ballot by the Master and both Wardens. When the ballot is closed, it is inspected by both Wardens and the Master, all of whom report publicly to the lodge that the ballot is clear or the reverse. This assures all brothers present that no mistake has been made; that their three most trusted officers are agreed on the complexion of the ballot. On the theory that the Master and the Wardens represent their "immovable" jewels in lodge during the period of labor, the ballot box is carried to the three principal officers. It should then be placed on the Altar every brother advances, salutes, ballots and retires to his seat, to impress upon all present the sacredness, the secrecy, the inviolability of the ballot, which either admits to initiation a candidate, - the greatest gift in the power of a lodge to bestow -, or denies it.

It is common practice to retake a ballot in which up to three negative ballots appear; this is to guard against a negative ballot cast in error. A third ballot may be taken at the Master's discretion, but the several ballots must be continuous, and not interrupted by any other business.

A collective ballot may be taken. The Master reads several petitions, the brothers advance to the Altar and cast their ballots on all at once. A negative ballot requires then, that all ballots must be taken separately. In no case is the petition of one on whom an unfavorable report has been made by the committee, balloted on in company with one or more petitions on whom favorable reports have been made.

A rejected candidate is held to be the property of the lodge rejecting him, so that he may not apply to another lodge without a waiver of jurisdiction. The ACGL also demands for its lodges a lapse of 12 months before a rejected petitioner may again
apply... Reconsideration of many questions can be moved in most parliamentary assemblies, but never in a lodge for the reconsideration of a ballot on a petition for the degrees of Freemasonry. Even Grand Lodges cannot order reconsideration of ballots on petitioners, its material being universally held to be the inalienable possession of a lodge, and a lodge the judge of its membership... No man may receive the privilege of Masonry against the will of any brother of the lodge to which he applies. A secret ballot is required hedged about with the strictest of provisions. The privilege of balloting, and the right of all lodges to select their material without interference or dictation is indefeasible.

The main question will always remain how to find and perform justice in our daily life especially on an investigation committee and when balloting. In literature men always look for practical justice, and desire, that virtue should have its own reward, and vice its appropriate punishment. The mass of men are always looking for what is just. We understand by intuition what justice is, better than we can depict it.

A sentence is written against all that is unjust, written by God in the nature of man, and in the nature of the Universe, because it is in the nature of the Almighty God. We as Freemasons have learned fidelity to our faculties, trust in their convictions, - that is justice to ourself; a life in obedience to the principles, laws, rules and edicts of our Fraternity, - that is justice toward men and ourselves as well.

In human affairs, the justice of God must work by human means. WE are the instruments of God's principles. Our morality is the instrument of His justice, which, incomprehensible to us, seems to our short vision often to work injustice. --- Justice is the rule of conduct written in the nature of mankind.

Freemasons must strive in their daily life, at home, at work, in the office or in the court, help to prepare the way for the commonwealth of justice, which is slowly but surely
approaching. All the justice we mature will bless us here and hereafter, and at our death we shall leave it added to the common store of mankind.

Every Mason who, content to do that, which is possible and practicable, does and enforces justice, may help deepen the channel of human morality in which God's justice runs.

On the question of balloting, I think we will all agree that a Freemason is responsible to no human power for the vote that he casts on the petition of a candidate. To his own conscience alone, is he to answer for the motives that have led to the act itself. The whole object of the secret ballot otherwise would be defeated.

Let us, my Brethren, in this as in all else, endeavor always to perform the duties of a good Mason and a good man.

In closing I may quote Abraham LINCOLN:

"I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true;
I am not bound to succeed,
but I am bound to live up to the Light I have...
I must stand with anybody who stands right,
stand with him while he is right,
and part with him when he goes wrong".

Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
George Washington’s Birthday

by
Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented on 26 February, 1977
at "Solomon" Lodge No. 822
(George Washington Ball)
"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of one small candle."

Fraternal Greetings

to all Brothers and Sisters, Ladies and guests, who share our joy in commemorating the 245th Birthday of a Brother, a General and Statesman, and the first President of the United States

the Honorable George WASHINGTON

born on the 22nd of February, 1732 in Wakefield, on the banks of the Potomac river, 38 miles from Fredericksburg, his boyhood home, not too far from Mount Vernon, the stately home of his later years.

And we celebrate the Birthday of the 16th President of the United States of America

Abraham LINCOLN

born on the 12th of February, 1809.

George Washington was still a child at his father's Augustine sudden death in 1741. By stern example and admonitions, his mother Mary Ball-Washington, toned and shaped her six children's personality: discipline and adherence to moral principles during their formative years; that the soft and easy way is very often not the right way, and that they owed a duty to themselves to persist until their goals had been attained, providing due consideration was given to others.
In those demanding years Washington's preparation for life and for living was immeasurable augmented by his becoming a Freemason in early manhood, when he was Raised on the 4 Nov.1752 in "Fredericksburg" Lodge No.4; and served as Wor.Master of the now known "Alexandria-Washington" Lodge No.22 in 1788. He wisely used the working tools Freemasonry presented to him, and strove for perfection in everything he undertook. Bro. Washington was a developer of great men, and he galvanized every man who came in contact with him. Whatever they had of ambition, purpose or personality, he magnified by the tremendous force of his character, by his fathomless reservoir of strength-in-repose. Men who caught his spirit, became imbued with his courage:

George MASON, the author of the "Bill of Rights",
James MADISON, the Father of the "Constitution",
James MONROE, the author of the "Monroe Doctrine".

The observance of the Birthday of Bro.George Washington by such an honored group of Brothers, members of the Masonic Order, whose own roots predate the time of George Washington, is gratifying. Needless to say, I am delighted to be here for this great day and to participate with you in celebrating G.W.birthday and the spirit for which he stands.

Certainly no group or association could bring a greater background of support and participation to the formation of this country, than the Masonic Order. Our ancestral brotherhood was well-known, active and influential in both Colonial America and in the Revolutionary movement which brought freedom 200 years ago. It is, therefore, deeply rooted into the national fiber that spiritual values and a belief in God are essential to our wellbeing. George Washington was a part of it.
In expressing this "self-evident truth" of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, our forefathers knew that in the exercise of patriotism, God and country go together. They also knew the value of citizen virtue: such things as honesty, rectitude, integrity and striving for excellence. We, being at the rear end of a long procession winding its way through history, benefit now from the examples set by so many Brothers of 200 years ago. By and large, they were a people of self reliance who valued integrity and excellence. George Washington and his Brothers knew that the ultimate purpose of government was to preserve the greatest measure of freedom for the individual.

In order to keep George Washington's spirit alive and to honor his Masonic way of life at his Birthday, we must renew those tenets of our forefathers which stressed faith, honor and patriotism, and a decent dose of patriotism can give meaning to our citizenship, and keeps firmly in mind the rich record of our past. As Brothers, we affirm anew the need for a strong moral fiber in all our dealings. Similarly, we must set a goal of excellence in our work while earning our own way, as we are able to provide.

This is Bro. George Washington's heritage. Our ideals must remain high and our resolves strong. It might sometimes seem to be difficult to attune modern thinking to the events of the past. The importance lies in the understanding and implementation of our timeless tenets and fundamentals, in the understanding of individual liberty, worldwide fraternity, and Masonic morality. Masonic history can serve to remind us of the sacrifice which went into the creation of this good land, the mother country of most of our members of our ACGL, and the bedrock of national idealism upon which it was founded. Perhaps most important is the perspective George Washington's birthday gives us for the future and the course we should follow. That is the charge we should heed, so aptly expressed by James Russell Lowell, that our countries "will last as long
as the ideals of its Masonic founders remain dominant." Then we can, indeed, look ahead with appreciation and confidence, and with a firm understanding of our past achievements. This is the formula for greatness in the foundation of a nation; it always starts with the guiding principles of freedom and individual esteem, under God. And Thomas Pains summed it up, when he wrote: "These are the times that try wens souls... he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

This Birthday Celebration following the Bicentennial year should be a time for all of us to unite in observance and rededication; it is a time for renewal of Masonic patriotism, which is an abiding spirit of freedom and courage, blended with respect for the ideals and principles, with respect for all mankind, set forth by George Washington and his Brothers. "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required." And blessing implies responsibility..."that we might live in a land of the free and the home of the brave." And we proudly repeat Bro.George Washington's reminder: "It is impossible to govern a nation wisely without the Bible".

And so mote it ever be in all future centuries; ever bearing in mind our Masonic commandment:

" I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry ".

[Signature]

Hugo Thomas
Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Tribute to the Order of DeMolay

by
Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Dedicated to the special class of initiates on 5 March 1977 in Kaiserslautern, Germany
“There is nothing too good to wish you
But this wish I hope may come true;
That all the sunbeams you’ve scattered,
Reflected, may shine back on you.”

Greetings and Salutations my young friends,
to this your special initiation class.

Vital to every man is a sense of real purpose in life. The operative Mason becomes a real master builder when, beyond earning his wages for cutting and setting stones, he shares the joy, in the inspired sense of achievement that comes from the realization that he is building a great cathedral.

Without the vision of his ultimate goal, and without the pride in the individual contribution he is making toward the noble finished product - the magnificent building that will be so great a source of inspiration - without this vision and this feeling of dedication, the worker is little better than a robot, or a zombie.

All too few of us today have a sense of deep pride in our jobs, and all too few of us are dedicated to building for generations yet unborn. All too few of us are building for our sons and daughters, the generations that tomorrow will be running the world.

From the moment of birth, the healthy baby begins a seemingly endless series of aimless twitching, which as weeks go by, takes on a semblance of purposeful activity. If the new born child is too quiet, a firm but friendly pat or two will trigger a cry of pain and the activity of life begins.

Growing up is a constant refinement of uncoordinated muscular activity into purposeful or effective motion - learning to eat, to
walk, to use the hands, to train our muscles to do the millions of things that are a part of human life.

The mind, too, grows in the same way, but far more subtly. The child must first learn to take care of himself, and then learn to live with others.

No child should grow up without an awareness of the necessity of purposeful activity to sustain life. No child should mature without developing a sense of ultimate responsibility both to himself and to his fellow man.

Too many of the young people of today are floundering - they have the inner urge to do something, but they don't know what to do. Many have so much handed to them, with so little restraint, that they are just bored or fractious.

Our youth groups - DeMolay Boys and Rainbow girls - have a great potential. They give our young people something to do and guidelines for doing.

It is obvious that the rioters and the hippies are not from families with Masonic background. The basic tradition of Freemasonry is the joy of the builder not the frustration of the destroyer.

What does our youth expect...?

Regardless of popular rumor, today's young people are not lost to all virtue and constructive endeavors. In many cases it is manifestly obvious that youth has thoroughly digested some of the most profound lessons of humanity. Young people are rejecting and condemning many old forms of hypocrisy and intolerance which justly ought to be so rejected. Unfortunately, in the eyes of many of the young, formal fraternities have assumed the inaccurate image of being hopelessly ultra-conservative, anti-youth and prejudiced. In addition, many of today's youths perceive that such organizations simply do not want them. From the outside, traditional Masonry often seems to have built in, its own defensive wall to keep young people and their ideas as far away as possible.
Regardless of the image problem, however, youth still needs Masonry as much or more than it ever did. Where else is there a potentially better vehicle for the ever essential communication across generations? The exciting fact is that Masonry still holds the key to the imagination of youth. Fortunately, that key rests in Masonry's most fundamental concept— the concept of world brotherhood, fraternity and tolerance.

Brotherhood is probably the most powerful word in the philosophical vocabulary of today's youth. We have developed one of the most active and "participating" generations in history. To excite the interest of today's young people, no organization need do more than say, "We are helping others. You can join us and have a meaningful role in making this a better world!"

To join and simply "belong" is not enough. There is too much attractive competition for one's time. Youthful membership in anything must promise relevance, active participation and demonstrated mutual respect. What a young man wants from Masonry cannot be separated from what Masonry needs for itself. To help give perspective to its crusades, youth needs Masonry. To help give crusades to its perspective, Masonry also needs youth.

I don't know who the first Mason was. I do know, however, the first great DeMolay was Frank S. Land; and I know what a Mason and a DeMolay are now, today, tomorrow. They are the perfect representation of love; a love that goes hand in hand with kindness, courtesy and respect.

Freemasonry and DeMolay stand for kindness for those in need, and to assist and support today's youth in worthy Masonic youth organizations. It's kindness is, sitting through a long meeting, but enjoying it as they watch the efforts their knowledge and guidance have wrought; it is seeing the faith and hope they have helped instill. And knowing that through their kindness, they have brought together many new friends.
It is courtesy for their neighbors. It is stopping to help a stranger along the way, lighten their load, and add a smile.

It is respect for our fellowmen, and thus set a precedent for all mankind... This, and much more is, what Freemasonry and DeMolay are.

From far and wide we came today
To honor our Boys of DeMolay.
Boys they are with hearts of gold,
But men at heart a thousand fold.
One for all and all for one,
Like soldiers who have a battle won.
In colorful dress large and small,
They stand before us proud and tall.
Hearts are filled with what we see,
This day of joy will always be.
A day we are so proud to say
"God bless our Boys of DeMolay,
and let us salute Youth in Masonry!"

Dr. Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Candian Grand Lodge
Annual Report
And
Valedictory Address
by
Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Annual Communication
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
on 15./16. April, 1977
Distinguished Grand East, my Brothers:

As I approach the countdown of my tenure of office, I could never find the words which could adequately express the joy I feel in my heart for having served you as your Grand Master. It has been a very demanding experience; yet, one of the most enjoyable of my life, and my life has been immeasurably enriched and augmented because of it. I shall be eternally grateful for your trust. I have tried during my stewardship to do my best and do those things which would be in the best interest of Freemasonry. If any progress has been made in the masonic quarries it has been due to the combined efforts, diligent acts, faithful service, and plain old hard work of all the Brothers. In retrospect I believe I can say without reservation it has been a good year and I am proud to have been a part of it.
My year is rapidly drawing to a close, and I am pleased to give you a rather detailed report of my stewardship for the past 12 months.

1.) State of the Craft:

Freemasonry enjoyed a stability in membership in our Grand Jurisdiction; although for the fifteenth consecutive year in the ACGL history we can proudly claim a modest gain in members; our Master Masons membership totals over 7,000 Brothers. While gain in membership is not our primary goal, it is gratifying to see new talents joining our ranks. Each new member appears to be bursting with enthusiasm for doing masonic work.

I am somewhat concerned with the number of Suspensions for NPD; some 300 net suspensions still remain over the past 4 years only! I know, all of you share my feelings, a suspension is a serious decision,... the next step is already expulsion..., and we all remember that particular portion in our obligation... “nor hold Masonic intercourse with a suspended Brother...”

Sometimes our lodges feel that just because they have complied with the provisions of the CODE and have declared a Brother suspended, that they have fulfilled their obligations. Not necessarily so! Every effort should be made to reestablish contact and urge our Brother to return to the fraternity. Just because a letter was returned as not deliverable doesn’t mean we should give up. Addresses of references on petitions can be used for follow-up, writing to the Department of the Army or Air Force with the Brothers name, rank and serial number or social security number, or advertising in newsletters for lost Brethren can be used. Not only should we exhaust every effort in the fulfillment of our Masonic principles but it also makes sense for economic reasons.

I am pleased to report that peace and harmony prevails in our Grand Jurisdiction and it was unnecessary for your Grand Master to render a single ruling this year with the exception of one Edict. Questions and problems which have arisen have been dealt
with by applying the existing laws and decisions, always acting on the five points of fellowship, “whispering wise counsels in the ear of an erring Brother and to warn him of approaching danger, on all lawful occasions”. This is Brotherhood in action, applied Masonic teachings, Brotherly Love on a sublime level.

I am especially grateful to our District Masters and to those who have worked so diligently on the several Grand Lodge Committees. Their efforts in carrying out the designs which were laid down upon the Trestleboard are greatly appreciated and have immensely augmented the reputation of english-speaking Freemasonry in Germany. A very special word of thanks is given to the members of the Education Committee who have contributed so much to promote Masonic Education, which is the primary reason for our existence as speculative or Free Masons.

The Grand Lodge was called in a Special Communication, held on 20 Nov. 1976 in the city of Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, for the purpose of Consecrating a new Lodge Hall of Red Sea Lodge No.919, with V Wor. Hugh Bates, PDM No.9, presiding in the East.

In compliance with the applicable Sections of the Code (3.4) 61 Brothers of Milo Lodge U.D. No. 938 petitioned the V.G.L.v.D. for a permanent Charter. Since the Lodge performed its Masonic work in such an exemplary and outstanding manner in the previous months, the M.Wor.Grand Master of the V.G.L.v.D. was pleased to issue a Charter as a just and duly constituted Lodge in the Orient of Abqaiq, Saudi Arabia, effective 27 Jan. 1977.. The Consecration of the Lodge Hall was previously performed in late Oct. 76 by VW Bro.Robert Klein, DM 9; Installation of Officers was conducted by V Wor.Bro.Arthur Bile, Senior Grand Warden, and acting as the Grand Master’s personal representative on his visit to our Lodges in the 9th Masonic District in Saudi Arabia... Our thanks and appreciation to you V Wor.Bro.Art for your services to our A.C.G.L. Special fraternal congratulations come to the Brothers and Officers of our youngest constituent Lodge, to Wor.Bro.Milo Cumpston as Founding Master and to Wor.Bro.Marvin L. Hein as Charter Master... and our sincere thanks
for your generous contribution of 1.900 DM to our PMR-Charity Fund.

2.) Visitations to other Grand Jurisdictions:

It is always enjoyable to visit in other Grand Jurisdictions and to meet brothers from all over the world. It helps one to really comprehend the term: The Universality of Free-masonry. I have met many distinguished Masons and have made many lasting friendships during these visits.

a) We will always remember the warm and kind reception when visiting our Brothers of the GLL BFG. This was performed on Grand Lodge level on 6 Nov. 76, and among constituent Lodges of both Jurisdictions. In this context a special recognition is extended to the members of our PMR - Lodge No.916 for their unremitting endeavors in promoting and enhancing our common endeavors. We will cherish the friendship of our British Brothers and maintain our strong ties, we now enjoy since our existence when both english-speaking Grand Lodges were founded 15 years ago. And we are blessed in having two Past Grand Masters and the present Grand Master of the GLL BFG as Honorary Members duly recorded on our Rolls:

The close ties with our English-speaking Brothers “up-north” is an indistillable chain and instrumental, we hope, in preserving the purity and strength of the VGLvD, from which we hail... R.Wor.Grand Master, Bro.Laurie Sharp, we thank you and your Deputy Grand Master and Grand Master elect, V Wor.Bro. Bill Heath-Smith, your Grand Lodge Officers and your Brothers for supporting us on this our common road.

b) Our Grand Lodge was well represented at the Senate meetings and at the Konvent of the VGLvD in Berlin on 23./24-Oct last. We proudly witnessed the election of M.Wor.Bros. Gall, Rohland and Holtorf as new Grand Masters of the VGLvD for the next three years, with M.W.Bro. Gall being installed as Grand Master for the year 1976/77 by the outgoing Grand Master
M.Wor.Bro.Friedrich Heller, whom we consider not only as a very special friend, but he is one of ours, our Honorary Member.

c) Our visit to the Grand Lodge of Belgium, originally suggested on a Brother-to-Brother base was an official Grand Lodge function by virtue of an invitation extended by the American-speaking King Leopold I Lodge No. 24 through the Grande Loge de Belgique and through the VGLvD to the ACGL--reading this, is even worse than the Military Chain of Command— was a huge success. Thanks to the splendid pre-planning and being in the safe custody of our trip-coordinator VW Bro.Gunter Furst, it was a most pleasant and rewarding accomplishment. M Wor.Bro.Julien van Driessche, Past Grand Master, looked so stunned in seeing that many visitors from Germany in one of his own Lodges, that you could see his eyes getting more moist by the second with pleasure...

d) On 28 Sept 1976 the ACGL paid a symbolic official visit to the Grand Lodge of Ontario in a duly secured room in the Intercontinental Hotel in Frankfurt, with Grand Lodge Officers and Brothers of our two Canadian Lodges in attendance. A specially-mounted silver version of our “von Steuben” medallion was presented to the Prime Minister of Ontario, the Hon.Bro.William G. Davis, commemorating the close ties which prevail between english-speaking Freemasonry in Germany and the Federation of Canada.

e) This our ACGL is a very special and unique kind of a Masonic ship; a testimonial to a very special group of crew-men, linked together by the same Mystic tie, the backbone of this trawler. And without mentioning names of the captains and Wor. Sirs, navigators and Wardens, crewmen and crafts-men, their visits to other Grand Jurisdictions as ambassadors of the ACGL immeasurably augmented the reputation of english-speaking Freemasonry in Germany: to Lodges in Austria, Switzer-land, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, England and Scotland, Italy and Greece; not to name the Lodge in the various Grand Jurisdictions in the USA and Canada and here in Germany. In February 1976 I was privileged to enjoy the stimulating Masonic
Week Bicentennial Activities at the Grand Masters Conference in Philadelphia, and at the 1977th convention in Washington the ACGL renewed many old friendships and established even more new ones. The Masonic spirit was prevalent and much in evidence at the concurrent meetings of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association, the Meeting of the Masonic Service Association, and at the parallel meeting of the Grand Secretaries, where R.W.Bro.Jess Minton was invited to address the Brothers with an administrative topic... The VGLvD was represented by its present GM, our IPGM, M.W.Bro.Günter Gall; our ACGL-team, consisting of the Grand Secretary, the District Master of the 1st Masonic District, the Grand Tyler and myself, supported by the GM of the GLL BFG, R.Wor.Bro.Laurie Sharp, was very warmly received. We missed, of course, the presence of our Deputy Grand Master V Wor.Bro.Art Powell; but upon doctors advice we had to cancel his previously reported participation. This Grand Masters Conference was instrumental in fostering the close and intimate fraternal ties among Free-masons in Germany and in the USA, and we witnessed a strong unity of the Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of God.

3.) Activities in our own Jurisdiction:

This year of 1976/77, bannered by our motto: "I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry" and being the Bicentennial of the birth of freedom and independence of the country of most of our Brothers, observed and kept alive the Spirit of the Bicentennial abroad. All constituent Lodges, supported by our Concordant Bodies and Youth Organizations, celebrated and exhibited the Spirit of '76 in supporting the basic principles and fundamentals upon which our great Fraternity is founded and which are responsible for whatever greatness and maturity we have attained. The Wor.Masters and Brothers of all Lodges I visited, in all Districts of our Jurisdiction, exemplified their belief in the Masonic way of life and in our institution. The dignity of their work was an eloquent example that our system is still the best ever devised, and the ultimate hope of free men everywhere. I will not itemize
my Lodge visitations nor the jointly sponsored Lodge communications, the lodges of Instructions, the Outdoor-Degree, the District workshops or seminars, the elected and appointed Officers and committee meetings, the many enjoyable social events, the Independence Day or George Washington Balls and Lodge Anniversaries, the due attention given to our Youth organizations and to our Con-cordant Bodies, the Masonic intercourse in so many Lodges of our German-speaking Brothers... these activities are on record; furthermore, their accountability is registered on the milage counter of my Mercedes, in jets or railways, and I freely admit, for which I beg your indulgence -, I have willfully violated the lecture of the 24" gauge in the EA Degree; yet, also a 24 hour day is too short, and a 48" gauge was not available; I, therefore, had no choice but to join the club of our Night-riders. This was the most ennobling year of my life, as I have traveled the length and breadth of this Jurisdiction of ours, renewing old friendships and making literally hundreds of new ones. Everywhere I have been received with the heartwarming cordiality and friendship from my Brothers in the Lodges; and from their wives, mothers sisters, daughters and sons at other Conventions or Masonic Assemblies.

Oh yes, we have problem areas, some Lodges have serious problems; with the assistance of your District Masters, supported by our Grand Lodge Officers we try to solve them Masonically... I am very perturbed to inform the Masters of our Lodges that the Grand Master is eventually faced with a serious problem to possibly suspend the Charter of one of our Lodges, due to failure of the elected Lodge Officers to attain the basic duties and responsibilities in the performance of a proper Lodge work, although they enjoy the support of two other Lodges in their District, and from the District Master in particular. Consequently we might have to take into serious consideration to place this Lodge into temporary darkness.

As we go through life, there is not time to stop and fret about each petty ill or wrong that comes our way, whether they be real or imaginary. There are many more important things for us to do.
Kind acts toward those with whom we daily come in contact will more than offset the petty disturbances folks put in our way.

No Organization can make any more progress than the lead-er-ship gives to it. No other person can fill the place for which you were chosen. No one has the opportunity of doing it but you, you were asked to serve because you were peculiarly fitted for the office for which you were selected. We are grateful for each of you for the way in which you are supporting your lodge and our Grand Lodge.

We rejoice with our members when something good comes their way.

We have another deep concern: if a Lodge or a Brother is in the wrong, speak not of their faults first to another, for no Mason has the right to speak ill of a Brother or a Lodge when they are not present, however true that may be which he may say. This is good and common Masonic usage and practice among Brothers of the Third Degree. Any deviation from this rule constitutes a violation of our obligation, as we all know and acknowledge.

Our Semi-Annual Communication on 12./13.Nov. 1976 was one of the most harmonious and educational Grand Lodge meetings for quite some years. Unique as a Masonic family get-together, and well attended by many elected Officers or representatives of our respective Concordant Bodies and Masonic Youth Organizations; we consider the tribute of these Bodies to Free-masonry in general and to this Jurisdiction in particular as a blessing of incalculable strength. The several appendant Masonic Bodies substantially sponsored many portions of our communication program; and we enjoyed a solidarity of purpose in our several Masonic endeavors, and a spirit of frater-nalism and cooperation that should prevail throughout the entire Masonic family and the entire spectrum of Masonic efforts.

26 Dispensations have been granted during the year for the usual purposes. Copies are on file in the Grand Lodge Office and may be viewed by any member of the Craft upon request.
This year the vast majority of our Lodges have made substantial changes in their By-Laws, concerning annual dues and initiation and advancement fees. I would like to commend those Wor.Masters and Brothers who have reviewed the activities of their lodges and have made changes which have taken more meaningful and realistic views regarding the costs of Freemasonry, and thus improving the strength and effectiveness of the individual Lodge and necessarily of Grand Lodge. Bro.Benjamin Franklin, my doctor colleague, is supposed to have said:"Income $ 1.-, Expenses.-99 cents, contentment; income $ 1.- expenses $ 1.01, misery". I agree! after the budget is completed, it may be necessary to recommend an increase in dues. And since an increase can be effective beginning in the next year only, the need to raise dues must be anticipated or the Lodge (or/and Grand Lodge) will find itself in a difficult financial situation, next year. If it appears that an income short-fall is a recurring matter, a recommendation to raise dues may be in order or is inevitable.

At the time of my election as Grand Master there was no Masonic trial case pending.

In compliance with the laws of this country this Grand Lodge is now enjoying its legal existence as a registered Association, the english word for “Verein”, in the 2nd year. Details and the reasons for such action have been discussed openly and clearly on the floor of Grand Lodge on various occasions, and the Grand Lodge in session has acted on the necessary resolutions previously... Masters and Secretary’s are reminded to make themselves and their Brothers familiar with the applicable portions of the Grand Lodge proceedings. To summarize it briefly and to eliminate possible misconceptions: the Grand Lodge Verein was not formed to serve as a legal aid society, and indeed, we can’t even conceive of what “legal services” a Grand Lodge can provide, either to lodges or individual members. Membership in the ACGL by any Lodge, by context, denotes membership in the Verein... or let me put it this way, an ACGL Lodge is, ipso facto, a member of the Verein.
This “Verein” is nothing more than the registered, legal, authorized civil (or profane) counterpart of the Masonic Grand Lodge... and the Verein is, by virtue thereof, the “business or legal arm” of the ACGL. Consequently, member-ship in the Verein must have the same benefits as membership in the Grand Lodge... they are one and the same.

Following the personal examples and reminders of our Past Grand Masters we continuously tried to practice what they expressed in their respective themes of the year: the improvement of Masonic Education and the enhancement of Masonic Communication. A special Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education, con-sisting of the Elected Officers and District Masters, tried to find out further avenues of activities which might warrant future consideration. Masonic education as a life-long, self-propelling process that makes human life more meaningful, and protects our Brothers from the inclemencies, rumors and bluffs in the profane world, was interpreted in the sense offered by Abraham LINCOLN: as an ability and willingness to study, to learn how to educate oneself, as an appreciation of the worth of our Masonic work and developing the habits of strenous efforts, and to acknowledge, we ourselves are the Lodge and the curriculum. All these committee members, with no exception, have discharged their duties in a forthright and commendable manner; a time consuming and hard work, yet never tired in attending to their duties on many Lodges of Instructions, District workshops and Seminars, Masonic study groups, Wor. Masters’ and Wardens’ workshops and study sessions for Lodge Secretaries, not to forget the Seminar at our last Semi Annual Communication.

These Officers, my Brothers, can rightfully be called the leaders of Freemasonry in this Jurisdiction. Our Masonic Education meetings seem to grow in popularity and I feel they have become one of the strongest forces for improving lodge efficiency that has occurred in many years, and of course, those of us in the Grand Lodge family continue to improve in our own masonic knowledge... For the purpose of a due accuracy of the Grand Lodge records I publicly express my humble sentiments of
gratitude to literally all Wor.Masters past and present, for affording me the privilege to impart Masonic knowledge of common interest to the Brothers of their respective Lodges; always faithfully supported through the presence of our elected Officers and many appointed Grand Lodge Officers. Since 1975 38 addresses, printed in booklet form, could be furnished to the Lodges and mailed out to some 9000 Brothers on my personal mailing list. I hope and pray this action will tie our Brothers closer to their Lodges and, in some small way, will prove to be successful by disseminating more light in Masonry. I certainly wish nothing more, since it is my - our - duty and obligation to work, and my right and privilege to serve. I am most appreciative to all who had a part in our common educational endeavors; your Deputy Grand Master, the Senior and Junior Grand Wardens and the Grand Secretary distinguished themselves conspicuously above and beyond the call of duty.

Special acknowledgement is due to the Chairmen and members of our Standing Grand Lodge Committees. I refer to the Committee Reports, which will be incorporated into these proceedings. It might be beneficial to consider a reappointment of the present Committee members, based on their availability and willingness to serve, and thus securing a continuity in the work they have already accomplished. This pertains particularly to the Public Relations and Charity Committee, and to the Awards and Lodge Services Committee as well. We recognize the tough job of the Works Committee, chaired by V Wor.Bro.Paul Skoglund. They prepared our fine Masonic funeral ritual for distribution to all Lodges at this Communication. The rewriting and updating of the Code, by the nature of the task, has been charged to this Committee. The Brothers have labored diligently; however, by the nature of the Code revision in cleaning up the inevitable details necessary in such finalization, we are confident that you will be pleased with the final result, possibly at our next Annual Communication. I wish to include a special word of commendation for their dedicated work of love in the preparation of the Funeral Ritual to V Wor.Bro.Paul Skoglund and Wor.Bro. Charles J.Williams. With a special appeal I endorse the efforts of the Charity
Committee, chaired by our Junior Grand Warden. We extend a heartfelt “Thank you, my Brother” to all Lodges and Bodies, and individual Brothers, who enthusiastically responded to our request to support our PMR-Fund. Their names are duly recorded on our Roll of Honor. In some future time, a historian cannot overlook or toss aside the many noble deeds of thought-ful, involved and compassionate Brothers who, by practising the tenets of our Fraternity, fashioned the course of our Charity goals, enriched and ennobled the lives of their Brothers and those in need of our aid and sympathy, and made more visible the glory of the Supreme Architect. It is here, our “Pursuit of Excellence” shall be revealed as an accurate title for a work well done by faithful Brothers. The task is ours to undertake, to perform and to give as liberally as our abilities permit...

Since time immemorial every active Mason has served the Craft with personal sacrifices to himself and his family; for Masonic Service is truly a work of love. You, the Brothers of our Standing Committees have truly exemplified this unwritten custom and usage.

4. Recommendations:

1.) Grand Lodge Office has received correspondence from Brother now residing outside of this Jurisdiction, who previously demited from an ACGL-Lodge, and now desire to re-affiliate despite their present non-resident status. The Grand Secretary and I therefore introduce a Resolution to amend the applicable portion of the Code to provide for certain re-affiliations of this nature upon proper petition. After due discussion of this subject at our last Meeting of the Elected Officers, Committee Chairmen and District Masters, we came to a mutual agreement to refer our concern for these “Non resident affiliations” to your favorable consideration for adoption.

2.) We recognize receipt of a resolution submitted by Very Wor.Bro.William M.Lanam, PDM and Secy of “The Lodge of Two Bridges” No. 877 to amend and change the Code to permit
Honorary Members to hold the office of Tiler (Sect.2.53) and to delete Para 4 of this Section which withholds this privilege now. Since Section 2.22 permits any member in good standing of a recognized lodge to hold the office of Tiler, we feel the proposed amendment is in line with our work to polish-up and update the Code.

3.) I have reviewed the long-standing question of the dis-position of the status of the life-members of “Berlin 46” Lodge No. 933, and we feel the time is now to resolve the matter of their status in Masonic fashion and with a due regard to the moral considerations involved. The question of “dropping” these life members from the Rolls was predicated on the desire to avoid payment of Grand Lodge per capita dues, and permission was granted to effect the “loss adjustment” in respect to certain of these life members, effective 31 Dec.1975. Extraordinary action was taken to permit the lodge to remit a vastly reduced per capita for the year 1976 in respect to every member, for that year only (10.- in lieu of 25.-each). No other ACGL Lodge has ever received such extraordinary relief, but it was the desire of this Grand Lodge to assist the lodge last year until such time as the final status of all members would be resolved satisfactorily and masonically. I have determined the time has come to exercise one of my pre-rogatives as executive of this jurisdiction, to safeguard the membership status of these brethren as Brothers in good standing. The amount of per capita payable on behalf of each of the named 42 life members shall be DM 10.- To that end, I have issued an edict for which I ask your approval. At this time, I publicly compliment Wor.Bro.Ray Newsom, Berlin 46 Lodge Nr. 933 for his spontaneous consent to this edict, which he endorses wholeheartedly... Truly a commendable Masonic attitude worthy of emulation.

4.) We feel, time and circumstances have come, which might warrant the establishment of a Masonic Center to be used by all Masonic Bodies in this Jurisdiction on special occasions. The feasibility of such a Center, its location, and a multitude of further evaluations might well be investigated by a special Committee.
We, therefore, suggest to consider the appointment of a coordinating Committee and request an interims report at our next Semi-Annual Communication. (Committee Chairman: GSW; members: GJW, Secretaries of the Concordant Bodies and ACGL); naturally they would be ex-pected to consult and cooperate with the Grand Worthy Matron and the representatives of our Youth organizations.

5.) Acknowledgements:
Every freedom has a corresponding responsibility, likewise, every right is married to a duty. I pray that my words of thanks, as limited as they must be by the restriction of talent, and dedicated to the faithful serving Brothers in all stations and places, will add some small measure to that “cement of brotherly love and affection... “ we’ve learned in the trowel lecture.

It is difficult to acknowledge all of the dedicated Masons who served this Grand Lodge during the past year. A man can get in trouble mentioning names and to single out individuals means that someone will be overlooked. However, there are a few that I must mention, because they have assisted your Grand Master unstintedly and have given endless amounts of time and effort to make this year a memorable one.

To each of you Wor.Masters, Wardens, Past Masters and Brothers of our 42 Lodges, who are the Grand Lodge, my heartfelt thanks and appreciation. To you my Brethren, belongs any credit for what has been accomplished this year; to the Lodge’ Secretaries, who bear the brunt of the detail work and too often criticism; their dedication to service keep the life blood of the Fraternity flowing to maintain its virility and strength. To the Committee Chairmen and Members, my grati-tude for your unselfish and untiring effort to carry on the duties assigned to you.

My corps of appointed Grand Lodge Officers has in every sense of the word, been a Grand Lodge Family, and they have represented Grand Lodge with distinction and honor. To each of you my thanks for being part of the family this past year. No one
could have received more support than I have. My love for each of you will remain as long as time itself.

My salute and commendation is extended to our Very Wor. District Masters; your willingness to serve achieved miracles, and your example encourages Fraternalism. You have invested your time and given your knowledge willingly and honestly from the heart. You made my term as richly rewarding in friend-ship and happy associations; you have so unselfishly and so loyally responded to my call on every occasion, regardless of the cost of convenience or personal comfort. My Brothers: these are the men from whom the future leaders of the Craft shall come and I commend them to you with a confidence which arises from experience and knowledge of their considerable abilities.

And in this context a word of clarification for the benefit of our Brothers:

The District Masters are the personal representatives of the Grand Master, and they are entitled to a due regard to the important office they represent. They are instrumental in maintaining and promoting the identity of the Lodges in their respective Districts, nothing more or less! And our District Masters, as well as the elected Grand lodge officers, represent the Grand lodge and its functions in the scheme of Freemasonry. We should always remember it:

1. Grand Lodge is the power by which local Lodges exist, not only in the sense that it issues their charters, but also it brings to each Lodge the strength of the whole craft.

2. Grand Lodge is a guarantee of Masonic regularity; without it each Lodge would fall a victim to its own local conditions.

3. Grand Lodge, expressing as it does the sovereign and just.

4. Grand Lodge is that which constitutes us as a fraternity so that because of it, a Brother made a Mason here, will find friends if he is traveling elsewhere, or a Masonic home if he moves to another part of the country.
5. Grand Lodge is the centre of distribution through which general craft can render service to each individual Lodge or member - an agency through which the means and ability of all are brought to meet the needs of each.

6. Grand Lodge is the custodian and preserver of our traditions, our customs, our ritual, and the rich inheritance of the past.

7. Grand Lodge is everywhere within the jurisdiction - when-ever a Lodge meets, or a Brother, perhaps, is isolated and is trying to live out the Masonic life. It is not a thing apart, but rather is the whole membership organized to preserve its traditions, to protect its interests, and to satisfy its needs.

I am forever indebted to all the Elected Officers; they res-ponded with vigor and zeal and effectiveness to every call I have made upon them. Yet, this is but the top of the mountain made up of the good Masonic services they exemplified. Untold thousands of small kindnesses and contributions to the Brothers have gone unrecorded except in the hearts and minds of those whom they have touched and through that touch ennobled. Our Junior and Senior Grand Wardens and our Deputy Grand Master endeared themselves to all of you and have been a genuine inspiration to all of us. I consider them as the epitome of our Masonic tenets Friendship, Brotherly Love and Truth, and they are so fittingly prepared to continue their work in this Grand Lodge, to give us the benefit of their wisdom and clear thinking on vital matters... and I know they will serve you well!

I salute our Grand Treasurer:

What makes a man great are the acts he performs on behalf of his fellowmen, posterity, and the well-being of the Fraternity. In the “Ethics of our Fathers” Ben Zoma is quoted as saying: “Who is rich?” “He who is happy with his lot”. Happy is the one who has something to look backward to with pride, and something to look forward to with hope. Your services have done this for me, V Wor.Bro.Claude, and contributed an important ingredient to my happiness. I hope you permit it to do as much for you and others.
This report would be a torso without a special word of appreciation and commendation of our Grand Secretary and his assistant Secretary for their devotion to duty and the tasks of the Grand Lodge Office. We are indeed fortunate to have them handling the business end of our Institution in such a dedicated and efficient manner, and I cannot personally thank them enough for their support and assistance. I take this moment to thank R.Wor.Bro. Jess Minton for his devotion to me and his faithfulness to Grand Lodge, always readily available even before call. All of you are aware of his great spirit of cooperation and service, and of the many fine contributions he has made during the years toward the upbuilding and advancement of the ACGL, but only a few of us and his wife, Gisela, really understand the road he has travelled, and appreciate the disappointments as well as the happy days, that have been his in previous years. This Grand Lodge is blessed with this great brother as he continues to serve our Fraternity with knowledge, experience and absolute integrity. The famous American poet John Greenleaf Whittier has formulated my personal “Thank you”, - and I may paraphrase his poem -, somehow, not only for this Grand Lodge Meeting, but all the long year through, the help and love that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you...

Last, but certainly not least, I owe a debt of gratitude to our Past Grand Masters for their counsel and encouragement. They are each wise and dedicated Masons seeking nothing for themselves but the opportunity to serve this Craft and our Brethren. I only regret that not all of them can be with us today... My silent greetings are extended to the founding father of this Grand Lodge, our late R.Wor.Bro. Peter M. Rasmussen. His confidence in me, he so sincerely expressed, when I was confided with his permanent medical treatment, will always be the brightest spot in my service to this Grand Lodge. The leadership he gave for so many years continues to yield results.

6.) Presentation of Gifts:

Agreeably to an established custom, adopted in every well-governed Lodge and Grand Lodge, and in token of my visible
sign of gratefulness, I am now pleased to present to each of my Grand Lodge Officers and Committee Chairmen a small gift: it represents a golden lead-crystall candle holder. Please accept it no so much on account of its extrinsic value, but as a memorial, that we commonly served our A.C.G.L. in the year of Light 5976/77. I realize this is a pitiful small recompense for the many hours of extra work I may have been instrumental in imposing upon you, my Brothers, and sometimes even upon your lovely ladies. May the gentle illumination of this symbolically presented Masonic light shine into the far places and enlighten the hearts and the pathway of the recipients.

7.) Conclusion:

I am nearing the close of my year as your Grand Master and of my Annual Report. I have tried with all the energy that was within me to be the kind of man that I thought a Grand Master of masons ought to be. For more than two years I have given a larger share of my time and energy to your service than to any other interest. In every way I have endeavored to serve Freemasonry with whatever abilities I possess. I shall be eternally grateful to my wife Hells, - also my office staff in the university clinic should be mentioned -, for her understanding, sacrifice and encouragement during my years of Grand Lodge activities. She never lost her calm smiling face and a heart full of love and understanding. And if, in any way, I have been successful much of the credit is hers. Whether or not I have been able to accomplish this remains to be seen. In the final analysis the Masters, Wardens and Brothers are to be the judges. Be compassionate in your understanding and charitable in your evaluations. Should your investigation be favorable and beneficial for the reputation of this Grand Lodge I request with all sincerity, that only the name A.C.G.L. shall be mentioned; if unfavorable, I accept with humble regrets all the blame and responsibility for my own, to keep the Fraternity’s apron white and spotless.
My fondest prayer would be that God may continue to bless you and your loved ones, keep our great Fraternity ever moving forward and protect our basic principles which have made Freemasonry the bright and shining light in the history of mankind. I am confident that the Master Masons in this Jurisdiction have the unlimited faith and courage and the unbounded determination to meet any challenge in the years that lie ahead. May God hold you in the palm of His Hand and bless our Grand Lodge.

Hugo Thomas, Grand Master,
American-Canadian-Grand Lodge
My Brothers of our honorable American-Canadian Grand Lodge:

The time is fast approaching when my term as your Grand Master will come to an end.

On Saturday, the 23rd of April 1976 A.D., kneeling at the sacred Altar of Freemasonry with hands resting upon the treasured symbols of our Fraternity, I repeated the solemn vows of the installing Grand Master, and there assumed the great trust which YOU, my Brothers, had committed to my care.

Your confidence, implicit in the result of the election, did not then, nor will it ever escape my recognition and humble emotions. Ineffaceable recollection of it will endure in the future as long as my confessedly limited talents can be directed to exertion, on behalf of this A.C.G.L. who displayed it; a constant stimulus towards accomplishing, to the fullest reach of my capabilities, the firm advancement of our honoured Craft.

It was with reliance, then, upon your benevolent regard; with recurrent and grateful acknowledgement of the privileged distinction you had bestowed upon me; with resolve that those responsibilities and the cause to which I had been committed shall never be permitted to recede, and with deep pride in and
affection for all who are constituent to our high purpose; that I proceeded obediently upon the mission with which you had charged me, reverently seeking guidance from the Supreme Architect along with wise paths of decision which will secure the prosperity and, I hope, stature of this Grand Lodge, and promote its proper destiny.

In this my Farewell - or Valedictory Address I may call your attention to what a writer has set forth when he could find no words, adequate for his humble thoughts as he contemplated on a remarkable year. Accordingly, he borrowed from the ancient Romans and wrote: “Annus Mirabilis” - a wonderful year. That is the spirit in which I survey this last Masonic Year. A pleasant year; and I have met so many of my Brothers throughout the Jurisdiction, friends, who have always been so kind and considerate of my wife and me that I find it impossible to express my true feelings and appreciation. A signal honor in rendering service to humanity, and building a base that will furnish an even more glorious future as we commonly move toward our greater destiny, ever remembering our vow

“I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry”.

It is with humble emotion, I confess, I learned again to realize my own human shortcomings. It is my hope when the year is closed and the acts and doings of my administration are history, that under close scrutiny, it can be said, that to some extent my endeavors were effective and Freemasonry made progress. All that I have tried to do has not, I fear, met with the approval of every Mason but I will assure you that in taking actions that I have taken I have tried desperately to put the interests of Freemasonry first and foremost... As I return the Grand Master’s Jewel, I hope that you find no tarnish thereon.

I witnessed that there is a dynamic force which moves a Grand Lodge and our Fraternity to greater achievements, bearing in mind this Entered Apprentice’s Scripture lesson: “Behold how good and pleasant it is for Brethren who live together in unity”. And this unity encompasses all Lodges and their members. The Brothers are the builders, the promoters of our Royal Art; they are the curriculum; they are Freemasonry and our memory bank.
I constantly experienced that the minds of our Brothers do not remain static, and that the limits of constructively thinking active minds have no boundaries. We are working for progress and education, and we believe this is right, because we always try to do it Masonically. We are in business... the business of selling; our product is Masonry. I pose this question — When the product isn't moving who should go back to school, the buyer or the seller? I shall be eternally grateful to our Brothers of this Grand Lodge for their contribution to our understanding of Masonry. I have but summarized their thoughts and aspirations here; they come from all walks of life and almost every lawfull profession. Masonry means many things to our Brothers and I trust they are not dissimilar from those found in other Jurisdictions: to belong, to measure up, to be accepted in the company of one’s peers; to know instinctively, that what they are doing is just, right and true; to be a part of a great institution whose precepts have been tested by the “fires of time” — and as happiness is not complete unless it is shared, to share and pass on those great eternal truths that he has discovered. These are but a few of the reasons Masonry commands their respect, their affection, their support and their allegiance.

I was blessed litteraly thousand times, with the simple truth, that the only way to have a friend and Brother is to be one. The friendship extended to me throughout the Jurisdiction and abroad, - from the youngest Entered Apprentice in the North-East corner to the exalted station in the East - is ample reward far beyond that, which I could ever have hoped for, or expected, or deserved. I am humbly grateful for this... God make me worthy of my friends. And our Grand Master Hiram A, will be a beaming Landmark to me to ask no more fidelity, integrity and service of my Brothers than I would offer in turn to them.

I finally learned again that God and men “work in mysterious ways their wonders to perform” in creating a new endeavor and in finding new avenues to promote the enhancement of our Masonic profession: it is a far-from-perfect system, but it still beats anything else ever contrived on this earth, and in all truth and sincerity, it is the most glorious Brotherhood, whose object of love is to serve, not to win. For my part, I saw in Freemasonry
and my Brothers, those qualities I admired: uprightness and tolerance; love of family, my neighbor and my country, a firm belief in Deity and a high-quality outlet for my energies. And as I progressed, I saw what was at first obscured, a chance to be a servant among my equals... a speculative or Freemason. As time passed during my tenure as Grand Master, I’ve never seen myself reflected in the warm glow of accomplishments and success. Even when I thought I saw glimmerings of honors on the horizon, the unheralded message that came through with unmistakeable clarity was Service; service before and after honors; service where a need was called to my attention.

That’s what Masonry in general, and this past year in particular, imparted to me - a reflection of myself and my Masonic education. I therefore recommend, that when we have an urge to criticize the Fraternity or a Brother, for something we think we see amiss, that we should examine ourselves first, and the unfavorable image we saw may disappear.

I consider myself as having been privileged, only because of my profane activities as a member of the medical profession, which are inevitably linked together with my Masonic duties, to assist some Brothers or their family members during the course of the past year (this will be the only time and place I reveal any figures): I visited 91 Brothers or their dependents who were in sickness or distress; a physical check-up was regularly performed on 365 resident Brothers, and in some instances in answering sick-calls at their home; 62 Brothers, now residing in the U.S.A., are enjoying long distance medical care.

And I shall continue to do all in my power to ensure that my services contribute to the most dignified execution possible of the Original and great Plan of Freemasonry. We shall convince the world that Freemasonry’s Friendship and Brotherly Love is not just a sentiment but a contagious and inspiring idea - a way of life. This is my philosophy; I ask you to accept it as genuine.

My Brothers: in closing this Farewell address I would like to leave you with a philosophy of life for living:

I consider that I am a traveler on a one way journey through life and never expect to retrace my steps or come this way again.
Memories of my yesterdays are poignant recollections of many tasks neglected or not done, mixed with pleasant memories of the few things that I have been able to do well.

My tomorrows hold great promise of an opportunity to do good things, to share the load and burden of others, to pledge Allegiance to our new Grand Master and to Freemasonry.

As I journey with my Brothers and fellow men, through this one way trip, may I be privileged to bring joy where sorrow once ruled; to replace tears with smiles; to plant a flower of happiness in those hearts, once only despair did grow. As I go on my way spreading the pathway of others with Brotherly Love, Relief and Friendship, may it be my province that every Brother, every man with whom I come in contact, may be glad that I came this way, and regret that I must leave.

These are my vows of sincerity and faith, so eloquently pronounced in Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, on 19 Nov.1863:

“ To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell”.

May the Great Architect of Heaven and Earth continue to bless and lead this Grand Lodge, now and forever more.

    God bless Freemasonry.
    God bless our Grand Master.
    God bless our Brothers of the A.C.G.L.

Thank you my Brothers... and may God bless you!

Hugo Thomas, Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Hugo Thomas
The Power of Dynamic Demonstrated freemasonry

by
Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Dedicated to the Brothers of “Hands Across The Main” Lodge No. 879 on 5 May, 1977
Right Wor. Grand Master,

Grand Lodge Officers past and present,

Wor. Master of this well-governed “Hands Across The Main” Lodge No. 879,

My Brothers!

You can imagine yourselves how much I am pleased to pay due respect to this fine Lodge, in a place of true fraternal spirit where Brothers create between themselves the affinity for mutual comprehension, for friendship, fellowship and Brotherly Love... which Freemasons axe and ought to do, not only by definition, but in accordance with their solemn vows.

I hope and pray, I can repay my debts of gratitude in the future; I can reciprocate, in some small way, for your faithful services to the Grand Lodge by your exceptional contribution of time and energy, of knowledge and enthusiasm. You have truly earned your wages and my everlasting recognition and commendation for your accomplishments. May our common future endeavors be crowned with the success that is wished, and serve as a beaming landmark of our traditional Masonic tenets, to which all individual aspirations must be tuned.

I hope and pray, that we attend to our respective duties in the new Masonic Year in the firm belief, that God has granted us Brotherhood not only for this day but for the rest of our life, and that a Lodge meeting is called for the sole purpose of promoting the growth of our own spiritual life and of Freemasonry..., and for no other purpose.

Thus we will render ourselves worthy of the trust our R. Wor. Grand Master Bro. Art Powell reposes in us and merit his confidence with

**Dynamic Demonstrated Freemasonry!**
Anyone, who has been raised to the sublime Degree of Master Mason, is aware of the importance and the emphasis that is placed upon the word fidelity and integrity. Right Wor. Grand Master, my dear Bro. Art, you re-present those tenets because they are one of the great and outstanding qualifications of your personal character. The GAOTU has endowed you with the sound judgement and wisdom to discern what is right - plus the determination to do what is right, You have convictions - and what is more important - you have the courage to implement those convictions. It is, therefore, the earnest and fervent prayer of your Brethren, that our Heavenly Father will guide and protect you, lead and direct you, and ever keep you and your loved ones under the protecting shelter of His wings of Light and love, for the higher glory of our ACGL and our Fraternity.

My Brothers: for your kind invitation I am deeply grateful, and I acknowledge the honor to communicate with you at this Lodge of Instruction with due respect and fraternal affection.

A week ago, when I decided to name this presentation

Mental Momentum

The Power of Dynamic Demonstrated Freemasonry

I prayed that it will, in some small way, accomplish some-thing... at least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new increased interest in Masonic education, to establish and revive values and to perceive a deeper meaning in the striking Theme of the year of our Right Wor. Grand Master. Please accept my personal thoughts on this topic as my pledge of allegiance to Freemasonry and to our Grand Master, my close and intimate friend and Brother, and to your Lodge.

In the beginning just reflect for a moment on a particular paragraph of the Charge given at your Initiation: “At your leisure hours, that you may improve in Masonic knowledge, you are to converse with well informed brethren, who will always be as ready to give, as you will be ready to receive, instruction.”
Freemasonry provides us the opportunity, better than any other organization I know, to accomplish these goals. Perfection is never attained, but must always be sought. As one journeys along his path of life “seeking more light”, he becomes keenly aware of the ever presence of a Supreme Architect. Through such awareness a deeper understanding of his responsibility toward his fellowman is implanted. It causes him to seek better ways of service, and through responsible acts of service he learns the true meaning of brotherly love. As he practices these acts of brotherly love his life takes on the sense of a new mission - such a mission is Freemasonry...

And now I can hear a very thought-provoking question by some Brothers. What will I get out of Freemasonry?

A question of this type can only be answered in a personal way. Every worthwhile endeavor we put our hands to, should remind us, that we will get from it as we give to it. If Masonry is only knowing something other men don't know, then we have it. If it is a ring, a tie-tac or a lapel pin, then we have it. If it is more than this, we can have it, but we must seek it. We must give of ourselves. “You're going to get out of Masonry in direct proportion to what you put into Masonry.”

I have heard it a thousand times and have probably repeated it a like number of times.

Is it true? Have you received as you have given to Masonry? As for me, I have received a thousand fold more in fellow-ship, in learning and in my faith than I have contributed. However, both are incalculable, so I will say I was lucky. I could test the truth of the saying in many places. When I was raised, the first effect of Masonry on me was to give me a social outlet other than that of the Government or the Army. I had fellowship with people who wel-comed me as a Brother. They invited me to work with them. They welcomed me to their organization and gave me a place in the organization. I soon learned more and became a part of the ritual team. I was receiving in a much greater proportion than I could give.
I found out that Masonry transcends language barriers, where the saying “to travel in foreign countries, to work and receive”, was a reality; where former strange people became closer than friends, they were Brothers.

As a soldier - at a post with only few military personnel, I found the fellowship at the local Lodges as heart warming and hospitable as any I had experienced. They also found work for my temporarily idle Masonic hands and I again found the Brotherly affection I had known in Masonry. Here I have been elected to serve my Brothers. From local work we have become part of the Grand Lodge and through it received membership in the United Grand Lodges of Germany. I have made many close personal friends across this country and even across the world.

In the years of privileged service I have been honored by being permitted to obligate hundreds of Brothers. They have included mechanics, house painters, a major, merchants, clergymen, doctors, teachers, members of the armed forces and men from many other occupations. All these men have two things in common: they are men and they are Masons. All of this began because I was told what I could get out of Masonry. Here in the Lodge I found the beginning of Masonic wisdom and knowledge and I believe it is my duty to pass it on to others.

Since my portion is great, I owe a great deal. It is like all love: the more we give away, the more we receive. My Brothers: What do we get out of Freemasonry?

The Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God. It is available to all who do as I have tried to do. We must all try to give in larger proportion to what we receive.

Now, since we are talking about speculative or FREE Masonry we are automatically faced with another challenging question:

**WHAT ARE A BROTHER’S WAGES?**

What do we hear about ourselves when we sit on the side-line or elsewhere in a lodge Room? Are we not continually being told to keep busy? We are Craftsmen, which is another name for working men. A set of tools and an apron are handed to us and
the opening ceremonies are one long reminder to us, of our
duties and functions. The Wor.Master is there to see that we get
to work and keep at work and make no trouble about it. He
draws designs for what we are to do on his Trestleboard. But are
not the majority of the speeches delivered from the East and
directed at us? And don’t they nearly always exhort us to be
busier than ever, or else expetiate on our duties?

Recently I fell to thinking about this, one night after Lodge, and
after I reached home about midnight. While meditating, the clock
struck low Twelve; and Low Twelve, you know is not the time
when we pick out the cheerfulest subjects to think about. Now,
I shall not deny that for a little while I fell into a mood to croak
at things, such as wondering what a Brother gets out of the
evenings he spends away from home doing Lodge work. It came
across my mind, that as a matter of fact the great and cheerful
subject of wages occupies about as much space in the Temple
as the serious subject of the work we have to do. I also thought
that we are FREE Masons and that if ever the spirit seizes us after
listening to orders, instructions and speeches from the East, we
can get up in the side-lines and talk back at the East on the
subject of wages. Please don’t misunderstand me: I made up my
mind to think about the wages of a Master Mason, and that is a
very cheerful subject, - and payday is a real holiday.

You may reply to me, the work we do in the Lodge is real work,
but they don’t give us any real corn, oil or wine; and this almost
sounds as if no man could question it. Wages are that) which the
Craftsmen own in the things they make and no Lodge has a
moral right to expect its members to work for it, unless it pays
them their wages if any be due. What are the wages of a Master
Mason? Let us forget about the language of symbolism and
emblems, because the wages we receive are in every full and
actual sense completely real. I shall not recite the complete list
of wages paid, but remind you of only a few of them:

First: the honor and satisfaction of being a full member in an
ancient, honorable, world-wide Fraternity.

Second: As a regular Lodge worker you have learned by heart
and therefore have in your permanent possession the Ritual,
which is worth a very high price, because of the language, the
wisdom, the beauty in it.
Third: Where two Masons meet, though they have never seen each other before, are at once friends and Brothers, because they have travelled the same road and received the same Light in Masonry, that you have.

Fourth: You find in the Lodge itself a large group among whom you find associates, companions or close friends, with whom you are united into one sacred band or society of friends and Brothers.

Fifth: Whatever your Lodge and Freemasonry accomplishes, a part of it is your own; because Masons compose a Lodge and you are a part of it.

Sixth: You have a social security of another kind from that offered by any government but of as high a value: if you are unfortunate, relief will come; and if you pass on, your descendants will not be forgotten.

Seventh: We have the enjoyment of many social and regular communications. Therefore when the Master sends us out to work in the morning, - or in the beginning of the Masonic year - , let us reply that we will go, if at night we receive wages of this kind. And let us never forget, things stranger than fiction, happen among Brothers of the Mystic Tie.

The true answer to all these questions must be given by each Brother himself. Give the answer cheerfully, for you are in possession of all the tools of Masonry, and you have, by precept and example, a mental momentum, or the power of “Dynamic Demonstrated Freemasonry”.

What is mental momentum? If it is ability to think, it is allimportant in the area of hopes and goals for individual fulfillment. Masonic learning is designed to give the intellect a push so that it will always, thereafter, have mental momentum. If the push is forceful enough, the intellect is propelled at a sufficient pace to meet and overcome the challenges placed before it. If Masonic enlightenment is the result of learning, and learning is the result of thinking, then learning is dynamic. It is moving. It is mental momentum.
In the process of Masonic training, the desire for group sanction and approval is a powerful instrument. It can be used in ways to guide the initiate to make choices consistent with the tenets of the Order. Other forceful influences leading to beneficial outcome are: drive to conform, concern for recognition, interest in others and selfassertion. These are helpful guidelines to thinking.

According to the psychologist, thinking is a flow of symbolic processes, perhaps images. So, “the teaching of morality veiled in allegory”, as Masonic tradition has established, makes for thinking with a purpose. Thinking with a purpose is, in reality, problem solving. Here is a great object lesson for our fraternity. If Masonic teaching can put the enlightened man together right, the community, the state and the nation will come out all right. Here is an example of purposeful, critical thinking. It is elementary, of course, but something to look for and hope for in outcomes of understanding. Important aspects of clear, purposeful, critical thinking are: ability to apply principles; ability to understand the nature of proof; ability to formulate hypotheses. Men of action, past and present, are the engines of great thoughts. The wise or unwise thought is the mother of the wise or unwise action and, always, the thought precedes the action. It is well to consider this power potential in every human being.

Thinkers see beyond the horizon of the visible where the imagination holds sway. Able thinkers are not conformists and the capable thinkers have an independence of intellect and intuition. The mind is a picture gallery of symbols and images. The pictures are revealed consciously, in words spoken or written and unconsciously, in murmurs, sighs, the smile and the laugh. These revelations of the mind help to catalogue the likes and dislikes of people and thus assist in measuring character. When the mind of the average person is exposed to the influence of great characters of history and literature, past and present, there can be imitation, emulation or masterful action based upon an inventory of the qualities of such characters.

Nations and races have the same interests, ambitions and rivalries as do individuals. Recounting them is called history. So history, in some measure, is the motivated action of the collective thought of humanity. We, as individuals in our day, are contributing to
the faults, mistakes and triumphs which measure the greatness of our era. Great moments touch the heart and call for soul decisions that match thought with action. These are the moments that involve timeless principles and prove ideals are prophecies of fulfillment.

As we know history to be the biography of leadership, so great minds assure us we have a part on the stage of time. To know the kind of prudence that guided the actions of the great is to profit in that knowledge and realize that all doors will open to those who sincerely seek entrance.

“... knock and it shall be opened unto you”. (Luke 11:9). This is an experience of our Order. Doors are not barriers. To knock is to open them to broad vistas of promise, the mental treasury of future action.

If the world is to progress toward the highest possibilities of human capacity mental trainings must never endeavor to prepare ready-made opinions or convictions. The individual must condition his own mind from the vast reservoir of tested reason. Thus, the mission and concern of learning is to furnish the parts and assembly plant for the mind to put together the wisdom of the ages. We all live deeply submerged in propaganda. The democratic way tends to progress toward an easy and convenient life, taking away the challenge and incentives required for individual strength. To overcome this we cannot imitate; we cannot parrot. We must emulate the daring, the courageous, the noble, in the quest for truth. This we can do with Mental Momentum, the mission of learning, with dynamic and creative thinking.

No institution, regardless of how noble its purposes and aims may be, can afford to entertain delusions of grandeur. Whatever title to grandeur any organization may possess must reside in the ultimate achievement of those lofty aspirations toward which all good men should continuously strive.

In Freemasonry this truth is not only obvious but basic as well, for we strive to build up a hope which belongs not only to our fraternity but to all mankind as well. Our excuse for being and our legitimate claim upon men’s devotion and efforts lie in the
ability of our membership to build and to keep building as closely as possible to the designs of our great Creator.

Our continuing purpose must be to strive for the completion of a spiritual temple, a vision grand enough to have stood the passing of time and yet strong enough to overcome what-ever problems the future may bring to us. Freemasonry’s spiritual temple is the spiritual and moral growth of the thousands of individuals who comprise our membership. Today we are living in an increasingly difficult era. Therefore, as we face the many problems of today’s troubled world we must keep ever in mind the basic tenets of the Craft - belief in God, in immortality of the soul and in the Brotherhood of All Man.

While it is not given for any man to look far into the future we may be certain that the future rests upon the thinking and actions of men of good will everywhere, regardless of creed. May the Masons of the American-Canadian Grand Lodge ever be in the forefront of such thinking and actions.

And now, my Brethren, we must again engage ourselves in fraternal labor; - let us collectively devote continuously concentrated efforts to advance the interests of the Fraternity, to enhance its image in the eyes of the un-initiated, and to serve untiringly in our greatest of all goals - and mutual universal Brotherhood... for this alone is the justification of our existence of speculative or Free Masons.

Our way is prepared... let’s go on with

“Dynamic Demonstrated Freemasonry”.

I pledge allegiance to Freemasonry,

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master

American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Our Masonic Dream

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented at the Annual Communication
of the
Grand Land Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany
on 7 May, 1977
Most Wor. Sir, Right Wor. Land Grand Master, distinguished Grand East, my Brothers:

The rank of Immediate Past Grand Master brings with it man happy and delightful experiences, not the least of which i the privilege of having found worthy to appear before this Grand Land Lodge.

Today, I am tempted to wear two hats: one as the invited guest-speaker of this Grand Land Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany, and one as an obedient servant of the American-Canadian Grand Lodge, from which I hail.... I am sure you feel how deeply moved I am that your Grand Lodge has found me worthy of addressing you on this auspicious occasion: the Annual Communication and Installation of your new Grand Master. And you can sense how honored I feel, - it is rather an emotion of humility -, in being associated and linked with Brothers of your Grand Juris-diction that have blended with the Brotherhood of history and pledged the same vows at the sacred altar as we did: W,Bro.Lt.-Co1.A.F.Mulliner, Wor.Bro.F.Barrington Baker and R.T.S. Kitwood, R.W.Bros.R.G.Holmes and J.P.Railton, L.Wheatley Perry and Barry P.Jackson, Jim Chapman, Laurie Sharp and Bill Heath-Smith; just t o name those few... they may stand for all members of your honorable Grand Land Lodge.

I hope that nothing I’m going to say will be allowed to mask the sense of privilege which I feel of being able to engage with the best minds in contemporary Freemasonry and to address so eminent a gathering as this Grand Lodge.

This communication breathes that true spirit of Freemasonry which permeates and actuates the smallest group of Brethren just as much as it does the larger assemblies. Let us be instrumental in our mutual advancement and education of our noble Craft, whose work is to bring goodwill into the community, to uplift mankind and to have an impact upon the life and the character of men and Masons everywhere.

R.Wor.Land Grand Master, my dear friend and Brother Laurie: I salute your Brothers as our faithful guardians of the fundamentals and privileges of our venerable Institution; to whom we are bound by every tie of gratitude and affection, and for whose character and virtues, we feel every sentiment of admiration and esteem.

To the Brethren in this Grand Lodge I express my obligations and shall duly attend to the important knowledge which they permanently conveyed. I am here to give something, however small it is.
The desire to give is the essence of brotherhood. It means giving time and understanding and abiding friendship. It means giving undiluted equality in thoughts and deeds. It means accepting, that your Brother is in fact your Brother, not some distant cousin, twice removed. What a resource is our Masonic faith, since it bids us to look forward with joyful anticipation to the reunion promised to all Masonry's noblemen:

a Masonry of the conscience which satisfies our moral nature,

a Masonry of the mind which makes known the real truth of our brotherhood, and

a Masonry of the benevolence, good will and fellowship which inspires us to practice charity, - Masonic Charity.

It is our privilege, at this time, to pay due respect to our Right Wor. Grand Masters, who preceded us in the Oriental Chair, and who, like blazing stars, have marked and illuminated the road. Theirs is the standard and the gauge of the opportunity which is ours, and the momentum at which it has been pro-pelled to us by their efforts.

In this context, I must pay a due debt of gratitude to R.W. Bro. Stubbs, when he recently stated, that it must not be forgotten, that the United Grand Lodge of England owes to Sir Alfred Robbins an immense debt of recognition for the establishment of the Basic Principles of Recognition, adopted in 1929, which we endorse as an essential part of our own laws.

In the matter of discipline, as well as things concerning the Craft generally, I have a firm belief, that the true course to pursue is to face difficulties, as they arise. A policy of pursuing the line of least resistance - though very comforting at the moment and calculated to gain popularity for those who pursue it - means only that the difficulties become worse with time, and because of bad precedents having been created, growing still worse, until it is impossible to undo the mischief which a weak handling of the reins by the heads of the Craft would certainly entail….

Most Wor. Grand Master of the VGLvD; Your english-speaking Brothers support you in all your fervent endeavors, and may the Lord bless you and may all that you do be crowned with success, you so richly deserve.

“Brethren: in so respectable an assembly, and before such competent Brothers of real merit, it may probably be deemed arrogant and presumptuous in an individual to offer his sentiments; especially when convinced that neither his knowledge of language, nor his talents for
eloquence, can do sufficient justice to the dignity of this day of joy and light.

It is not my intention to enter into an elaborate disquisition concerning Masonry. That task far exceeds the limits of my abilities. I shall only venture to submit to your serious consideration a few observations “ Those words are not an example of 20th century modesty; and I will hasten to reveal, they are, in fact the opening words of the Oration given by Bro. William Preston himself in 1772, when he introduced the first of his Masonic lectures. All the same it is this spirit that the following thoughts are offered on the subject of

“Our Masonic Dream”

dedicated to the Brothers of the GLL BFG.

To me the way in which speculative Masons have drawn upon material from former times, from the freestone masons, the Bible and from ancient sources unconnected with either - is little short of amazing. By a long process of refinement, by adding and discarding, a system has been developed which despite all the anomalies and anachronisms inevitable in such a growth, is nevertheless surprisingly harmonious. We ourselves compose the structure of our Masonic Temple; let ourselves be the temple, that shall stand in great proportion unto all eternity.

But, here is work to do, my Brothers!

The great work of Freemasonry is to promote Universal Brotherhood under the Fatherhood of God. Our task today, as ever, is to make men better, more tolerant, and consequently happier.

I believe the great work of Freemasonry is to raise mankind to a higher realization of the beauty of truth, the importance of human freedom, the building of character, the glory of service in every good and charitable cause. In today’s world we see growing evidence of conflict bet-ween freedom for the individual and oppression. Lost sight of is a clear understanding that no people can live and grow in greatness except through the careful cultivation of character - honesty, justice, mercy, self-control. Freemasonry, in its efforts to assure the blessings of liberty, points to the VSL open on our altars, and in which we read “What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”
It is for us who have seen the measure of Masonry’s light to cultivate character in our conduct as Brothers and as citizens of our respective countries. It is for this purpose that we have Masonic communications in our Temple, so that all men of good report, irrespective of race or creed, can unite in developing character, brotherliness and charity. Deeply convinced that the world of tomorrow can be a better one than that of today if the minds and hearts of the people are regenerated, Masonry has ever sought to build not only temples, but character, thereby strengthening the moral fibre of its votaries. It is in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in order that we might have freedom to worship, freedom to think, freedom to live as Free and Accepted Masons.

When mankind realizes that tenderness and pity and love are more potent forces than those engendered by the Atom’s splitting - that understanding has more power to produce than the thrust in a jet engine - then, I believe, the world will shake off the shackles of distrust and enmity. But each of us has a contribution to make to the world of tomorrow, if we will be receptive to what the future demands abandon despair, use all the tools of Masonry, and commit ourselves with confidence to the vision of human advancement that has inspired the achievements of our past.

When the world criticizes Masonry, it may be sayings “What you say you are, and what you really are fills me with doubt, Your preaching and practice are unrelated”. Maybe the world is wrong to criticize us. Only YOU can answer that! Guilty or not guilty?

Love is not enough any more.

Preaching is not enough. Reciting a creed, religious or otherwise, is not enough. We need to go beyond the quoting of old cliches! We need to dream the impossible dream, to be willing to march through hell for a heavenly cause. There is really nothing wrong with what we preach from the East or from the sidelines. The real hang-up comes from what we are and do, not from what we say we are!

I can say I love God and I believe in God, but when I say I have faith in God, then I have the strength to move mountains, I can say I love Masonry, I believe in Masonry, but when I say, the world will be better for this what I do, then I reach the unreachable star:

the unreachable star of love and universal Brotherhood;

the unreachable star of genuine commitment on the part of the entire Fraternity;
the unreachable star of a new world where all men can breathe free without fear.

We modern-day Masons too are craftsmen and builders, and if our labors are to contribute significantly to that ultimate, ideal, philosophical empire which is not only our Masonic dream but the hope of mankind as well - and if our actions are to mark our work with a standard of excellence, then we must pour our devotion and steadfastness into the mortar.

We too must, by precept and example, strive with every fiber of our strength and persuasion to add substance and power to the spiritual aura surrounding our own lives and the life of our Brothers, our Lodges and Grand Lodges. There is a need for a revival of spiritual self, a rededication to the unfoldment of inner self, a giving of self and of spirit.

Our life is a single but highly complex cosmic structure and we must look closely and with serious heart at the edifice we have entered. If we listen with understanding we will hear a sound made up of the beating of human hearts, and hear the nameless music of men’s souls. If we look we will begin to dimly see the soaring outline of the building itself of many forms and shadows.

Surely the work of no ordinary builder.

Can you see the mighty pillars, cast in the form of the bodies of our Brothers who have sacrificed themselves in the name of truth and justice, - and their endless rows forming a bulwark?

Can you see the cornerstones from which all else expands, and see there our Masonic fathers surrounded by our young men, our Brothers of tomorrow? Can you see in the spans and arches above, the joined hands of all men, interlocked and strong, and hear in the heights of the lofty dome the gentle musings of the dreamers of the world?

And can you see that the mystic house is not yet finished. It is still building and being build upon, and we realize that the work must always go forward. The building must be united.

It seems a simple realization, yet the profound feeling of it brought forth a Moses and Jesus Christ, a Buddha and St.Augustine, a Darwin, Anderson and Einstein. These great axial thinkers became creators of transcendent values and created a world of universal thought which today is our most precious human heritage. They speak to us with the sole purpose of helping to create that kind of world, “of that state of perfection at which, we hope,
being the rough ashlars we are to arrive, by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God”.

It is a rugged and difficult pathway. God will supply the blessing; but we ourselves have to come up with the endeavor. This is Freemasonry’s opportunity, our Masonic dream. Look up and see:

“Far away in the sunshine
our highest aspirations.
We cannot yet reach out and touch them,
but when can lift our heads and see their beauty
We can believe in them,
and try to follow where they lead.

This great opportunity and responsibility is simply to help build that eternal cosmic structure, that spiritual house not made with hands, mortared by the cement of the brother-hood of man, and illuminated by the source of all light, the fatherhood of God.

This is our Masonic dream: good men are made better men
by right teaching and by their own efforts, and all men work for the betterment of one another.

This is our Masonic dream: men understand, that no end, however noble, is worthy of unjust means; that the struggle to unfold our inner self must always be on the high plane of dignity and self-discipline.

This is our Masonic dream: no man walks alone; our individual destiny is tied up with the destiny of every other man. And all Brothers walk better when their inner self shines like the white purity of the Masonic apron. And we travel into the future with the knowledge that there is no turning back.

Right Wor.Land Grand Master-elect:

We who are witnesses of this very moving communication will pray that God will help you to faithfully discharge your responsibilities to this Grand Land Lodge and uphold the dignity of your profession.

And Brother Mozart of Vienna has symbolically dedicated to you his “Chain song”:

“Brethren, let us with hands united
begin and end our labour to the sounds of rejoicing.
Let our first duty ever be
to honour virtue and mankind,
and to teach ourselves and others Brotherly Love.
Then not only in the East will the Light shine,
nor in the West alone,
but also in the South and in the North.
May this chain embrace not only this holy place
but the whole Earth.”

In closing let us also observe this as our Masonic dream: of a time when every man in our great countries will be able to sing with deeper understanding, appreciation and joy.

“My country tis of thee
Sweet land of liberty
Of thee I sing....”

and they sing:

...”blüh’ im Glance dieses Glückes,
blühe deutsches Vaterland;”

and they pay homage to Her Royal Majesty, commemorating Her 25th Coronation Anniversary:

“God save our gracious Queen,
God save our noble Queen,
God save the Queen,
send her victorious, happy and glorious,
long to reign over us, God save the Queen”.

God bless you... everyone!

Kingo Thomas
Past Grand Master,
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Consecration

By
Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Presented at the Consecration of
“US-Hessen” Lodge No. 844
on 28 August, 1977
My Brothers:

on such a day of Light and Hope, of happiness and joy, the
completion of a new Masonic home and the consecration of
this Lodge Hall for the Brothers of “U.S.Hessen” Lodge No. 844, it may possibly deemed presumptuous in an individual to
offer his sentiments and thoughts; especially when convinced
how difficult it is, to add sufficient justice to the dignity of
this solemn ceremony. And reflecting on the kind invitation of
the Brothers of this Lodge to deliver the keynote address, -
generously endorsed and promoted by our R.Wor.Grand Master -,
for which I am grateful, I do not know a more suitable time,
to invoke the blessings of the Allmighty Father in the words of
the great King Solomon as he dedicated the Temple, the final
sentence of his prayer:

“That Thine eyes may be open toward this house
night and day,
even for the place of which Thou hast said,
Thy name shall be there...
and Thy name is here.”

In opening this section of my presentation you may have noticed
I began by thanking our Creator. For I am aware, that had it not
been for His greatness and goodness, and the silent prayers
you offered, the enthusiasm and the dedication, combined
with plain hard work of the Brothers of this Lodge under the
capable leadership of Wor.Bro. Ted Erskine, his Wardens and
Officers, would have been in vain, and I would not be able to
meditate in this topic on

“Consecration ...
of an edifice with tried keystones”.

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The pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, when they first saw King Solomon’s Temple on Mount Zion, they started this symbolic Lodge hymn we read in the 121st psalm:

“I will lift up my eyes unto the hills whence comes any help. My help comes from the Lord which made heaven and earth. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. He shall preserve thee from all evil, and shall preserve thy soul.”

In this spirit, we as speculative or Free Masons are taught to love things heavenly, and while now we dwell among things that are passing away, to cleave to those that shall abide forever. This Lodge hall is our Masonic home.... for home is where the heart is, and Masonic hearts cling sweetly to their peaceful halls. Within these walls new Brothers will be brought to Light; will be solemn ceremonies, and contented hours and fruitful plans will be made. Here may youth find its consecration and age its consolation, crowned by accepting personal responsibility and the will to believe, to work, to act and part on the same level. Bro.(Dr.) William James (1842 - 1910), the “Galilei” among psychiatrists summarized it all too well: “Sow an action and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap your destiny”. Each Brother’s responsibility is as large as his ability and for as long as he lives. He fails to meet his inherent obligation, if he chooses to move out on the one hand, or to retire out on the other. Our Masonic responsibility, - granted a lifelong educational process -, is the Charge we are accountable for, and their fulfillment we must squarely accept.

In one of his books the famous American poet Bro. John Ruskin (1819 - 1900), narrated in his own words a story about a young boy: on his way home from his day at school, saw on a hillside his own house with golden windows; the level of light of the sun was turning the windows to gold... Throughout this Jurisdiction, I know, there are 42 Lodges which have golden windows, regardless how small their membership is. They do
not own whole buildings, but the structure of their Temples are not less magnificent than Gothic cathedrals. The Brothers are the Lodge, the design and the curriculum. They constitute the Lodge, whose cornerstones are Faith, which is conversant with unseen things; whose roof is Charity, which covers a multitude of our daily human shortcomings; whose inner door is obedience to the tenets of the Fraternity; and whose pavement is humility and truth, - the uncensored tongue of an Entered Apprentice, the educated impatience of a Fellowcraft and the balanced wisdom of a Master Mason.

This Lodge, a symbolic representation of King Solomon’s Temple is part of our Masonic heritage, with many doors, each opening upon something very significant. To these doors we must have the fitting key which will open them when needed. Call the doors anything you want... There is the first door which opens on Fortitude. It takes a while to make the right key for that, forged with Prudence, Temperance and Justice. Then we reach the door called work or labor. This one doesn’t open to any old key; we may have to find just the right one. Sooner or later we’ll find the right material with perseverance and enthusiasm. There is a very special door called Faith. It doesn’t much matter in what we believe as long as we do, knowing that the GAOTU is constantly with us, and to Him we must all render that awe and reverence that a creature must give to his Creator. That means fundamentally, that a man and mason has faith in the existence of a Supreme Being who rules an ordered universe, and that his conduct among his fellowmen is beautified by the inspiration and comfort which he bestows upon his fellow sojourners in life through benevolent service. To open the elusive door called contention and happiness we may fashion even a hundred keys in the course of our lifetime, because we all have different standards and demands and wants. To many the search for the right key goes on and on a full lifetime. The door called love is not a one-way-door, - it opens outward and inward. This door permits us to unlock our-self, so that we can be loved, and, more important, permits
us to love our fellowman. He altogether misinterprets Freemasonry who considers it simply a social institution, a social plaything, ministring only to good fellowship. One of our keystones is the insistence upon truth and love as the principles for the guidance of life. The key to the door of education can be made by anyone. Education and learning is not wisdom; and it is not entirely in books nor in formal education; it is what we derive from living. Masonic education, however, to be effective and dynamically demonstrated, must be treated as a force and not just accepted as a form. It is not just a system of symbols, ancient usages, customs and landmarks, dressed in archaic language to satisfy some esoteric urge in men and masons. It is not just a set of rituals and ceremonies to be worshipped because it is old. It is not just a theoretical philosophy to be dallied with apart from real life. It is as modern as the minute in which we think of it. It is ageless and timeless and is not meant to be sheltered and pampered within our temple walls. Masonic education is indeed a study of Masonic fundamentals, and as such must be assigned a place of importance in any attempt to really understand our ancient fraternity; to prepare us by having us realize that each should make his moral being his prime care and that each should struggle to keep his moral vision clear. Devotion to ritual, ceremonies and even the traditions of Freemasonry is fine and splendid when this regard is reflected in constant and sincere effort to fashion a way of life that conforms to the principles, precepts and truths our ceremonies symbolize. Worship of the forms without obedience to the substance is not only useless, but is detrimental. The Great Light of Masonry does not say, “by appearance ye shall know them”. On the contrary, it says, “by their fruits ye shall know them”. Our actions are our mark upon our work, just as surely as were those left by our operative Brethren upon the stones of the great cathedrals, many intangible elements went into the several parts of those eloquent buildings and were poured into the mortar, and added tremendous substance and power to the spiritual aura that surrounds them ...
The most important door of all that opens upon spiritual understanding only, and permits us admission into a yet unfinished part of the Temple, is Masonic Charity and compassion, - and I dare to say that is our godly heritage. It takes years of understanding and constant searching to find the proper ingredients to make this sublime key. But once we have made and used it, nothing can deeply trouble us again. For the key of spiritual understanding unlocks the ultimate door, that leads to the same eternal goal, the intimate knowledge of what is good and true and just.

Let us continue to search and to find each door to our spiritual Temple with the proper key in our hand and heart; the plumb of uprightness in standing steadfastly fox that which is good and rejecting that which is evil; the level of equality and mutual helpfulness with out Brothers; and the square of straight and honest dealing with all mankind, all to build a character that is an honor to ourselves and a credit to our Craft.

My Brothers: a keystone is no strange word to Freemasonry; long identified with the art and science of the operative masons of ages past, it is always the keystone, placed in the center of the arch, that preserves the other stones in their places and secures the firmness and stability needed to complete the undertaking.

Before closing let us pay our admiration and all due respect to the vast legion of Brothers of this or any other Lodge who have traveled the same road before us. And I pause to ponder and also tease and tempt each of you with a timely and challenging request that says: do not misplace the keystones of the grand designs and observe them in their rightful places. And “be of good cheer”, so that every Brother in your Lodge is clothed in the habiliments of truth, and has a wardrobe that contains the robe of justice, the mantle of charity, a tunic of education, and a cloak of toleration, all of which are genuine quality, measured and cut by a master tailor or overseer of the work.
And so my final words to you conceived in the year 1786 by our Masonic poet Bro.Robert Burns:

Ye powers who preside over the wind and the tide, who marked each elements border; who formed this frame with beneficent aim, whose sovereign statute is order; - within this dear mansion, may wayward contention or withered envy never enter; may secrecy round be the Mystical bound,

and Brotherly Love be the centre!

“Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee”.

(Dr.)Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Masonic obligations inculcate

Equal rights and opportunities

by

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Presented at “Galiei Lodge No. 810-A
On 29 August 1977
My Brothers:

It is a signal honor and a real pleasure for me to be invited to actively participate in this Masonic education night ... in a Lodge, where the Masonic Light of our American-Canadian Grand Lodge illuminated the pathway of the craftsmen first, and thus becoming a light-tower for all other 42 constituent Lodges in the following years. It is the knowledgeable pride in this Lodge and the willingness to come to its assistance wherever the necessity might require it.

In recent weeks I have reviewed my thoughts to determine where increased emphasis should be placed during this communication to deal with problems of the day. As a result, I have concluded that our principal concern should be directed to carry on the sound and profound admonition:

“Masonic obligations inculcate equal rights and opportunities”.

Word fashions come and they go. Slogans are widely used to put across a point, to convey an idea, sometimes to cause a thought. Most of these have political or commercial origins and are used to promote an individual’s interest or to sell the public some bill of goods offered by a business. Even Freemasonry is not immune from modern sloganeering. Change has become a fetish, the “in” thing, the thing to do; some advocate a special Masonic image. And even such a serious topic as “the future of Free-masonry”, caries the implication of change and we are in grave danger of being coerced into sweeping changes purely as a sign of the times. “Equal rights”, “human rights” are further re-modernized slogans; too self-evident to speculative Masons to react ostentatious about their practical application or to proclaim them from the
housetops. Yet the challenge becomes apparent, a challenge toward off approaching danger due to mis-interpretation.

Webster’s definition for “obligation” is synonymous with duty, responsibility, vow and accountability; and “opportunity” inculcates convenience, occasion, season; an opportunity is a conjunction of possible, with probability of success, advantage or gratification. And “equal” classifies: of the same degree with another or with each other, as in magnitude or value, neither greater nor less; having the same rank, rights or importance; meeting on the level, uniform in operation under equal laws.... What more can I say!

The needs of modern living encroach upon both our personal and public lives with ever increasing demands, With multiple activities competing for every available moment. Unfortunately, it is often Freemasonry which suffers and does not receive the attention it merits in this competitive situation. Freemasonry is heir to a great legacy but we must always remember that an institution is only as strong as its foundation, a chain as strong as its weakest link. We want to select only those promising strong links forging the mighty edifice as strong today as in times past. The structure’s foundation must remain as firm as it once was. Each and every Mason must look in his heart for the answer. Our contribution to mankind down through the centuries has been significant, whether it be in the fields of government, education, literature, medicine, music or almost any other area we would name. This is not because of any direct involvement, for such would be contrary to our high principles, but rather is the result of individuals practicing Masonic precepts in their daily lives. The precepts and teachings of our Order in seeking tolerance and personal liberty for all and a desire to be better men and citizen have been instrumental in the formation of our free nations, where “common obligations inculcate equal rights and opportunities”.

I do not construe this as indicating that we should shun all change, or that we should cease our efforts to constantly seek
improvement. But I do believe that we should abandon no standards until we are morally certain that we have replaced them with better and more effective ones, and I pray the basic facets of Masonry will always escape the ravages of changing times.

In opening this section of my presentation you may have noticed I began by thanking our Creator. For I am aware that had it not been for His greatness and goodness, and the prayers you offered upon my request, I would not be able to deliver to you in person this topic today....

It has been said that out of pain and suffering the souls of men are rewarded with a greater understanding of the true value of things. And I am fully aware that it was Another’s spirit that guided your prayers that effected my thoughts which I offer you for consideration, meditation and contemplation. Yesterday has passed; with the yesterdays and today behind us, we must now look ahead to many trying tomorrows. Experience and increased results should be our goal for every tomorrow.

An institution comes into being because it has something of great value to contribute to society. It exists as long as it adheres to its original design and continues to make its influence for good felt in society. It has always been the work of Masonry to keep before the world those lofty teachings which give meaning to life, which reflect the divine nature of man, and which give dignity and worth to the individual, in equal proportion. Free-masonry was never intended for the masses... we are a selected and receptive group of equals. It is an institution with nothing to sell to the general public, no public welfare. Each man who desires admittance comes of his own free will, prompted by a favorable opinion conceived of the institution, and uninfluenced by mercenary motives. And we ask for nothing but to let us continue in our time-honored and proven ways to go about our business quietly, and to do our good works: to belong, to measure up, to be accepted in the company of one’s peers; to know, that what they are doing
is just, right and true; to be a part of a great institution whose precepts have been tested by the fires of times, while practising equal rights and opportunities for centuries. We are proud, that in all of history, Freemasonry has never broken with its past; never spilled one drop of blood for opinions’ sake; which, in spite of its latent power, has never dominated or controlled anything by block voting; whose adherents are secure in the knowledge, that happiness is not complete unless it is shared, to share and pass on those great eternal truths that he has discovered. Let us pray to God that it is His will that our Order stands upright as it was since time immemorial. And having prayed let us muster our numbers and all other Masonic organizations and put our combined good resolves into meaningful action. Benjamin Franklin said: “We gave you a republic, if you can keep it”. I paraphrase his statement Masonically: We gave you your working tools, keep and use them wisely, ever remembering, our common obligations inculcate equal rights and opportunities. When we pledge allegiance to Freemasonry, we are really demonstrating the spirit of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth in the spirit of the Three Great Lights. Only a symbol or a slogan? Not so: but rather the visible sign of the power to nurture and sustain our invisible Mystic Tie; they are the Charter of our spiritual liberty, our reverence to the Grand Lodge empowering us to bring men to Light, who would haveotherwise remained in perpetual darkness; to make this world a land of the free and the home of the brave, with integrity, pride, hope, love of God. That is our Masonic equal right and daily opportunity. George Washington expressed it all too well in his farewell address: “The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts; of common dangers, sufferings and success. Every portion of our country, - and of our Order -, finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving this union of the whole”.

The Craft does not pretend to take a man - any man - and make him good. Rather its purpose is to take a good man and try to
make him better. In so doing, the result cannot help but benefit society as a whole. For that reason, Freemasonry is, and should be, exclusive in nature. Only those found to be worthy of the honor should be admitted. To be a member of the Order is a privilege, not a right, and should be ever so. There is no substitute for quality, with or without equal opportunities. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, we read that there is a time for all things. Freemasonry is more than just an organization. It is a state of mind, and as such, it is timeless. Freemasonry is indeed in the pursuit of further Light “a time for all seasons”.

Truly, to comply with these demands means a revolution in our way of life and thinking. Doesn’t this mean a privilege! And the greater the privilege the more important is the responsibility. Governments and their institutions can legislate against poverty or discrimination, - racial or otherwise -: a Mason’s task is improvement and tolerance. We reach refinement through endurance; perfection is God’s work.

I, therefore, protest those who campaign and petition and parade for individual rights but have no tolerance for the rights of those who oppose them. I protest those who profess to champion peace and equal rights, but ressort to terror and violence. I protest broadcast commentators and journalists who feed the flame of fear by allowing rumors, guesses, speculation and conjecture to masquerade as facts. In short: I protest those groups and individuals who champion any system at variance with the basic concept of equal rights and opportunities. The symbolic Sword pointing to the Naked Heart illustrates that justice will sooner or later overtake us, and although our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, yet.... these are our equal rights and opportunities.

Finally, my Brothers: I believe, that Masonry cannot continue to live, only because of the esteemed place which it has held in bygone days, but must gain new life by virtue of its contribution to the present generation and the plans it makes for the next. I further believe, that the opportunity for putting
into practice Masonic teachings has never been greater and that telling the world what we have been is not nearly as important as promoting excellence of purpose in a revolutionary world that needs our guidelines for stability. And I further believe, that true men will continue to make application to our Fraternity, if traditional Masonic philosophy, based on belief in God, Country and the Brotherhood of man, is made visible in the lives of our Brothers.

There is one supreme victory for each Mason. It is the satisfaction which he must feel, when he has taken the message of the obligations to his heart, when he banishes all evil from his life, when he is free of guile and jealousy and when he recognizes in his Brothers men who are striving, as he is, to faithfully discharge their duties to God, to country and to all mankind... within the length of their Cable-Tow.

May God continue to bless our Masonic obligations and vouchsafe the equal rights and opportunities contained therein.

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Tribute to our Departed Brothers

by

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

Presented on 30 August, 1977
at “Eifel” Lodge No. 855
"You are come into the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect".

Hebrews 12:22,23

To properly express in words and thus pay proper 

Tribute to our Departed Brothers

is almost an insurmountable task. I prayed fervently to our Lord today to give me the strength to say what is so right and proper concerning His servants, our friends and Brothers, who have left us for a while, who have ceased to walk on earth with us, and who now walk serenely in that land from whose bourn no traveler ever need return. We, therefore, commend them to our Heavenly Father, who alone can heal the broken hearted, dry our tears, comfort our hearts, and sustain us with His all-sufficient grace.

We, the members of the American-Canadian Grand Lodge, pause in our labor and stand silently for a few moments, and we are led in a prayer of supplication for their families and loved ones, our Brothers and our Lodges.

Now, our Brothers are gone to their heavenly rest, we would assure them, if we could, that they are not forgotten, that they are still loved by us all. We realize “it is appointed unto every man once to die, but after death cometh the resurrection”; and this is our consolation, our hope facing our final, celestial summons: the belief in the immortality of the soul!
Thus we deposit the evergreen, the sprig of acacia, which is our emblem of this belief. And this faith may comfort our hearts as we lay in the grave the lifeless remains of our Craftsmen, who have traveled the same road and received the same light in Masonry that you have. Therefore, our finest testimonial to our departed Brothers will be, that they lived with a strong faith and applied the moral teachings of our fraternity through-out each day of their life; and that they never forgot and always adhered to the words of the Master, “the least of these things you do unto others, you do them also unto me”.

“To the promised land our friends are gone.
To the land of perfect rest;
their work is done and the setting sun
has sealed their life’s request.
They have left this earthly strand
for the house beyond the sea -
though the past is gone, they still live on,
their memories cherished will be”.

Our Brothers having completed the designs written for them on life’s trestle board, have passed through the portals of Eternity and entered the Grand Lodge of the New Jerusalem, and have received as their reward, the white stone with the new name written thereon. In their death their families have lost a beloved father or son, or simply loved one, the community a valued citizen of esteem, and the Lodge a faithful worker among the Craft. In their Masonic endeavors no task was too great, no burden too heavy, no decision so small that it did not receive their full consideration and attention, each within the length of their cabletow.

We being secure in our belief in the Great Architect of the Universe, we who are His creation, call upon Him in our hour of sorrow. In His infinite wisdom He has seen fit to call the immortal souls of our Brethren from this earthly estate to His
Divine Presence. Our Lord, who is aware of the flight of a sparrow, has always walked with them through the pathways of their life here with us, and joyed as we joyed at their happiness, and sorrowed as we sorrowed at their sadness, and He knows their heart and the kind of man and Mason that they were. Therefore, we beseech our Father in Heaven, open wide the gates of your City and make welcome in your abode the faithful soul of our departed Brothers, that there they may abide with you until time is no more.

We know of no greater compliment that can be given them: they were good men; no greater esteem than: they were good Masons; and no greater tribute than: they were good men and Masons. They were a constant inspiration to those of us who knew them, and their memory will be a continuing example to all who come after them; and we are the greater for having known them, and we are the lesser for having lost them.

Our finite beings are humbled as we stand before the eternal plan of God. We experience a weakness of spirit because of the great mystery of God’s creative process. This mystery is the eternal beauty of the universe if only we can muster the eyes of faith to see God’s eternal plan.

Birth, life, death and eternity ever surround us and must tune our eyes to behold the truth that perseveres. When we view the complete process of God’s creation, we know that death is to eternal life as birth is to earthly life; and then we come to realize that death is the glorious entrance into eternal life through the immortal commemoration of birth, life, death and resurrection.

There is a glorious victory and an eternal beauty in the process of death. It is the process of placing the finite hand into the infinite hand of God and being transplanted into the celestial life. How fitting then to rejoice and receive death as the kind messenger sent from our Loving Father to accompany us unto our celestial abode, as we triumphantly shout “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the glory”.

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I would like to close this Tribute to our Departed Brothers with a prayer which has become very much a part of my personal philosophy, - and I am sure of yours as well. It seems to express so exactly what Masonry at its best tries to be; The Prayer of St.Francis of Assisi:

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace:
That where there is hatred -
    I may bring love.
That where there is wrong -
    I may bring the spirit of forgiveness.
That where there is discord -
    I may bring harmony
That where there is error -
    I may bring truth.
That where there is doubt -
    I may bring faith.
That where there is despair -
    I may bring hope.
That where there are shadows -
    I may bring Thy Light.
That where there is sadness -
    I may bring joy...
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort -
    than to be comforted;
to understand - than to be understood;
to love - than to be loved ....
For it is by giving - that one receives;
it is by self-forgetting - that one finds;
it is by forgiving - that one is forgiven;
it is by dying - that one awakens to Eternal life”.

God bless you - everyone!

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Explanation of the United Grand Lodges of Germany

The Konvent of the VGLvD

presented at the Semi - Annual Communication of the American Canadian Grand Lodge on 12 Nov., 1977
United Grand Lodges of Germany (VDLvD)

1. Grand Mother Lodge of the Three World Globes (1740)
2. Grand Lodge of Prussia (1760)
3. National Grand Lodge of German Freemasons or Feemasons Order (FO)
4. Grand Lodge of Hamburg (1743)
5. Grand Lodge of the Sun of Bayreuth (1741)
6. Mother Grand Lodge of the Eclectic Union at Frankfurt
7. National Grand Lodge of Saxony at Dresden (1811)
8. Grand Lodge Concord at Darmstadt (1846)
9. Grand Lodge Chain of German Brotherhood at Leipzig (1924)

“Old Prussian Lodges”

“Humanitarian Grand Lodges”
R.Wor. Grand Master,
distinguished Grand Lodge Officers past and present, Wor.
Masters of our constituent Lodges, my Brothers:

Permit me to express my sincere appreciation for the confidence our R.Wor. Grand Plaster reposed in me when he assigned we the task to prepare and present this talk on the topic, entitled

Explanation of VGLvD

Attending VGL Konvents”.

Time limitations will preclude any possibility of delving into at length, but my observations coincide “ I believe, with the realities of our association within the VGLvD. I’ll try, however, to provide our newly installed Wor. Masters and Officers incentive and motivation for action on their part, to liven things up and ensure the brethren will sit up and take notice.

The purpose of this brief summary is to describe the present structure of Freemasonry within the VGLvD – an acronym for “Vereinigte Grosselogen von Deutschland”. German ‘Freemasonry can trace lie origins on German soil back to Sept... 13th, 1740, the date of the formation of the first of 9 recognized Grand Lodges in Germany, all of which remained in existence, until the era of Hitler brought a temporary end to Freemasonry in this country. This first Grand Lodge was established in 1740 by Brother The Prince Royal Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, - known as Frederic The Great-, the first Grand Master of the “Grand Mother Lodge of the Three World Globes”. This Grand Lodge was one of the 3 “Old Prussian Lodges’” consisting of

1. Grand Mother Lodge of the Three World Globes (1740)
2. Grand Lodge of Prussia (1760)
3. National Grand Lodge of German Freemason (1770)
They initiated only men of the Christian faith; the third one adopted the Swedish Rite or “System”. The other Grand Lodges

4. Grand Lodge of Hamburg (1743)

5. Grand Lodge of the Sun of Bayreuth (1741)

6. Mother Grand Lodge of the Eclectic Union at Frankfurt (1742)

7. National Grand Lodge of Saxony at Dresden (1811)

8. Grand Lodge Concord at Darmstadt (1846)

9. Grand Lodge Chain of German Brotherhood at Leipzig (1924)

have been called the “Humanitarian” Grand Lodges as they accepted for initiation men of any faith.

All these 9 Grand Lodges acknowledged one another and maintained regular fraternal relations.

“There is only one Masonry..., this Unity demands the communication of all true Masons, the only fundament of whom are the three blue degree”, so stated the honorable Bro. Frederic the Great, Protector of the three Prussian Grand Lodges, who was initiated in 1738 in “Absalom Lodge” No. 1 in Hamburg. Truly, a prophetic statement. It is easy to understand that, when the hour of trial came in 1935, those Grand Lodges with a membership of 100,000 Brothers, were compelled to become silent and went underground, a prey to abject despair, their property confiscated. Happily, the spirit of Freemasonry lived under ground under the greatest of difficulties... a little blue Forget Me Not in a lapel marked a Brother, in lieu of the traditional Square and Compasses, and distinguished those who refused to allow the Light of Masonry to be extinguished. The spirit of Freemasonry lived underground under the greatest of difficulties; and because this spirit lived on, Freemasonry in Germany was able to rise.

Restrictions of Lodge meetings were lifted in the latter half of 1946 and in early 1947, and the Masonic Working Community
in Frankfurt sent out invitations to Freemasons throughout the western, free part of Germany. Many fruit-ful discussion ensued; they realized that the pre-war structure of many Grand Lodges, all working independently of one another, was not practicable; they also realized that it was essential to find a common ground where by all Freemasons in Germany could be united into one Grand Lodge to ensure recognition by foreign Grand Lodges. But, you will remember, they were members of 9 different Grand Lodges. At their meeting in Bad Kissingen in 1949 a proclamation was drafted culminating in the firm belief: “There is only one Free-masonry which embraces all Brothers, scattered though they may be and yet bound together by the Royal Art. German Freemasons are pledged to carry into fulfillment the desires of many generations of Masonry”. On the 19th of June 1949 representatives of German Lodges entered the Paulskirche in Frankfurt to found, constitute and consecrate the new “United Grand Lodge of German Freemasons AF & AM” and to install its first Grand Master, Dr. Theodor Vogel. This bright day bad its sadness as well.

You will recollect that the third of the so-called Christian Lodges, the National Grand Lodge of German Freemasons, found herself unable to unite with the new Grand Masonic body, and formed their own “Grand Land Lodge of German Freemasons or Freemasons Order” (FO). The Lodges which formed the new United Grand Lodge of Germany agreed to follow and accept the principles of the English Constitution and to acknowledge the three degrees as we know them. The Lodges of the Freemasons Order which practice the Swedish Or Scandinavian rite, operate a system of 10 degrees, 6 of which must be passed before eligibility for the Master’s Chair-, maintains a distinction between the “Blue Lodges”, i.e. the first three degrees and the advanced degrees. In some ways, the advanced degrees may be equated with the American York Rite system. It is this very problem of distinction or independence of the Blue Lodges which presume the greatest obstacle to the Freemasons Order becoming completely unified.
with the other Grand Lodge - a problem requiring great understanding from all sides. Old habits and customs die hard (the Rite came to Germany in 1770), and it can readily be understood that this old Grand Lodge was not willing to relinquish its inheritance. But it should be stressed that the Freemasons Order was not against some form of unification, and after long discussions, the second memorable occasion in post-war Freemasonry was the convention on the 27th of April, 1958, where the “United Grand Lodges of Germany” (VGLvD) were born, the operative word in the title being “Lodges”. On this memorable day the United Grand Lodge of German Freemasons AF & AM (“AFAM) and the Grand Lodge of German Freemasons (Freemasons Order) merged, and shortly after this the Grand Mother Lodge of the World Globes (“3 WK”), was admitted to the United Grand Lodges of Germany. The basis for this unification is the document “The Magna Charta of German Freemasonry 1958”. At a meeting of the Konvent in Berlin on the 24th of October, 1970 an amendment to the Magna Charta was ratified and the two English-speaking Grand Lodges in Germany, the Grand Land Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany (“GLL-BFG”) and the American Canadian Grand Lodge (“ACGL”), were admitted as equal partners to the United Grand Lodges of Germany. The five partner Grand Lodges which comprise the VGLv.D are listed in the order in which they became signers to the Magna Charta

1. Grossloge A.F. u. A M’s. von Deutschland…simply referred to as “AFAM”, composed of 9,000 members,

2. Grosse Landesloge der Freimaurer von Deutschland…referred to as “FO”, Freemasons Order, composed of 4,000 members; based on the Swedish Rite;

3. Grosse National-Mutterloge” Zu, den drei Weltkugeln”… referred to as “3WK”’s time and partition of Germany have taken its toll, and current membership is now just under 1,000 members. Here, too, mist additional degrees within the system;
4. Grand Land Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany... referred to as GLL-BFG, with current membership around 1,500; our English-speaking counterparts in the northern part of Germany.

5. American Canadian Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M referred to as “ACGL”, with 7,500 Master Masons as members.

To me, these five equal partners or constituent partner Grand Lodges symbolize the five orders of ancient classic architecture: the Doric, the Ionic, the Corinthian, the Tuscan, and the Composite; they support the covering or roof of an edifice termed as the VGLvD.

The adoption of the Magna Charta as the Constitution of the VGL defined the position of German Freemasonry; it was drawn up to effect a structural unification of scattered masonic systems in Germany, for the purpose of seeking and retaining recognition with other masonic jurisdictions of the world with which German freemasons claimed a “mutual community of interest”. Consequently we read in Article I of the Magna Charta: “We German freemasons acknowledge our right and our duty to provide our national order with a form commensurate with the development of German freemasonry and the customs of freemasonry throughout the world.”

This document Magna Charta clearly states the constituent Grand Lodges are autonomous; they govern their own internal affairs. It also contains the rules for electing a Grand Master for the VGLvD, and authorizes two deputies, a Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer, which are part of the so-called Grand Master’s Office (Grossmeisteramt); but there are no grand wardens in the VGLvD. Under authority of the Magna Charta, additional laws and regulations have been adopted for government of the VGLvD: regulations for the establishment of the Senate as the lawgiving and legislative body; rules for the regular convening of the annual communication called Konvent as the representation of the general membership, - a word akin to the English convention. A number of Committees
exist, and these are appointed by the Senate. The 12 members of the Senate are elected and appointed by the respective Grand Lodges (4:4:2:2), and serve a term of generally two years, with re-election or appointment the general rule rather than the exception.

The VGLvD, through its Grand Master, the Senate, the Konvent is the sovereign Grand Lodge in Germany, and is the only Grand Lodge in Germany that is officially recognized by more than 150 other Grand Lodges of the world. As a consequence, each of the constituent Grand Lodges enjoys recognition through its membership in the VGLvD. The designation “Brotherhood of German Freemasons”, as supplement to the VGLvD title, convincingly infers, that it is not only the individual Grand Lodges, - the signers of the Magna Charta -, which are members of the VGLvD, but all freemasons in Germany, irrespective of their nationality, represented by the Grand Master of the VGLvD, Senate and the Konvent. And we are German Freemasons, - and were it not for those inspired few of 1948 and 1958, we would not now be practicing our beloved Craft here in Germany. Fraternal relations, including the exchange of grand representatives with other Grand Lodges, may be accomplished only by the VGLvD. Correspondence between Grand Lodges must be channeled through the VGLvD, except in certain instances where this authority and right is delegated directly to the Grand Secretary of the ACGL. The partner Grand Lodges enjoy autonomy and govern their affairs virtually without interference, just as with any Grand Lodge, certain restrictions are placed on their activities, and they cannot, individually preempt the rights and prerogatives of the VGLvD. In effect, each is a subordinate Grand Lodge... and it is the VGLvD which guarantees our recognition with other Grand Lodges, and therefore must have control over the regularity of lodges working within its sovereign jurisdiction.

There have been varying interpretations as to just where the border line of control exercised by the VGLvD ends, and where the control and authority rests with the subordinate Grand
Lodges. In an ongoing attempt to define these matters, the Senate and various committees assigned specific functions, meets at fairly regular intervals. They will particularly be engaged with two problem areas: the first involves the so-called parity applied to the financing of the VGLvD, where those partner grand lodges with the least number of lodges or total membership have been paying a vastly disproportionate share of the coast of running the VGLvD; the second aspect is the need for establishment of a legislative body, a truly representation of the constituent lodges, either on the basis of the number of lodges or per capita representation. Our Senate does not meet that criteria, hence our VGLvD does not meet all the criteria of a masonically recognizable form as a grand lodge... You will find more and comprehensive information on this subject in the striking keynote address of R. W. Bro. Jess Minton delivered at the Konvent in Hannover on 22 October, 1977.

This brings me to the second section of my talk... the Konvent.

The Konvent or annual communication or convention of the VGLvD is held generally in the month of October, and is announced by the Grand Master. Each Lodge within the VGLvD is entitled to one vote, and that vote can be exercised, as with almost any Grand Lodge, by the Master or one of the wardens. A proxy may be appointed to represent the lodge, subject to specific rules.

According to section 5 of the Magna Charta, the Konvent is maintained as being the representative of the constituent Lodges (“Vertretung der Bruderschaft”). Nature of the Konvent, besides the Senate and the Grand Master is that of a “body” or ‘organ’ (Sect. 6-8 Magna Charta). In accordance with masonic law, legislative power is normally incumbent upon the General Assembly (=Konvent) in its capacity as supreme authority. The Magna Charta deviates from this view in that, it restricts legislative power to the five partner grand lodges through the act of delegating members to the Senate, while indeed granting
the Konvent cooperative rights (statute pertaining to the Konvent, 29.10. 1960). The Senators, however, are subject to no directions at all (sect. 7:6 Magna Charta). Under this regulation, they are not delegates of the Konvent as supreme authority of the VGLvD, but of their respective Grand Lodges, and nevertheless subject to none of the directions thereof.

The legislative function, therefore, has been delegated to the Senate. The Konvent is thereby afforded were cooperative rights they consist of the authority to call upon the Committee of Arbitration, if in a case of conflicting opinions, no agreement can be arrived at with the Senate, or if the Senate refuses to comply with the Konvent’s petition. The recommendations made by the Committee of Arbitration can then only be rejected by the Konvent with a two-thirds majority. The Konvent, therefore, retains a small legislative authority in a rather negative sense.

I disagree with this sole supervisory nature of the Konvent; it takes no statutory initiative; it defines its attitudes about the laws and resolutions presented to it. That’s not enough. The Konvent appears to be the not important of the three bodies of the VGLvD; but it is fell of contradictions and fails entirely in living up to its importance.

Summary

1. To be sure, the Konvent elects the Grand Faster and two Deputy Grand Masters, every three years. Its choice is limited to the candidates nominated by the Senate and of selecting two each candidates for election. The Grand Master and his two Deputies rotate in the office of Grand Master for the three-year period, with the first Deputy becoming Grand Master for the second year, and the second Deputy becoming Grand Master for the third year. While not serving as Grand Master, the brothers concerned are Deputy Grand Masters.

2. The Konvent is permitted no legislative initiative, except in cases of extreme emergency, in which it can call upon the
assistance of the Committee of Arbitration and its qualified majority to repeal laws already passed by the Senate. For the Konvent this results in the lick of an opportunity to actively participate in deliberating the inception of laws. It is only entitled to legalize and/or ratify the Senate’s laws. This means that the Konvent has very little opportunity of contributing to fraternal integration or unification, at least within the realm of legislation. This, though, could be a different case, if laws were proposed and debated in the Konvent prior to the resolution thereof... These facts make room for a certain uneasiness about the Konvent possibly being reduced to a sort of acclimating organ with a rubber stamp function is characterized by R. Wor. Bro. Jess; the members of the Konvent could lose interest in legislative participation.

3. I fear, that the Konvent’s authority is limited, in spite of its lawful designation is the “Fraternal Representation”, of which all Masters of Lodges are voting members, and in which they should all personally participate.... This important organ, the Konvent, duly empowered by the preamble of the law and regulations concerning the Konvent, represents the “Fraternal order” in accordance with the ancient rules, regulations and customs of the Order. It is the voice of all constituent Lodges within the VGLvD, to all regular Brothers throughout the world and to the public. Furthermore, it is the “law-ful and sovereign representative of the Brotherhood” and should visualize the quick energy and vital spirit of the Brotherhood... In a legislative sense, the Konvent is unable to realize such duties, because it is presently and to a large extent rendered ineffective.

The Konvent’s main task can therefore be recognized as a fraternal representation. And representational functions are assumed by institutions claiming a specific intrinsic dignity. Above all, representational activities have an Integrating effect in any community … integration through personal representation. The dignity bestowed on the representatives of the fraternity lends visible significance to the fraternity’s own dignity: it is the concept of humanitarianism, of brotherly love and truth. In its capacity as the voice of the Brotherhood, the Konvent is
called upon is a very special sense to express this concept, call it to mind... and to document our Masonic spirit.

We are in. no need of systems and tutorial opinions, or disputes as to the proper ways and means. - No, what we need are Brothers, crewmen no passengers; Brothers who take their fellowman as Brothers, not as rivals or competitors.

In closing may I reiterate: members of Grand Lodge should be fairly conversant with the problems encountered, and must be familiar with the historical development of Masonry in their own jurisdiction, as well as the functioning of Grand Lodge. This ideal situation can only be realized if a concerted program of education on the subject is undertaken by every lodge. And it is the responsibility of every Master of a lodge, the only member of his lodge who holds voting membership in Grand Lodge, to promote such a program. And once conversant with Grand Lodge, he will be more than pleased to follow through in his own lodge.

Masonic unity has a long hard road... but with mutual understanding and respect for others, closer personal contacts and sharing of our common work, we are convinced that social and masonic intercourse will lead to friendships and friendships to recognition and a United Grand Lodge of Germany.

Thank you very much!

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Thanksgiving & Christmas

by

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented at “Spessart” Lodge No. 875
on 3 December, 1977
my Brothers of this or any other Lodge: it is a distinct honor and privilege to have been invited to this Masonic gathering and to share Masonic fellowship in this fine “Spessart” Lodge, noted for its gracious hospitality and fraternalism. I now have mixed emotions and feelings about my part in fulfilling the request of Wor.Brother Hugh Carter to make an offering of some benefit to those here assembled...

In this context I am reminded to little five-year-old Betty who was taken to church for the first time. As she walked out of the church with her parents, the preacher stopped her, leaned over, and asked her how she liked church. “I liked the music okay”, said Betty, “but the commercial was too long.”

My “commercial” shall be kept within due bounds.

Now is the special time for thankfulness... to give thanks, not to expect it, and to pay a fitting tribute to Thanks-giving Day and Christmas. As Masters of the Craft we are duly prepared to make us masters of ourselves, and by applying the principles of speculative Freemasonry we may even assume the role of helping others to master themselves, and to make out of them our own temple of existence and become a lighthouse for all others who may pass our way through life. It is for that reason we are thankful for our Masonic heritage which has laid its foundation deep in the spirit of the Three Great Lights; and we are grateful for the fraternal spirit which emanates from the Asylum of our Order, and for the deep commitment to service which has come to us since time immemorial.

We are thankful that Masons are brothers by a double tie, and, that among brothers can exist no invidious distinctions. God created mankind for fellowship and not for solitariness. I agree! Our fellowship is formed with the best in human spirit and the bond of unity. The kindred spirit burns as a warm glow and we
are one. When we meet together we do not just meet as men from outside. We meet as brothers in the great family of Masons past, present and future. Our dynamic Masonic fellowship is not the mutual profession of a creed or agreement in matters of lodge organization and procedures. Fellowship is of the spirit, it is a union of the hearts, it transcends differences of opinion and even an agenda, it implies an intellectual allegiance to a common Masonic tradition, and it restrains a man from imposing his own personal views upon another as a condition for common action. This is what our fathers in Freemasonry called “The Mystic Tie”.

Giving thanks should come naturally to a Brother, but I am sure there are times when each of us can become so involved in our own busy activities, concerns and frustrations that we expect more thanks than we give.

Our Thanksgiving Day, - the Sabbath of the Year -, is a most fitting time to examine our thinking and remember with greatful hearts how much we owe compared to the little owed to us. To give thanks unto HIM from whom all blessings flow, just as it was first observed by the pilgrim forefathers in 1623 under their famous Governor William Bradford. It is the responsibility of all of us to expand and extend our work, to count our blessings and to give thanks for all the manifold spiritual blessings we have received for our-selves, for our Lodges and for our Order. Hold your life up against the light of God’s goodness, it shines and turns transparent, radiant and bright. It is the ability to be thankful that makes us rich. He is poor, who is not thankful and has not compassion or charity. He who can share is truly rich. As Masters of the Craft we owe so very much to so many. Let us, therefore, implant the spirit of Thanksgiving in our heart and mind... and “Thank you” often upon our lips.

Finally my Brothers: with the approach of the Holiday Season and the New Year we all join in our supplication to the GAOTU to grant His grace to us and to our loved ones. In our Masonic World it has been a year of light and shadows, well known to all of us, that there is no need for itemization. But have we always been guided by the Square and Compasses? Have we always been faithful enough to our leaders who preceeded us, and to our Brothers of our own or other Lodges? The candid answer must be yours!
This is the season when all peoples around the globe attune their hearts and sentiments to the Christmas epistle:

“Good will toward men”. Freemasons in particular must demonstrate this through their actions, not only on Thanksgiving or at Christmastime, but through every day of every year to come. As we gather in our Lodges and in our families, let us clasp hands and open our hearts to the light eternal, to those divine rays from the Light in the East, that guided the Wise Men of two millenniums ago.

May the Holiday Season and the New Year with their blessings begin. May the Almighty bless you and your loved ones and instill in each of us a deeper understanding of the magnificence of the Brotherhood of men. And with thanks-giving we raise our voices in the ancient Advent hymn:

O come, Thou Day-Spring,
come and cheer our spirits,
by Thine Advent here;
and drive away the shades of night,
and pierce the clouds,
and bring us more Light!”

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
MASONIC

thoughts for

CHRISTMAS

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas. Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented at „Pyramid” Lodge No. 869
on 15 Dec., 1977
My Brothers:

I gratefully acknowledge your fraternal invitation to attend the Special Communication of this well-governed Pyramid “Lodge No. 869 and to reflect on

“Masonic thoughts for Christmas”

with you.

And Christmas means more than an annual celebration of a day or a season. It is a universal symbol of the generosity of the human spirit. With the approach of the Holiday Season we all join in our supplications to the Great Architect of the Universe that HIS timeless message may fill our hearts with joy, love and hope from above.

In our Masonic World it has been a year of light and shadows, so well known, that there is no need for further itemization. But with candid minds we must ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled our duties, adhered to the lessons of the Square, the Level and the Plumb, converted noble plans into reality, and whether we have been faithful enough to our leaders who preceded us and to our Brothers of this or any other Lodge.

This is the time for reflections. One of the interesting coincidences in the calendars of our major religions is that none of the most important observances occur during the summer months. It is as if nature recognizes that the average human being is not likely to be spiritually alert when he is in the arms of physical lassitude. The spiritual revival for nearly all, our faiths begins then with the end of the vacation months; and there is in all creeds around the world an anniversary on which reverence is paid to a divine spirit which constantly calls for individual dedication to the service of humanity.

The holiest days in the Jewish religious calendar, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur which mark the New Year, usually come with the advent of autumn. Christmas, the most important
solemn as well as festive days in the Christian community, comes with the winter solstice. And there is a spiritual affinity between these holidays or Holy Days. The Jewish New Year calls upon the individual for a recommitment to the ideals, principles and practices of his religion - a rebirth of Faith; to take inventory of his past conduct in order that his future course may be in keeping with God’s demands. Christmas which centers around the birth of the imperative figure in the Christian tradition, is designed to be more than an occasion for merry-making and gift giving. It is meant to spur the individual to a way of life in emulation of Jesus. I, for one, see in these emphases of our two religions a moral and ethical “ecumenism” far more important to recognize and understand than the usual homiletical effervescences which stream from our pulpits during these holiday times. The implications of these Holidays are broader:

- men of good will feel an especial urge to open their hearts and hands in sympathy and charity to others;

- men who wear the Square and compasses extend to their less fortunate neighbors not only a sincere fraternal greeting, but such help as the situation may require;

- Freemasonry will thus be instrumental in furthering the design of the Great Artificer that peace and good-will reign among men, and trusting the “One who unerringly leads, bright though the pathway or dim, praying for Wisdom, we joyfully go into the New Year with HIM”.

What we need at this time of the year is a spiritual rebirth, is a unhedged dedication to the trilogy of belief which we as Freemasons subscribe, indeed one which all men can adopt who axe eager to cleanse our society of the evils which keep us from an advance to-ward peace. A rededication to the great truths Masons proclaim and treasure: the belief in God as Supreme; the conviction that all human beings are kin; that these principles are the cornerstones of. our moral and ethical
charter and must guide our actions every day and in every place.

The human soul has its own simple elements that keep it rich, like love and family, like God and starlight, visions of a better life, small babes and kindly faces at the door. These do not give us wealth or power, but they can give us happiness and courage to adapt to any change. And Freemasonry has always taught this balanced way of life. At Christmas time we are all somehow synchronized to a harmonious rhythm strangely apart from the unsynchronized beat measure of the world’s metronomes. In a mature universal sense the spirit of this Season, the meaning of Christmas, is a celebration, a testimonial to the glory of one the world knows as our Saviour, honored for his teachings and his genius with a four letter word spelled LOVE. Expressed Masonically: let Wisdom, Strength and Beauty be the lesson that we learn from it and may we know that at this time we can be truly united in the drive for Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, to really exemplify the basic Teachings of our Fraternity.

We do not intend to change the world; but we are the hope of the world, and we have the implements that the world needs today. Love as Masons understand it, is not merely affection for each other; it should dissolve domination and the lustre of power. It connotes tolerance and a willingness to share each other’s abilities, and particularly, rendering unto others the respect and consideration that equals deserve from one another. This spirit must become our code of mankind. And to achieve this emancipation, we must grow as an evergreen Christmas tree, nourished by the fundamentals of our Order within our own hearts. A Christmas tree, emblem of our believe in God’s infinite benevolence, wisdom and justice; an emblem of our hope in the final triumph of good over evil, and in the perfect harmony as the final result of all the concords and discords of the Universe; an emblem of our faith in the Great Light, that light which will guide us to all truths, direct our paths to the temple of happiness, - that light eternal that never
fails. A Christmas tree which spreads its branches from Brother to Brother, as it unites us all, we hope in a world of eternal love.

Now we can joyfully perceive and proclaim the Christmas message: “Peace on earth, and good will toward men”.

“Merry Christmas”, will lift the spirit of all who give it, as well as those who receive it, when given sincerely and received with an open heart. In effect we are saying: be happy and faithful. Do not let this symbolic greeting become casual meaningless, automatically uttered; send it forth, impregnated with the spirit of Brotherly Love. When we say “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year” to our friends, let us silently say “I behold the Brother in you”.

And as you address each letter or card, bless the recipient with the thought “May the world learn the true meaning of Brotherhood - the cement for men of good will everywhere.”

This year let us not permit the material aspects of Christmas to overwhelm us, until we actually forget or neglects its real meaning. We must capture the spiritual concept of this Season. But this takes discipline of the mind, which speculative Masons have learned and practise; and the advice of our conscience will be our unerring square; none can willfully disobey or disregard it. At Christmas we display joyously and confidently our gifts, for to us has been given the secret knowledge embodied in our Masonic heritage. Meekly we offer the rich gifts of our Fraternity, not because it is a fancy custom, but because of our own need and free will to give and to express our love and goodwill, even if the world at large is not yet ready for the message. Reinforced by a conscious realization of the true meaning of Christmas and with our readiness to spread the feeling of love and happiness to others, we are guided in our actions by the Blazing Star and the letter G in the East. If we keep this frame of mind ever present during this Season and the rest of the year, we cannot help but be in a joyful mood:
Christmas is the gift
    of our Lord’s grace.
Christmas is the smile
    on a loved one’s face.
Christmas is God’s peace
    dwelling in the mind.
Christmas is the love
    we give all mankind.

Every Christmas greeting should be full to overflowing with this spirit, and should project our Masonic Faith and unfailing trust to the recipient. As true ambassadors and teachers of our four natural cardinal virtues together with the three theological virtues, we find God within our very own being when we offer our Christmas Prayer

“Our heavenly Father, we rejoice that Thou hast called us into this great Masonic Order. Grant us the strength that will enable us to be faithful in our tasks as fellow-workers with Him, as in Thy mercy, Thou dost pour upon us Thy truth and Thy grace. In our human frailties, we are prone to error, Our vision is often blurred and dimness obscures the path in which our spirits grope.

We are called upon to make decisions that have eternal consequences and that may influence count-less lives through many years. Thou hast put eternity in our hearts and given our spirits the heritage of immortality.

Help us, 0 Lord, to free ourselves from earth-born clouds and mortal fears that in Thy light we may see life, in Thy presence find peace, and as faithful Brothers and Thy servants take our rightful place in the building of Thine eternal kingdom.

Amen.”
May God bless you always and keep us united in the Brotherly feeling which only we understand.

Merry Christmas, my Brothers!

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

[Signature]
Farewell address... to any brother leaving the Grand Jurisdiction

by

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge

January 1978
Very Wor. District Master of the 5th Masonic District, our friend and Brother Edward Martin:

This is neither the time nor the place to hold a laudatio, but the right moment, I think, to express our appreciation and acknowledgement for your service you have rendered to the American-Canadian Grand Lodge in general and to your good “Peter M. Rasmussen” Lodge No. 916 in particular. Now and in the years to come we are reminded thinking of you, when our most valuable tenets of Freemasonry are concerned: Friendship, Brotherly Love and Truth. You have always exemplified those noble attributes, thus encouraging us to do it likewise.

At this time, and prior to your departure from the Jurisdiction, it will be difficult to properly express our sentiments, or to put in words a fitting tribute in reverence to you. And I feel myself placed in that position of one of the twelve Disciples, - his name was Thomas -, known for his critical or rather meditating disposition, to make at this time and place a forthright and all-inclusive confession of our common Masonic faith, which links us together and which we proudly subscribe.... Please accept it in the spirit of countless Brothers of this and many other Jurisdictions, who were the trusted recipients of your permanent guidance and kind reminders, of your constant help and assistance, of your capable leadership, as well as your encouraging inspiration.

To all of us you’ll remain our Brother who constantly tried to enlighten men’s mind, warming their hearts with the love of the good, inspiring them with the great principle of our fraternity. And as one of the servants of our Brotherhood you practised these living examples that our words and actions shall conform to that principle, that we increase our desire to live for others, for our Brethren; that we reflect God’s glory into the dark places of daily life, and pity the vicious man as one afflicted with a deplorable malady. It is a logical consequence, therefore, that your mind and spirit is governed by the everlasting truth, that true and perfect morality of Free-masonry is the reproduction of the simple and sublime teachings of Moses and Christ: “Love one another; submit to the powers lawfully over you; be pure of heart, meek and humble; do unto others as you would have others do unto you; do that which is right to do, not because it will insure you success or gain the applause of men, but because it is right and therefore ought to be done.”
There is no better time to broadcast our feelings and to salute you than through the voice of the Worshipful Master of your Lodge, Brother Woodroe Harwell, thereby paying a special tribute to you and your beloved “Peter M. Rasmussen” Lodge. A lodge whose foundation is Faith, which is conversant with unseen things; whose roof is Charity, which covers a multitude of our daily human shortcomings; whose door is obedience to our tenets; and whose pavement is humility.

Many of us were personally privileged to jointly work with you in the quarries and at the site of King Solomon’s Temple: as Officer and Wor. Master of your Lodge, as Grand Lodge Officer and District Master, and we enjoyed your many marks of leadership and esteem in our Masonic allied Bodies. These intimate ties between your Brethren were just one part of that destiny that made us friends and Brothers. And we learned also through your support: Masonry is like a beautiful poem; it is scholarly, as it stimulates within us a new and greater appreciation for the liberal arts and sciences; it is dramatic, as when it unfolds that great and consoling lesson of immortality; it is constantly, as when it entreats us to be temperate, prudent and to avoid extremes in all our thinking.

And we learned, Masonry is one of the all-encompassing prayers in our daily life, when it proclaims our belief in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God.

We learned, Masonry is patriotic and resolute, as when it calls us to discharge the three great duties as Masons: to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves.

We learned, Masonry is a devotional guide for our practise through life, magnified by the Three Great Lights and glorified by the letter “G” in the East.

We learned, Masonry is a noble and great thing to excuse the failings of a friend; to draw a curtain before his stains and to display his perfection; to bury his weak-nesses in silence, but to proclaim his virtues on the house-top.

Through your personal example you emblematically implanted in the hearts of others those foundation-stones of principle, which Plato inaugurated, and on which we can truthfully erect our common Masonic Faith, which all the storms of misfortune and all the powers and temptations shall not prevail against:
I am referring to Wisdom, exemplified by precept and example;
to Temperance, through your gentle and generous personality;
to Truth, through the equal greatness of your spirit; to Justice, through your unremitting endeavors while presiding in the East;
to Prudence, through your portrayal of speculative Freemasonry into our daily life, which is to study, to ponder, to meditate, to contemplate, to think; and to make proper decisions in accord with the moral laws as we have learned them as Brothers;
to Fortitude, through creating new avenues and finding Freemasonry’s goal in the amelioration of mankind, providing due consideration is given to others.

On this solid background you pledged allegiance to Freemasonry with dynamic demonstrated Freemasonry.

In closing let us seal our affectionate vows for you and your wife Pat with our prayer: “Let us with the deepest veneration and devotion adore the great source of life, that glorious spirit who is the most merciful and beneficent ruler of the Universe and of all the creatures it contains. And may our Lord and Saviour bless the work you do, and through the coming years may His grace abide in you.”

God bless you!

Auf Wiedersehen!

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
As early as the year 1934, soon after Hiller’s rise to power, it became apparent that Freemasonry was in clanger. In the same year, the German Grand Lodge of the Sun in Bayreuth (one of the pre-war German Grand Lodges), realized the imminent problems facing them and elected to wear a little blue flower, the Forget Me Not, in lieu of the traditional Square and Compasses, as a mark of identity for Masons. It was felt the new symbol would not attract attention from the Nazis, who were in the process of confiscating and appropriating Masonic Lodges and property. Masonry had gone underground and it was necessary that the Brethren have some readily recognizable means of identification.

Throughout the entire Nazi era, a little blue flower in a lapel marked a Brother. In the Concentration Camps and in the cities a little blue Forget Me Not distinguished the lapels of those who refused to allow the Light of Masonry to be extinguished.

In 1947, when the Grand Lodge of the Sun was reopened in Bayreuth by Past Grand Master Beyer, a little blue pin, in the shape of a Forget Me Not, was proposed and adopted as the official emblem of the first annual convention of those who survived the bitter years of semi-darkness, bringing the Light of Masonry once again into the Temples.

At the first Annual Convent of the United Grand Lodges of Germany, AF & AM, in 1948, the pin was adopted as an official Masonic emblem honoring those valiant Brethren who carried their work on under adverse conditions. At the Grand Masters Conference in the United States, Dr. Theodor Vogel, the Grand Master of the newly-formed VGLvD, AF & AM, presented one of the pins to each of the representatives of the Grand Jurisdictions with which the VGLvD, AF & AM enjoyed Fraternal relations.

Thus did a simple flower blossom forth into a meaningful emblem of the Fraternity and became perhaps the most widely worn pin among Freemasons in Germany. In most of our Lodges, the Forget-Me-Not is presented to new Master Masons, at which time its history is briefly explained.
On Masonic Jurisprudence

By
(Dr.) Hogo Thomas, Past Grand master
American Canadian Grand Lodge

Presented at the District Workshop
Of the 1st and 5th District –ACGL–
on
7 Jan., 1978
Distinguished Grand Lodge Officers,

Wor. Sirs, my Brothers:

permit me to express my deep appreciation to Very Wor, Bro. Gunter Furst for his kind invitation to actively participate in this District Workshop and for the privilege accorded me to present a paper on the special subject of Masonic Jurisprudence particularly what constitutes a Masonic offence and certain Masonic penalties.

I admire the confidence of the District Master of the 1st Masonic District he reposed when he assigned this task to me, the most obvious perhaps being my preference to invest my abilities and my knowledge in the medical field rather than in judicial endeavors. None, however, should take this statement verbatim.: I am. deeply convinced of the necessity of Masonic laws and a strict adherence to them; I am too familiar with our laws to appreciate their main purpose, to preserve that general uniformity of character and design which constitutes the true universality of our Institution. And they are equally fortunate for the prosperity of the Order, and for its capacity of keeping up with the progress of the age.state merely because he happens to be Massachusetts or Germany.

At this time, I will not even attempt to compete with many brilliant Masonic scholars on Masonic Jurisprudence: Albert G. Mackey, Louis B. Blakemore, J. Edward Allen, Sir William Blackstone, Robert Ingham Clegg, just to name a few “stars”, but it is their spirit which motivated me to present this paper.

First, let me offer you some general remarks.

Every Master Mason is obliged to abide by the laws, resolutions, edicts and decrees of his Grand Lodge, the by-
laws of his lodge of which he is a member, and to uphold, maintain and support the ancient usages and customs of the Craft. It is impossible to abide by any laws if we do not know what they are. In a foreign jurisdiction a Mason is amenable to its laws, as well as those of his own jurisdiction. In this duality of allegiance Masonry follows the civil law; thus, an American residing abroad is amenable to the laws of the nation in which he lives, but is also expected to obey the laws of his own nation. Neither is a Mason from Texas exempt from the laws of the Grand Lodge of that

The laws of Masonry, like the laws of nations, are both unwritten as “common law” and written. And the foundations of Masonic Law are to be found in the “Ancient Landmarks” or unwritten law and in the “Ancient Charges” or “General Regulations”, the written law.

Some brief comments.

The “Ancient Landmarks” are thus stated to be those foundations of the laws of Masonry which are not subject to change and consist of the laws, usages and customs which have existed since the time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Had the Grand Lodge which first adopted the “Ancient Landmarks” it would have saved much trouble and confusion for those newer Grand lodges which came after. Apparently, however, they were so well understood and practiced then, that it was not thought necessary to codify it. The Landmarks - Mackey lists 25 - have been reduced to print and made a part of the written law in many jurisdictions. Nothing can be subtracted from them or added to them, not the slightest modification can be made in them, and we are bound by the most solemn obligation of duty to transmit them to our successors.

The code of the “General Regulations” as set forth in Anderson’s Constitution of 1723 and adopted shortly after the formation in 1717 of the First or Mother Grand Lodge in England, is considered as the universal written law of Freemasonry.
Together with the Landmarks they constitute the foundation on which the whole superstructure of Masonic law is erected, and make the science of Masonic law. It is unnecessary to itemize these General Regulations, i.e. the Old York Constitutions of 926, the Constitution of King Edward III of 1327, the four Regulations of 1663 until 1720, and finally the General Regulations of 1723. In general it may be said that the Ancient Landmarks are concerned with the individual brother and his Lodge and his brethren; the General Regulations with the conduct of the Craft as a whole. The latter permit their own alteration by Grand Lodge, - the Ancient Landmarks do not. It is, therefore, of real importance that Masons desiring to understand the laws by which the Craft is governed and the legal standards by which Grand Lodge measures its laws, resolutions and edicts should study both; and the Grand Lodge has an inherent power and authority to make new regulations, or to alter these, for the real benefit of our ancient Fraternity, provided always that the Ancient Landmarks be carefully preserved.

The Ancient Landmarks and the General Regulations may be regarded as bearing the same relation to Masonic law as the provisions of the Magna Charta bear to modern constitutional laws. Just as Magna Charta specified some of the inherent rights of men which all laws of all governments should consider and respect, so the Landmarks crystallize in words the inherent characteristics of Masonry - those fundamentals which make Freemasonry, and without which it would be something else.

I will now omit to commence a treatise on the subjects that relate to the qualifications of candidates, their method of application and admission, or rejection. Symbolic Freemasonry recognizes nothing beyond the degrees of FAs, FCs, Master Masons and Past Masters; according to the progress they have made, they acquire certain rights and prerogatives; and according to their obligations specific duties devolve upon them as individuals. These applicable laws, including the
nature and prerogatives of constituent Lodges or the Grand Lodge as their representative capacity will not be the subject matter of this presentation.

Law in Masonry is so much more a matter of the heart than of the head, so much more concerned with setting forth conduct than in assessing penalties that thoroughly to comprehend it, we must be willing to revise our ideas of law as we understand the enactment of legislatures.

It is peculiar to the subject which is now about to be treated, that the division of wrongs in the profane world is not admissible in, or applicable to the system of Masonic jurisprudence. In Freemasonry, every offence is a crime, because in every violation of a Masonic law, there is not only sometimes an infringement of the rights of an individual, but always, superinduced upon this, a break and violation of public rights and duties which affect the whole community of the Order; and this is the very definition of a crime. It is a settled axiom of Masonic law, that every offence which a Freemason commits is an injury to the whole Fraternity, if in nothing else, at least in this, that the bad conduct of a single member - or a lodge! - reflects discredit on the whole institution. The discredit and shame, therefore, that is brought upon the Institution by the misdeeds of its members, is an important element to be considered in the consideration of every Masonic offence... that is to say, that all private wrongs to an individual are public wrongs to the Order. There is a division of Masonic offences which is well worthy of notice. You’ll find them listed, together with all other matters of Masonic jurisprudence, in Section 4.00 of the Code of the ACGL. Wor. Masters, “cause it to be read in you Lodge, that none may pretend ignorance of the excellent precepts it enjoins”.

Let me briefly reflect just on a few of them:

- cruelty to one’s inferiors and dependents, uncharitableness to the poor and needy, and a general misanthropical
neglect of our duty as men to our fellow beings, exhibiting itself in extreme selfishness and indifference to the comfort or happiness of all others, are offences against the moral law, and therefore Masonic crimes;

- injustice in every form in which one man can do wrong to another is a Masonic offence;

- disobedience and want of respect to Masonic superiors, and the bringing of private piques or quarrels into the Lodge are justly considered Masonic offences;

- a want of courtesy and kindness to the brethren, speaking calumniously of one behind his back, or in any other way attempt to injure or slander him, is each a serious violation of the precepts of Free-masonry, and an offence.

Loyalty is an essential qualification in Freemasonry and only those who cheerfully conform to every lawful authority are accepted. Disloyalty in any form is regarded as a serious Masonic offence.

To be loyal is to be faithful to one’s obligations, to be faithful to our leaders, and show faithfulness to obligations. Let us give a little thought to one’s obligations, not only to friends but to the solemn obligation you and I took while we knelt at the Altar. Perhaps, it would be well for us to do a little reviewing of these obligations, especially the phrase “I will speak no evil”, or “I will not wrong, cheat or defraud”. Have you ever had the heartache of some unkind person speaking evil of you just for spite, jealousy, or perhaps just to irritate you? This type of person is not loyal to God, his home, or even to himself. When we find it necessary to speak of another person it would be wise for us first to put ourselves in that persons place and then ask ourselves if those words kind: are we being loyal to our obligation... Be faithful and loyal to your convictions... The
chief glory in the crown of manhood is loyalty... Take a tip and be loyal.

Everyone knows how to express a complaint, but few can utter a graceful compliment. It’s a matter of practise. If everyone sweeps up his own front door the whole world will be clean.

I could go on and on... It is sufficient to say that whatever is a violation of fidelity to solemn engagements, a neglect of prescribed duties, or a transgression of the cardinal principles of friendship, morality and brotherlylove, is a Masonic offence, and renders the offender liable to Masonic punishment.

In this context I must, however, bring to your attention, that it is not a Masonic offence for a brother not to attend lodge or to obey a summons - - - “health and business permitting”. In every lodge everywhere, there are members who remain inactive except for remitting their dues payments. This appears, on the surface at least, to be inconsistent with that dynamism one would expect from a member of our fraternity; the facts are that some members, for better or worse, actually appear to remain passive in their masonic activities. These Brothers are as vital to the well being of Craft Masonry as those who devote many hours to the work of the lodge. We must never lose sight that without the financial basis to operate, derived principally from dues and fees, very few lodges could maintain a viable program, or even provide the “setting” for the active members to conduct their affairs. In that sense, it is not necessarily derogatory to be termed a “card-carrying-Mason”.... if by that term the implication is conveyed that the brother concerned is in good standing and is supporting the lodge by his regular dues payments. So the simple fact a brother may be inactive, while very unfortunate indeed, cannot automatically place the brother in a disparaging light. He is just as much a Mason as the brother who attends regularly, votes, and holds office; he is just a different type of Mason. Some Masons are more motivated than others; some love ritual and instruction, some love administrative work, some just enjoy sitting on the
sidelines and watching others perform... and some even enjoy participating so long as they can criticize. To each his own, Masonry has something for everyone. And there are Brothers who remain very active for a period of time, and then, for some reason best known to themselves, simply display what appears to be a lack of further interest by not attending or participating in the lodge’s affairs. What happens to cause these Brothers to retire from active attendance or for not obeying a summons I cannot say, but I accept it in good faith. Were we to question the motivation of every member, and attempt to determine for ourselves just what constitutes an “acceptable” response to such summons... we would not be recognizing the fact that every member is the best judge, - whether we personally think so or not is irrelevant -, as to the proper allocation of his time in accord with our Masonic teachings... Only a brother can best determine what constitutes “business” for him, and how his time should best be allocated to attend to such business. Remember always that the term “health and business permitting” is not restrictive to one’s personal commercial endeavors, but applies to anything a brother rightfully considers as his business. Domestic affairs and duties are in this category - and blessed is the man that remains home to preserve his domestic tranquility if his family cannot or will not put up with his absence at lodge. Unfortunate, but it must be respected. In short, we must endeavor always to respect a brother’s excuse, whether we consider it to be valid, acceptable, or anywhere below that evaluation. We may not like it, but we are dealing with mature human beings and Brothers who received the same light as you and I did, - and fortunately they are eminently human. Education is the only answer here. After all, in Masonry we are constantly dealing with Brothers, good, upright men with their own human traits and inclinations. Masonry does not have the authority to mobilize its members simply by issuing orders or expecting them to commands. We do not think in military categories! Our only real source of control over our membership is that exerted in the form of the Mystic Tie... that
mysterious force which enables us to respond immediately because that force does exist and causes us to respond, to acknowledge our duties, and to view Masonry in that favorable light which has enabled it to expect such response from its members... but always voluntarily!! Motivate the Brother concerned, pay him a personal visit to attempt to get the answer. Each man’s answer is to him, personally valid. We can only change men’s views or opinions by understanding this vital fact. A man’s excuse is personally valid, until he can be convinced by himself, that the excuse is not valid. Do not force a Brother against the wall, respect his answer first, and then attempt to make him see things your way, but give him the genuine respect he should enjoy as a brother, whether you think he deserves it or not. Summing up this issue into one sentence, “Do ye unto others, as ye would have others do unto you!”... You just can’t beat the Great Light when it comes to wisdom in brief.

Many civil laws are provided with measures of enforcement and penalties for infringement. Masonic law in this jurisdiction knows but three penalties: reprimand, definite and indefinite suspension and expulsion or Masonic death; to these other Jurisdictions have added censure and exclusion. These Masonic penalties for serious infractions of Masonic law may be ordered after a Masonic trial and a verdict of guilty, but the punishment is usually made to fit the crime, and mercy is much more a part of Masonic than of civil law. Infractions of Masonic law resulting in trial and punishment are rare, compared to the number of Masons, the vast majority of whom are so willing and anxious to obey the laws that “enforcement” is seldom required. But this requires certain basic mental qualifications.

I suggest to consider carefully the fact that while a man is born with some qualifications, there are many which he can acquire for himself; he can qualify himself by deciding to do it, by will, determination and practice, by patiently learning this great and ancient art of Free-masonry, permitting himself never to be discouraged by either time or difficulty. Our goal
is: to make men better. Of all descriptions pertaining to Masons these are the most applicable prerequisites for mental qualifications: good character and to be free born. Good character connotes being honest and truthful, devout and charitable, thoughtful, loyal and respectful of others and of oneself. No one is born with character and you cannot buy good character. Moral concepts and moral behavior must be learned, molded at an early age through adulthood, with training and self discipline; and then become a way of life just as Masonry is a way of life. It is, therefore, inappropriate for a Mason to sponsor a man for membership in our Order merely because he knows of nothing against him. He should know him well enough to know his philosophy of life, - his good character. And we still number among membership qualifications the requirement to be free born. But, how else could we be born, since today we have neither slavery nor serfdom? Our Order requires that a man be free born in every sense of the word, wholly answerable to himself, not under obligation to give an account of himself to others, nor required to divulge to relatives, or to business, political or religious superiors everything he does. Otherwise it is impossible for him to keep his Masonic obligations... The Investigating Committee is our first line of defense. Let it be vigilant and alert and successfully resist all attempts to relax our traditional moral standards, or the consequences may be fatal to the Lodge and the Brother concerned.

You will note, among the Masonic penalties is not noted the “Admonition”, although I’m tempted to briefly comment on it. According to the ethics of Freemasonry, it is made a duty obligatory upon every member of the Order to conceal the faults of a brother, - that is, not to blazon forth his errors and infirmities - to let them learned by the world from some other tongue than his, and to admonish him of them in private; to whisper wise counsel in his brother’s ears and to warn him of approaching danger. And this refers not more to the danger that is without and around him than to that which is within
him; to that deeper peril of those faults and infirmities which lie within his own heart, and which, if not timely crushed by good and earnest resolution of amendment may bring harm to the Brother. But as the duty of admonition is Masonic, so is there a Masonic way in which that duty should be discharged. Never admonish with self-sufficient pride in our own reputed goodness, not in imperious tones, not in harsh language that will wound rather than win, will irritate more than it will reform; but with persuasive gentleness that gains the heart, with the all-subduing influences of “mercy unrestrained”, with the magic might of love, with the language and the accents of affection, which mingle grave displeasure for the offence with grief and pity for the offender...

This, and this alone, is Masonic admonition. I am not to rebuke my brother in anger, for I too have my faults; but I am to admonish in private, not before the world, for that would degrade him; and I am to warn him perhaps from my own example, how vice ever should be followed by sorrow, for that goodly sorrow leads to repentance, and repentance to amendment and amendment to joy!

On the subject of Suspension, - deplorable as any Masonic punishment -, I will briefly touch the sentence of Definite Suspension, a verdict which is exercised in December by many Lodges when some Brothers are subject of suspension for non-payment of dues. By definite suspension is meant a deprivation of the rights and privileges of Freemasonry for a fixed period of time, which period is always named in the sentence. By the operation of this penalty, a Free-mason is for the time prohibited from the exercise of all his Masonic privileges. His rights are placed in abeyance, and he can neither visit Lodges, hold Masonic communication, nor receive fraternal relief during the period for which he has been suspended... But he is still a Freemason!

I endorse the many fine comments made by Masters of Lodges and Masonic scholars on this subject, particularly Bro.Jess’,
SOP in his last November MAD-Bulletin. However, it is urged that every Lodge investigate thoroughly each individual case before actually suspending a Brother. There is too often the possibility that a Brother is in a financial bind; and many are too proud to make their hard-ships known, although this is not the attitude a Brother should take; he has the right to confide in his Brethren that he is in need of assistance. Did we instruct him so before he left the area? Is it always possible to investigate thoroughly these cases across the miles? Did we make every possible effort to ascertain if a Brother is not letting himself be suspended merely because of his financial inability to pay. I do not mean those few Brothers who deliberately fail to pay their dues because of cold-ness and indifference to the lodge. No, no ... but I’m referring to the 80% who have lost contact with their lodge; where we have no valid up-dated address; who were never trained or instructed how to travel in foreign countries; who never received a lodge communication. I could go on and on... the manner this serious subject is dealt with and discussed in some lodges makes me sick and distressed. But I will not hesitate to publicly correct an often observed misconception or rather misinterpretation; that is “We need their dues to meet with our Charity goals”. Yes, but this goal must be primarily directed on the needs of the lodge.

It is to be borne in mind that Freemasonry if not to be entered in the hope of personal gain or advancement. Our aim if to cultivate a brotherly feeling among men and help the distressed and afflicted Brothers to the extent of our ability. But it cannot be too strongly emphasized that Blue Lodge Masonry is not a benefit society, although the practice of Masonic charity if a fundamental virtue. There are other excellent Masonic Bodies founded for monetary charity.

We should also remember that Freemasonry originally was not designed to confer degrees. This function was incidental to its main objective which was to enable men to meet together in friendship and brotherly love. This still should be the main
objective of every Mason and his most important task should be the building of a chain of friendship which will make of his brethren a Temple of living stones. Only the individual Mason can make this come to pass but he must have an inspired leadership in order to do so.

Brothers of the Lodge: be sure in each case before final action is taken on suspension.

All Masons, whether members of Lodges or not, are subject to the infliction of any Masonic penalty when found to merit it after due trial. Resignation or withdrawal from the Order does not cancel a Mason’s obligations, nor exempt him from that wholesome control which the Order exercises over the conduct of its members. The highest of all Masonic penalties that can be inflicted on a member of the Order is expulsion; it has been often called a Masonic death in its all-encompassing consequences... An important question remains to be discussed, which refers to the penalty of suspension or expulsion from a Masonic allied body. They do not affect the relations of the punished Brother to a Symbolic Lodge. But a sentence from a Lodge carries with it, of necessity, the same sentence from every appendant body. The concordant bodies are not and cannot be recognized as a Masonic body by a Lodge of Master Masons by any of the modes of recognition known to Symbolic Masonry.

In closing this presentation, imperfect and with all its omissions it must of necessity be, just one final comment on this subject, perhaps it can serve as a small guide-line:

As the Lodge is opened with the rising sun, in the name of the GAOTU, and closed at its setting in peace and harmony, so, if you have any animosity against a Brother, let not the sun sink in the west without being witness to your reconciliation. Early explanations prevent long continued enmities.
The golden ladder of charity that must be climbed to reach the summit, is the rung of grace. Grace is often doing for another being kindness he doesn’t deserve, hasn’t earned, could not ask for, and can’t repay. Grace offers man what he cannot do for himself. The unwritten creed of many is that God is under obligation to them, but grace suggests that we are under obligations to God. To live in that consciousness is to live by grace. When you possess the gift of grace, you see the needs and hear the hearts of others through an inner awareness. And within every Free-mason should be found the gift of grace towards all man-kind. The unconscious grace of knowing your Brother’s need before he speaks and your mindfulness of that need will be as little light to dispel his darkness. If all Freemasons act as little lights to each other and to humanity at large, we can never falter on our path... Always remember that from your light, another may be ignited. All our little lights together will form a brilliance comparable to a sunburst at noontime.

Masons look for the good in life - and praise it! What value is it to dwell upon the negative aspects of the otherwise wonderful lives which are our good fortune to live! The philosophy of positive thinking is by no means an exemplification of the “head in the sand” syndrome. It is, simply stated, the prototype of the basic Masonic belief in a Supreme Being. It is a specimen of our knowledge that by practicing and teaching the four natural virtues of antiquity; i.e. temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice, together with the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, that the ills of the world may be tempered, if not cured.

Study to show thyself approved unto

God and the brethren,

a workman that needeth not to be

ashamed of the way he deals with the Truth”.

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Finally, my Brothers, allow me the liberty of quoting the Apostle Paul as this sums up my feeling on how everyone, including myself, should conduct himself in his Masonic life. Paul said:

Study to show thyself approved unto
God and the brethren,
a workman that needeth not to be
ashamed of the way he deals with the Truth”.

And so mote it ever be!

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Cooperation and Interdependance

by

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge,
2nd Vice Pres. ESC

Presented at the Annual Meeting
of the
European Shrine Club
on 14 Jan., 1978
Honorable President and Vice Presidents,
Nobles and Brothers:

At this time and place I propose a vote of thanks to our Recorder Noble Elmer George for his kind invitation of 9 December, 1977 to attend and participate at the Annual Meeting and Seminar of the European Shrine Club, and I appreciate and welcome the opportunity to share fraternal fellowship with all good brothers here in attendance. I was privileged to work with most of you in the quarries and at the building of our Masonic edifice. Our Masonic work consists of commonly shared and channeled energy, and I hope and pray we have been able, at least in some small way, to make our Lodges an Oasis of friendship and brother love and to imbue this spirit throughout our Grand Juris-diction. We pledge our allegiance to Freemasonry with dynamic demonstrated Freemasonry. In this spirit I may offer you my personal thoughts, and to invite your attention on the subject of the mutual Cooperation and Interdependence between ancient Craft Masonry and our Masonic appendant Bodies, and Shrinedom in particular.

Freemasonry and Shrinedom have one great common strength and goal, which all of us voluntarily subscribe: to bring and to emanate happiness. And this we do in the spirit of Henry Ward Beecher’s definition of a smile: “It is a light in the windows of the face by which the heart signifies it is at home and waiting”. And our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand. And Brother Beecher is right, when he clearly states: “A man should fear when he enjoys only the good he does publicly. Is it not publicity rather than charity, which he loves? Is it not vanity, rather than benevolence, that gives such charities? This is good
Masonic groundwork where the warm sunshine of the Shrine radiates. And it was for that reason, over 100 years ago, an internationally prominent actor Billy Florence and a respected physician Dr. Walter M. Fleming, decided to design and institute “A playground for Masonry” as an organization of eligible Master Masons which would be interesting, pleasing and where good fellowship would be the watch word.

As Masons and Shriners we have a great heritage, living up to the expectations of the profane world and of the community in which we live, and our strength and power is primarily in our hearts and minds, in our enthusiasm. And as far as receiving help from the profane world is concerned, it’s like giving yourself a blood transfusion taking the blood out of your right arm and putting it into your left arm, and spilling half of it on the way over. That’s about what it amounts to. -

We are all in agreement, the top in Masonry is an accomplishment and not a degree. So is it with the Shrine and both Rites of Masonry, and this we have to tell the Brothers in our Lodge, our Companions and our Nobles. There is no way to a higher degree in the Rites or in the Shrine. Each is to be considered on its own merits, and many Masons take both, Neither is antagonistic to the other, but on the contrary each supplements the other. A. jack-of-all trades never becomes prominent in anything, and it is better to have well-grounded knowledge of one subject, than a superficial knowledge of many things.

While eventually we may find it desirable to seek additional degrees, we should remember that we can never outgrow the degrees of the Blue Lodge. Additional degrees will be found useful only as they enable us to obtain a better understanding of those we have already received. If they cause us to forget our lodge, it would be better had they never been taken.
Which way to go? That is unimportant. The important thing is to learn well the lessons taught in the three degrees of the Blue Lodge. To “go on” before this has been accomplished, will only mean confusion and render your chances of becoming thoroughly grounded in the principles and symbolism of Masonry, almost nil. The term “Higher Masonic degrees” is a misnomer. The highest Degree in Ancient Craft Masonry is the Master Mason Degree, and being the highest there can be none higher.

These “higher degrees” are merely a beautiful superstructure designed to make clearer the meaning and add to the knowledge already gained from the three Blue Lodge degrees. One does not enter college until after graduation from high school. The reason - not qualified. It is possible for one to receive the Blue Lodge degrees, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite in rapid succession and then on to the Shrine within the space of a few weeks. Yes, this is done often, but about all the candidate gets out of it is the satisfaction and pride that is his, because he has gone both the York and Scottie routes and is entitled to wear on his coat lapel the double-eagle and the scimitar. The tenets of the order, the weaning of its symbols, are to him just as foreign as before he received them.

But he’s a 32° degree Mason, a Shriner, and member of the other bodies, but if he had to stand examination before being admitted as a visitor in a Blue Lodge, probabilities are he couldn’t pass.

Please don’t get us wrong. We are not trying to dissuade anyone from joining the Chapter, Council, Commandery, Scottish Rite or Shrine - no, that is not what we mean. One may get both, pleasure and knowledge, that will enhance the beauty of the E.A., F.C. and M.M. degrees if he has mastered their lessons, before “going on”. No matter how beautiful the architectural design of a building unless the foundation is of
solid construction and durable, the building is of little use as a business house or as a residence.

If one would acquire a thorough and comprehensive Masonic education he must use for its foundation, the only foundation, the bed-rock of Masonry - the three degrees of the Blue Lodge. Just as in the building of a house he must begin at the bottom and work up, - he can’t begin at the top and work down.

Build first a solid foundation, then the building you erect may be made more pleasing to behold, may be more useful, by adding to it the beautiful superstructure degrees - not by substituting them for the degrees of the Blue Lodge.

Please, do not misinterpret me. Sometimes it seems as though the more prominent and the more popular a Masonic member becomes the more odd he is if he doesn’t belong to all of the Appendant Bodies. Sometimes it seems to be the felling among a lot of the members that he has -to belong or there is something wrong with him. I don’t think this is right, because we have so many fine and prominent embers that are Craft Lodge members, and that’s all. They are always being questioned and encouraged, and I think it’s part of the program of soliciting membership that is encouraging them to go on and obtain additional degrees, which I think is all right. However, I have always had the feeling that it isn’t right to feel that something is wrong with somebody if he doesn’t belong to one or all of the Appendant Bodies. I think one of the greatest benefits of these Bodies, and one of the reasons we should be proud of them and encourage them, is all of the many benefits that are derived to the public in general by having their funds and wonderful facilities available for all the fine programs that they have: scholarships, the Knight Templar Eye Foundation, the Shriners orthopedic and burns hospitals. It is therefore we need these Bodies and Shrinedom and their self-supporting hospitals and so many worthwhile endeavors in the communities.
I would not discourage honest criticism in our ranks. Solutions are arrived at, when problems are faced realistically. At the same time, we should not fail to see and to talk about the basic and fundamental teachings of Shrinedom and manifestations in the lives of members. Make the meetings more attractive; offer the members some Masonic food for thought and contemplation; don’t stress the lack of attendance but rather praise those in attendance, We cannot sweep problems under the rug. We can talk more about the good work, and point to the members in every community who bring honor and credit to the Organization. The devotion and service to the Institution cannot be measured in terms of material gain alone; it is more precious - it is that which makes one wiser, better and happier. And it is written “A Shriner believes that pleasure is something that one takes out of life but Happiness is something that one shares”.

Our members are interested in the answers to three basic questions: what is the origin; what are our purposes; what are our accomplishments?

Working as a Brother and Noble is a responsibility that never ends. If our endeavours to improve, strengthen and enlarge this our A,A.O,N,M.S. cease, the whole cause of Freemasonry is lost. Whether it is today or in the years to come, when leadership will pass into the capable hands of another, let’s you and me continue to give our best for our honorable E.S.C. and our worthy Temples. If we love it, let’s work for it, ever bearing in mind the Entered Apprentice Scripture lesson: “Beholds how good and pleasant it is for Brethren who live together in unity”.

Es Selamu Aleikum!

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Salute to our Past Masters

by

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented at the “Past Masters’ Night”
at “Truth and Friendship” Lodge No. 828
on 25 Jan., 1978
Wor. Master,
distinguished and honorable Past Masters of this or any other Lodge, my Brothers:

In so respectable an assembly and before such competent Brothers and Grand Lodge Officers of solid Masonic knowledge it may probably deemed presumptuous in a servant and honorary member of this well governed “Truth and Friendship” Lodge No. 828 to offer his sentiment, and to do sufficient justice to the dignity of this day of Light: the symbolic exemplification of victory of light over darkness, the most impressive and striking drama ever written. And I am deeply grateful to the Wor. Master, Bro. Sam Moore for his kind invitation to attend this “Past Master’s Night Communication” and to be accorded the opportunity to impart my personal sentiments to those in attendance in the most important night in a Brother’s life, which inculcates “further light” and a most comprehensive summons: “To preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied”.

Out of this renewed experience, with growing comprehension as we study our Masonic philosophy, as we ponder its immeasurable implications for personal growth, and as we continue to make our preparation for the final reward of our labors, there comes a deep appreciation for “that celebrated artist, whose name is held in high veneration by the Craft”, our ancient operative Past Master Hiram Abif, the Grand Master of Tyre.

As speculative Masons, we gladly acknowledge thee morality of Bro. Hiram., the very epitome of a true Past Master, in the implication in that morality for us a challenge for the future, as well reconfirmation of the enduring worth of the lessons of justice, truth, temperance and fortitude, which we learned and
from our Brothers who preceeded us, — our instruction and sponsors. We need be reminded, and Bro. Hiram does remind us, that no man ever did justice to himself by doing an injustice to others. And in this context you might accept in vary simple terms the reminder of Bro. Benjamin Franklin: ‘Our books are balanced in Heaven not here. Pity and forebearance should characterize all acts of justice.” Surely the great Past Masters of the Craft of Tyre would agree that such statement, in its profound simplicity, complements his concept of morality.

We also need be reminded, and Bro. Hiram does so, that truth challenges our highest capacity to keep a candid mind, I agree with Bro. A.A. Hodge’s statement. “No one’s truth is rightly held until it is clearly conceived and stated, and no single truth is adequately comprehended until it is viewed in harmonious relations to all other truths of the system of which the prophets in the Old Testament and the Revelation of Christ are the center.” I believe Bro. Hiram would say, “If the entire world goes against Truth and brotherly love, then Hiram goes against the world”.

We all know that the Wor. Master is charged to maintain order, that he orders the Craftsmen to their places and that all of us speak of our Fraternity as the Masonic Order, where the work must go forward according to the designs on the trestleboard. For that reason and for none other, we have degrees, make, titles and honors.

I come now to a doctrine in the science of Masonry of speak with temerity and must speak with. Caution, because it is easily misunderstood. What is the highest honor in a Lodge?

What honor is it, which, once a Mason has received it, he can receive no higher because the Lodge has no higher to give? It is obvious even to the youngest Entered Apprentice that the highest office in the Lodge is that of Wor. Master; he is in literal fact Master of the Lodge; he is its chief executive officer and its chief magistrate; and there is no higher title than Wor. Master. But I did not ask what is the highest office; I asked
what is the highest honor which the Lodge can give: it is the rank of Past Master!

Fortunate the lodge which has many; poor that body of Masonry in which Past Masters have lost the interest with which they once presided in the East. The honorable station of Past Master is honored by the brethren, honored by those who know that he has earned it. It is well known to all the Craft that the honors of Masonry are in the wearer, rather than in the conferring. These are valued by the brethren as the Past Master values them; and he must value them by a plumb line, like that which the Lord set “in the midst of my people Israel”, erected within himself. He values them as he wears the badge of a Past Master, the square and the diagram of the 47th proposition on a pendent silver plate, which is universally acclaimed as the quintessence of perfection and truth.

In search of further Light in Masonry Past Masters salute our Grand Master Hiram Abiff; he is a constant reminder to us to ask not more morality of our Brothers, than we would offer in turn to them.

It is here in this Terrestrial Lodge that we learn, that the only intrinsic wealth on earth is not founded on extrinsic or material values, but in service to our Brothers, our lodges and our fellowmen. And on our final pay day, - and for this we must work and pray -, our records may show, that we earned our wages as Past Masters, - as Brothers. Then we will hear the inviting words of our Grand Paymaster:

“ Well done good and faithful servant “

Hugo Thomas
Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
I am Freemasonry

I was born in antiquity, in the ancient days when men first dreamed of God. I have been tried through the ages, and found true. The crossroads of the World bear the imprint of my feet, and the cathedrals of all nations mark the skill of my hands. I strive for beauty and for symmetry. In my heart is wisdom and strength and courage for those who ask. Upon my altars is the Book of Holy Writ, and my prayers are to the One Omni-potent God. My sons work and pray together, without rank or discord, in the public mart and in the inner chamber. By signs and symbols I teach the lessons of life and of death, and the relationship of man with God and of man with man. My arms are widespread to receive those of lawful age and good report who seek me of their own free will. I accept them and teach them to use my tools in the building of men, and thereby, find direction in their own quest for perfection so much desired and so difficult to attain. I lift up the fallen and shelter the sick. I hark to the orphan’s cry, the widow’s tears, the pain of the old and destitute. I am not church, nor party, nor school, yet my sons bear a full share of responsibility to God, to country, to neighbor and themselves. They are freemen, tenacious of their liberties and alert to lurking danger. At the end I commit them as each one undertakes the journey beyond the vale into the glory of ever-lasting life. I ponder the sand within the glass and think how small is a single life in the eternal Universe. Always have I taught immortality, and even as I raise men from darkness into Light, I am a way of life. I am Freemasonry.

Ray V. Denslow.
George Washington’s Birthday

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge

presented at a “George Washington’s Birthday Communication” of “Friends on the Lahn” Lodge, No. 860 on 28 February 1978
Fraternal Greetings,

to all Brothers who share our joy in commemorating the 246th Birthday of a Brother, a General and Statesman, and the first President of the United States

the Honorable Brother George WASHINGTON.

He was born on February 22, 1732 in Popes Creek, West-moreland County, Virginia and he departed his adored Mount Vernon for the last time at twenty minutes past ten in the evening of December 14, 1799 in the sixty-eighth year of his life, two and a half years after his presidency. Ill from pneumonia, but the victim of his physicians, who had drained the life-sustaining blood from his veins in the mistaken belief that they were removing poisons from his body.

With Masons everywhere, we join full heartedly in saluting the birthday of our Brother, a man’s man, a soldier, diplomat, planter and surveyor, a Free-mason and a thinker of great thoughts. He was endowed with those sublime qualities of character which we call courage, determination and virtue. His story of tremendous accomplishment against odds which overwhelmed men of weaker stature will ever be an inspiration to patriots in each succeeding age. We are truly thankful today that he lived to guide and influence the birth of a nation and to lead this nation with conservative care in the first years of its infancy.
Freemasonry came to America just before Washington was born. Its requirements were simple but strict: the most fundamental being a belief in the GAOTU, and morality, brotherly love and mutual help. On 4 Nov 1752 George Washington was made a Mason in Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 in Virginia and was raised on 4 August 1753 when he was 21 years old. And this was his Masonic confession: “Being persuaded that a just application of the principles, on which the Masonic Fraternity is founded, must be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society, and to be considered by them as a deserving brother”. Twenty-five years later, at the chartering of Alexandria Lodge No. 22, this foremost citizen of the young republic was asked to be first Worshipful Master. He accepted, was re-elected and served a full 20 months, the last four of which he served concurrently as first Master of his Lodge and first President of his nation. And as President he addressed the brethren of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in such humble attitude worthy of emulation: “A society whose liberal principles are founded in the immutable laws of truth and justice... the grand object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race”.

This young unknown Entered Apprentice has become a fore-most symbol of American manhood and American Freemasonry. What is known about Bro. Washington goes to prove that when he presented himself at Fredericksburg he had all the qualifications to wear the badge of a Mason, - the lambskin. As a youth, we know, he was making progress in the practice of every commendable virtue before he knocked at the door of the preparation room. That small group of Fredericksburg’ Brothers were not looking into any crystal ball when they found him worthy of admission into their sacred portals. How could they stretch their imaginations to the extent of visualizing this candidate as a world shaking personality who would overshadow so many great figures of history.
Out of the many facets of Bro. Washington’s character his integrity stands out like a beacon light. And the virtue of integrity should be a goal of every Mason. When the individual has that in his possession he is truly a builder of his own character. Bro. Washington had it in such marked degree that he naturally gravitated into the society of Masons who were of like distinction: James Madison, George Mason, James Monroe, Benjamin Franklin, Paul de Lafayette, Joseph Warren, John Marshall.

All the glory associated with the name of Washington is enhanced the more knowledge and research concerning him is brought to light. It will never fade as long as freedom remains one of our sustaining powers, enframed with the principles and tenets of the Craft. And this is Bro. Washington’s heritage in his address to the Grand Lodge of Maryland: “So far as I am acquainted with the principles and doctrines of Freemasonry, I conceive them to be founded on benevolence and to be exercised only for the good of mankind.”

George Washington died on 14 Dec., 1799, two and a half years after his presidency. His was a life of service, a life dedicated to a cause, a life of sacrifice. The great revolutionary General Henry Lee (“Light Horse Harry”), whose son, Robert E. Lee, was to achieve fame in a war yet to come, left for eternity the noblest assessment of George Washington when he presented the funeral oration to Congress on 26 Dec., 1799. We are familiar with the first line Henry Lee gave us, but the tribute deserves to be more complete:

“First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countryman,

he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life”.

Freemasonry salutes Brother George Washington!

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
George Washington

Our Pilgrims Fathers had a dream
Two hundred years ago,
They forged their way to liberty
And made this nation grow.
Freemasons played important roles
At Independence Hall,
Their motto was: In God We Trust
And with it we grew tall.
Freemasons numbered well indeed
Among our nation’s great,
But the father of our country
Ranks number one to date.
Let freedom ring throughout the land
But let it ring with pride,
In memory of our founders who
Made “Trust In God” their guide.
They fought and died with one concern
To build a peaceful land,
That we today might carry on
This nation truly grand.
In all our tumult of today
Across the land and sea,
Our nation is far better off
Than any others be.
With all our faults in government
And many greedy souls,
Let’s count our blessings and be proud
The freedom bell still tolls.

- Erv Strub, Edgerton, Wis.
10th Anniversary

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge

presented on 11 March, 1978
at “Black Forest” Lodge No. 901
Distinguished Grand Lodge Officers and Worshipful Brothers,
Sisters, Ladies and guests, my Brothers:

I freely admit I cannot improve upon the eloquent statements of appreciation that have been made by those who have preceded me on this platform, but I can assure you, it is a great thrill to attend such a splendid banquet and to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of this regular and well governed lodge.

We are delighted in having the privilege to share Masonic fellowship with all of you, to practise Brotherhood and to pay due respect to your Wor.Master, Brother Wimbourne A. McLellan.

Like many other distinguished Brothers and visitors here in attendance, I am deeply grateful to the Wor.Master, Wardens, Officers and Brethren of this good “Black Forest” Lodge No. 901 for the many fraternal courtesies that have been shown us here. And we deem it a signal honor, to have participated in the special festive communication this afternoon; it remains for the guidance and pen of future generations of Brothers, as a worthy memorial to some of the most significant days in the Lodges’ history.

The genius in French philosophy Jean Marie Arouet, known under his pen name as Brother Voltaire, made a very thought-provoking statement: “The secret of being a bore, is to tell everything”. I agree... and it is for that reason I shall adhere to brevity and follow the advice of my doctor-colleague Bro. Benjamin Franklin: “Better is little with content, than too much with contention”.

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Let me broadcast the congratulations and sentiments of all Brothers from our American Canadian Grand Lodge: not to bridge a gap between north and south; there is no gap! Freemasonry and our Grand Lodge is our bridge, our connecting cord or cable tow among Brothers, linked together by the Mystic Tie. An indissoluble chain between Canadian and American Lodges, representing an active living Fraternity, a universal chain of Masonic Brother-hood. A very happy relationship, indeed.... where Brothers convert their problems of today into the light of challenging opportunities of tomorrow. We diligently try to correctly spell, uphold, maintain and support our Masonic principles, its esteem for Brotherhood and traditional values, and its humble acceptance of God as the Supreme Being. These guidelines are our source of personal strength by which we strive to become an upright man. And speaking of light I am reminded, that most of the shadows of this life are caused by our standing in our own sunshine.

Your Lodge, my Brothers, like all other Lodges in our Jurisdiction, is a home; and there would be something wrong wi a household which does not welcome and receive guests. Wi open arms and a friendly fraternal handshake the Brothers were met at the threshold of your temple, received in you Lodge Hall and you made them feel that they were indeed entering their home, embraced by your inimitable atmosphere of harmony and brotherly love. What a true Masonic spirit just in one Lodge! The genius in english poetry, William Shakespeare, expressed it all too well “How far a single candle shines into a dark night, so shines a noble deed into a naughty world”. The message is obvious. And it is apparent to me, that the Supreme Architect has out the duties each of us has to perform and we all have trusted in His will with the knowledge that our trust is well-founded. Our Masonic Light is a coherent Light, the particles of each Brother work together, thus giving them the power of a united effort. Through your Light all our thoughts and actions are accurately corrected and adjusted by the Square of virtue and wisdom, by the Plumb of justice and the
Level of humility and love, in perfect harmony with the will of our infinite Creator.

I must beg your indulgence, but words are sometimes like sunbeams, the more they are condensed the deeper they penetrate.

At this time, where happiness and pride are our symbolic guests, it is rather difficult to properly express our sentiments, or to put in words a fitting tribute in reverence of this day of joy and light: to celebrate the 10th Anniversary, when this regular and duly recognized “Black Forest” Lodge No. 901 was brought to light and received its Charter by the Most Wor. United Grand Lodges of Germany on the 23rd day of March, 1968. We are grateful to be here as a servant of this Lodge as of any other Lodge within this Jurisdiction. And it is with great pleasure in sharing the fraternal and cordial congratulations and the best wishes for the years to come with all elected and appointed Grand Lodge Officers of our American Canadian Grand Lodge and many Brothers of our constituent Lodges dispersed all over the world.

We respectfully recognize the Charter Members and the Wor. Masters whose names are duly recorded and symbolically represent the reputation of this honorable Lodge: Wor.Brothers Kinnon, Hampton, Boris Hladish, John Bulmer, Lomax Grant, Stephen Plant, Hyde, Tony Elliott, George Mc Lellan and our Past Grand Master, Right Wor. Brother Gordon Greenwood... just to name a few; their names may stand for all of them. “More Light from Masonry”, the theme of the Masonic year of our Past Grand Master, R.Wor.Bro.Gordon Greenwood still inspires us in our Masonic activities and endeavors. His theme, like a password, will forever greet us and remind all our non-resident Brothers, now residing in Canada, in the USA or elsewhere on this world, that through retaining their Lodge membership prove their intimate ties with this Lodge and their close bonds with our American Canadian Grand Lodge in general.
The Charter, symbolizing an active link between ourselves as a Lodge and the Grand Lodge from which we hail, and growing out of the Ancient Charges and Landmarks of the Order, belongs to the source of many of our emblems and symbols, even the Temple of King Solomon. It would be idle, therefore, to celebrate this Anniversary without a conscious rededication to the basic principles and fundamentals which have served Freemasonry so well in the past, and to pay our tribute to the past by rendering service to the future.

A ten years Anniversary of a Lodge is neither a long nor a short period of time, since Freemasonry is ageless and our ancient Brethren were working since time immemorial as Masonic scholars and historians are fond of saying. This makes one think of the Hour Glas, so reminiscent of the sands of time, which used to be exhibited in many of our Lodges. On a day like this interest should be revived in bringing back its symbolic meaning... Among the great things in our earthly life that have brought us a humble pride, is the fact that we are speculative Freemasons and Brothers, and members of an honorable Lodge, whose foundation stones are: the dignity of the work, the importance of the universal Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of God, and the most valuable tenets of Freemasonry, - Friendship, Morality and Brotherly love. On this solid foundation, surrounded by the trinity of the flags of our respective mother countries Canada, U.S.A. and Germany, we do our work.

My Brothers: we want you to be proud of your Lodge and Free-masonry; enhance and foster its high reputation by attending by taking part in constructive work, by promoting and disseminating friendship, harmony and tolerance. Remember Bro. John Donne’s words of compassion for humanity and unity: “No man is an island unto himself”; this statement could well have been pronounced by so famous Canadian Masons such as Sir John Macdonald, Joseph Howe, Alexander Mackenzie Or Sir Winfried Laurier, just to name a few of your
great country. Bearing this in mind “you will render yourselves worthy” of the honor and duty entrusted to your care, and merit the confidence your predecessors and our Brothers repose in us. We, the Brothers of all other Lodges of the American Canadian Grand Lodge pledge you our continued support and assistance in the spirit, so aptly expressed by Bro. Edwin Markham:

“There is a destiny that makes us Brothers,
none goes his way alone,
all that we send into the lives of others,
comes back into our own”.

In closing, one final word of deepest thanks to our wifes and Sisters. We greet you well with deepest veneration. We do not know quite what to say to you for your patience, your faithful fellowship, your inspirational assistance and understanding, your tender loving care, which makes our own life deeper and more meaningful and our own spirit richer and nobler, except to say a very sincere thank you... and this we do!

In this spirit we salute our Grand Master, Right Wor.Bro. Arthur E. Powell, and through him the Wor. Master, Wardens, Officers and members of “Black Forest” Lodge. And having expressed my reverence and thanks, no doubt incompletely, but if so unintentionally, I deem it a happy and an appropriate coincidence that I have the pleasure of showing you my fraternal affection in the words of the late Duke of Windsor:

“Four and twenty Yankees, feeling very dry,
went across the border to get a drink of rye;
when the rye was opened,
the Yank’s began to sing:
‘God bless America’,
but ‘God save the King’.”

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
Masonic Brotherhood

by

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented at “Nahe Temple” Lodge No. 824
on 20 March, 1978

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Wor.Master, Grand Lodge Officers past and present, my Brothers:

At this time, while communicating in a consecrated Temple, a house of Light -, dedicated to virtue, benevolence and Freemasonry, I am grateful to you, Wor.Bro. Montry Allamon, for inviting me into your truly well-governed “Nahe Temple’ Lodge No. 824; and I humbly acknowledge the honor to share Masonic fellowship with all Brothers here in attendance at this Lodge of Instruction. I would like to preface our work with some remarks of general interest.

In the beginning a candidate must indicate his willingness to absorb all the lessons taught in the Degrees. He must acquire and cultivate the spirit of Brotherhood, and this requires special qualifications. In a larger and more important sense they determine a man’s fitness to remain a Mason. They are the qualifications of a Mason, not merely of a man who desires to become a Mason. They always remain in force, therefore we do not outgrow them when we pass the ordeal of the ballot. By a candidate’s qualifications is consequently meant what values or worths he may possess to fit him for a place in the fellowship of Masons. While Freemasonry remains true to its own fundamental principles and exercises due and proper care in the selection and training of its candidates it has nothing to fear of the future. We may not experience any great membership gains, but our strength, our influence and our usefulness do not depend upon mere numbers, but upon the quality, the loyalty and the devotion of its active members. It is a great danger that some lodges with membership problems are sometimes tempted to let down the bars and to accept as candidates men who are unqualified for membership. We cannot
afford carelessness in the screening of our candidates. Encom-passed in such a favorable climate Brothers ought to grow Masonically; they ought to always remember the Masonic phrase they repeated in the night of their Initiation, “art or arts, part or parts, point or points of the hidden Mysteries of ancient Freemasonry”: arts mean the knowledge or things made known, parts the degrees in which Masonry is divided, and points the rules and usages of our Order. By the same token Brothers of longer standing membership will grow in stature, provided they make the required efforts. However, Brothers who freely admit personal shortcomings in measuring up to the high standards of Freemasonry are numerous. These searchings of the conscience must consequently lead to higher levels of life and conduct. One Brother will go back to the phraseology of the petition he signed; another Brother is somewhat awed by the thought that he owes an immeasurable debt to the two recommender and avouchers who signed his petition; still another Brother will consider his Lodge’s high opinion of him must be sustained, because he was honored with a unanimous ballot. He might wonder whether an investigating committee would recommend him again should he petitioning anew.

These mental interrogations indicate, the Brother is drawing to make sacrifices and performs duties that he may have previously shunned. To the Brother with regrets because he has been a passive, inactive member, one can order the antidote of steering the opposite course: there is always room in the Lodge set up for Brothers who are constructive with their suggestions, who are desirous of having and receiving Light... more Light, who promote peace and harmony, and who are willing to go far beyond the line of duty to repay in part at least their voluntary assumed duty to Freemasonry. The teachings of our fraternal Order demand the best that is in us. They demand the sanctification of our lives, the purification of our souls and the ordination of our spirit, but it is by our actions that the world shall know us. Our actions are our mark upon our work just as surely as were those left by our ancient Brethren upon the stones of the great cathedrals.
My Brethren: you did not honor Freemasonry when you were admitted into these consecrated walls for the first time. Masonry honored you and you are indebted to the Fraternity for this honor, it can never be repaid in full. The will to work, act and part outlines a principle which is especially applicable to the endeavors of a speculative, that is a Free Mason. Humility and education is our obligation we are accountable for and its fulfillment we must squarely accept. To respect and honor this educational process is to be mature, to implement and to realize it, is to maintain and support our specific Masonic way of life, and for each Brother to do more than his share is to be noble. Brothers, “to these duties you are bound by the most sacred ties”.

When I decided to name this presentation

Masonic Brotherhood

It is presented with the sincere hope that it will accomplish something... at least achieve its primary purpose: the stimulation of a new increased interest in Masonic education, to establish or rather revive values and to perceive a deeper meaning of some facets of our Masonic philosophy, ever bearing in mind that a Lodge meeting is called for the sole purpose of promoting the growth of our own spiritual life and of our fellowmen... and for no other purpose!

Masons are Brothers by a double tie, and among Brothers there can exist no invidious distinctions. A king is reminded, that although a crown adorns his head, yet the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and is no better than that of the meanest of his subjects. Men in inferior stations are taught to love their superiors, when they see them divested of their grandeur, and condescending to trace the paths of wisdom, and follow virtue, assisted by those of a rank beneath them. Virtue is true nobility, and wisdom is the channel by which it is directed and conveyed. Wisdom and virtue distinguish Masons.
If I may pay a fitting tribute to a thrilling exemplification of Masonic Brotherhood in a realistic and sincere adjustment of one human being to another, and not as a matter of sentiment, I am reminded of the apostle Peter, who in his first epistle advised the laying aside of all malice, hypocrisies and evil speaking, exhorted: “Honor all men. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God”. Brotherhood or genuine caring for Brothers is our potential and powerful tool to build a better world. The Honorable President Brother Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed it all too well in a prayer: “Grant us Brotherhood, Oh Lord, not only for this day, but for all our years; a Brotherhood not of words, but of acts and noble deeds.” More than ever before I am convinced that Freemasonry has given us a new opportunity to promote the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. Heaven knows too well, how much we need to do this. Oh yes, I realize, that the trouble with opportunity is, that it always comes disguised as hard work. This opportunity of a Brother inculcates his responsibility to the Craft in general and to his own Lodge in particular. “There is no right without a paralleled duty”. And you cannot practise Masonic Brotherhood without knowing the basic structure and functions of your Lodge, its local problems, its various projects and activities; without realizing the importance of regular Lodge attendance and willingness to participate in Lodge work both within and without the walls of the Temple. Therefore, let us prove worthy to the fulfillment of our obligation to our Brothers and fellowmen by the improvement of ourselves and by uniting our collective fraternal efforts, when there are no Masonic prohibitions to prevent it. Many of us doubtless have the ability to keep our immediate surroundings busy in other ways. Some of us, however, I pray, God has tamed to be an apostle and contender for our noble precepts and valuable tenets.

I see Masonic Brotherhood in a realistic sense, not as a superficial matter of sentiment. Brotherhood is a sincere and realistic adjustment of one human being to another. One may
not agree with his neighbor about many things, but I can always be just to him, do him no harm, speak no evil of him and wish him well. Honest differences of opinion should not separate us, nor cause us to hate one another. A soldier on the battlefield does not inquire about the beliefs of his brother as they prepare to make a common sacrifice. It is true this illustrations relate to times of crises. But are we not at a crisis point right now?

We all want a better world in which to live. Military, political and diplomatic successes alone have not brought about world peace. Losers in these contests never forget. There is only one way to achieve real peace on earth, and that is through the instrumentality of genuine Brotherhood among all mankind. It is more than a dream, it is our only hope. To realize it, we have got to start some time. Let me put it this way: “All of this leads me to say that God has given us a new opportunity to promote the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Let us not destroy each other’s attempt and right to worship God and to strengthen our Brotherhood through listening to unsubstantiated assertions, past shortcomings and current ignorance. Rather, let us prove worthy of each other’s confidence even though we have different approaches to the fulfillment of our obligations to God and our fellowman by the improvement of ourselves and our institution with collective fraternal efforts.

We are gathered in this Lodge hall in the spirit of Brotherhood; a friendly gathering of Brothers, each wishing to understand one another just a little better, so that we may walk our ways in peace and understanding and harmony. Some Brothers may be naturally gifted with a strong Brotherhood make up, and all of us benefit by strengthening personal qualities essential to promoting real understanding in our Fraternity. Each time this experience transpires, all Brothers achieve a better appreciation and awareness of fellowship and Brotherhood. When you put other Brothers first, this reverence and accommodation to others bring forth harmony. It is remarkable how quickly things do change for the better when a person finds that someone really
cares. Outstanding ideas are often of little or no value unless the Brothers who are to execute them are properly motivated. This motivation comes when they recognize that their efforts are considered important by others and that others do care about them. It is not always important for Brothers to be included in an effort, so long as they feel that they count no matter what job they perform. This feeling is more important than a merely formal participation; and to be a part of a united effort requires one to absorb peculiarities and mistakes of others without making a profound judgement... Brotherhood in the world is at its best a dream yet to be fully realized. In Masonry it is a fact. The link between each Brother is an eternal bond. That Mystic Tie is our strength!

In the world of Masonry there is a common ground of unity and oneness regardless of a man’s state or status. Brotherhood is a treasure. To keep it as the norm and ideal we must not take it for granted. We may never allow anything to cause any Brother or the Brotherhood to suffer, but rather cultivate the highest and best in our brotherly relations. We share within our Brotherhood the best of life as well as the worst; and we always make every Brother feel welcome and when we have visiting Brethren let us extend the right hand of fellowship and fraternal love.

Sometimes, being weak, frail mortals, a Brother may slip, stumble, fall or even fail, but none of us should ever be guilty of casting stones, And if ever we are so tempted, I pray the stones will be too heavy to pick up. When kind admonitions of correction or sympathetic words of wisdom axe needed, we must always do so in the name and spirit of Masonic charity and treat each Brother as we would want to be treated... sharing in his sorrow, misfortune, weakness, strength, triumphs as well as failures; laugh with him and also weep with him. Our strength may never turn into arrogance or pride of spirit which would certainly destroy ourselves and our Masonic Brotherhood.
Whatever the need in the life of the Brother, I hope we have and will have trust with each other to come to the Brother’s rescue. This may mean counseling as well as consideration. It may mean listening and advising. Masonic Brotherhood ought never to be a system of competition. To climb upward is never a race; and the desire to climb upward ought to be responsible action as well as right motivation. In this context let us not take our-selves too seriously; there is above all the joy of bringing the light of happiness, of truth and understanding into a dark world. And we may never forget our sense of destiny as Brothers. The world about us and the world within is one. Masonry continues to influence the world about us as Masons everywhere practice Masonic Brotherhood and friendship. We can be and should be builders of a better world and a better tomorrow. It begins with each as an individual, then as Brothers and then through the Lodge.

One final comment on two subjects so intimately inter-woven with the topic of this presentation: the young and the old Brother.

Freemasons are summoned, not only by definition, to cultivate and educate the new and young Brother in the spirit of fellowship, friendship, unity and harmony. As he begins his journrney we must take personal interest in him. He is uncertain and, therefore, needs strength and most of all guidance, understanding and support. Never let him stand alone; his future successes are in his present education, orientation and acceptance. Those who are assigned to him in the memory work should also help in communicating, within the limits of each degree, a sound educational process of understanding, knowledge and awareness. The memory work is important but it can only be as effective as is the step by step understanding. It is not enough to memorize. We must relate, educate, stimulate and concentrate on his understanding and illumination.

In many Lodges there is a wide age difference. It is here that we need to exercise tolerance and Masonic Brotherhood. The
younger Brethren have genuine respect and consideration for the olders. Wisdom is a treasure; strength is a blessing enthusiasm is a great asset but it must be tempered with patience and prudence. The older Brothers of a Lodge have often been the pioneers, the pilgrim father’s in the struggle for establishment and beginning. The younger Brothers would do well to seek their counsel and gain wisdom from their experience... The attitude of the “now generation” that the “old generation” are not with it is a tragedy. Men gain wisdom and truth from the past, and to live only in a “now situation”, in the present days, offers emptiness, not wholeness of life. This kind of consideration ought never to exist in any Lodge, or in any Masonic organization... The young as well as well as the older Brother ought to complement each other and add to the dimension of life with each other. We must seek from each other those lessons and that spirit which adds to life, not detracts from it.

Masonic Brotherhood, as I see it, is carved, marked and engraved on the symbolic Five Masonic Points of Fellow-ship:

First: When the necessities of a brother call for my aid and support, I will be ever ready to lend him such assistance, to save him from sinking, as may not be detrimental to myself or connections, if I find him worthy thereof.

Second: Indolence shall not cause my footsteps to halt, nor wrath turn them aside; but forgetting every selfish consideration, I will be ever swift of foot to serve, help, and execute benevolence to a fellow-creature in distress, and more particularly to a brother Mason.

Third: When I offer up my devotions to Almighty God, a brother’s welfare I will remember as my own; for as the voices of babes and sucklings ascend to the Throne of Grace, so most assuredly will the breathings of a fervent heart arise to the mansions of bliss, as our prayers are certainly required of each other.
Fourth: A brother’s secrets, delivered to me as such, I will keep as I would my own; as betraying that trust might be doing him the greatest injury he could sustain in his mortal life; nay, it would be like the villainy of an assassin, who lurks in darkness to stab his adversary, when unarmed and least prepared to meet an enemy.

Fifth: A brother’s character I will support in his absence as I would in his presence: I will not wrong-fully revile him myself, nor will I suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it.

In closing, let us pray, that the glorious gospel of our blessed God may motivate our worthy endeavors by promoting Freemasonry. The mystic tie of Freemasonry is Masonic Charity and Masonic Brotherhood, which springs from pure hearts, good conscience and a sincere faith in God. Masonic Brotherhood that knows no limits is nothing less than the love of God operating in the hearts of Freemasons. The agape of God, - that is his unlimited love -, has no beginning and it has no ending, our Masonic Brotherhood should be no less!

(Dr.) Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
THE LEVEL AND THE SQUARE

We meet upon the Level and we part upon the Square;
What words of precious meaning, those words Masonic are!
Come, let us contemplate them, they are worthy of a thought,
In the very walls of Masonry the sentiment is wrought.

We meet upon the Level - though from every station come
The rich man from his palace, and the poor man from his home;
For the rich must leave his wealth and state outside the Mason’s door
And the poor man finds his best respect upon the checkered floor.

We act upon the Plumb - ’tis the order of our guide -
We walk upright in virtue’s way and lean to neither side;
The All-Seeing Eye that reads our hearts doth bear us witness true,
That we still try to honor God and give each man his due.

We part upon the Square, for the world must have its due;
We mingle with the multitude, a faithful band and true;
But the influence of our gatherings in memory is green,
And we long upon the Level to renew the happy scene.

There’s a world where all are equal - we are hurrying toward it fast,
We shall meet upon the Level there, when the gates of death are past;
We shall stand before the Orient, and our Master will be there,
To try the blocks we offer with his own unerring Square.

We shall meet upon the Level there, but never thence depart;
There’s a mansion - ’tis all ready for each trusting, faithful heart -
There’s a mansion, and a welcome, and a multitude is there,
Who have met upon the Level, and been tried upon the Square.

Let us meet upon the Level, then, while laboring patient here;
Let us meet and let us labor, though the labor be severe;
Always in the western sky the signs bid us prepare
To gather up our working tools and part upon the Square.

Hands around, ye faithful brotherhood, the bright, fraternal chain;
We part upon the Square below to meet in Heaven again!
What words of precious meaning those words Masonic are –
We meet upon the Level and we part upon the Square!

Anonymous
Founders and Past Masters Day

by

Dr. Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge

presented on 5 June, 1982
at “Outpost” Lodge No. 895
Right Worshipful Grand Master of the ACGL, distinguished guests and friends, honorable Officers of the Grand Lodge, Wor. Past Masters and Wor. Master Robert L. Chilcote, my Brothers of the Mystic Tie:

we greet you well and. we symbolucally embrace all here in attendance at this Anniversary and Past Masters Day Dinner, - devoted to paying a special tribute to the Institution and honorable and well governed Outpost -"Lodge No. 895, and to symbolically celebrate this august event with our wives and sisters, who abide with us throughout the year as we roam around our Jurisdiction to work and to earn Master’s wages. This is our way to broadcast our grateful adminration to our Ladies, our way to celebrate the our mothers, and sisters, our way to enthusiasm they voluntarily and abundantly implant into our hearts for that noble and glorious purpose.

If it is true that congratulations and fraternal prayers have their own magic influence, valuable then many of our modern techniques anyway I am convinced chat this 17th Anniversary and Past Masters Dayof this well-governed “Outpost “ Lodge No. 895 is instrumental in fostering; aid enhancing the spirit of Brotherhood and togetherness which is an essential feature of Freemason anyway. In this sprit I salute this Lodge and extend warm fraternal greetings from our Grand Master, his elected and appointed officers and the Past Grand Masters

You can imagine yourselves how much I am delighted in paying due respect to this fine Outpost Lodge No. 895 , in a place of true fraternal spirit, where the members create between themselves the affinity for mutual comprehension, for friendship and fellowship . . which Freemasons are and ought to do, not only by definition, but in accordance with their solemn vows. I now have mixed feelings about my part in fulfilling the kind invitation and request of Wor. Bro. Robert Chilcote in November last year to offer a talk of some benefit to those here assembled,
and I sincerely hope I can repay my debts of gratitude in some small way.

We salute today all resident and non-resident members of this good Lodge, your Past Masters, your Wor. Master and his Wardens and Officers, who represent the early days description of a speculative or Free Mason: a free man, born of a free woman, brother to a king, fellow to a prince and patient companion to a seeking or erring Brother. We are elated over their accomplishments and their service to the Craft. And while King Solomon’s Temple was not build in a day, we know for sure, their designs upon our Trestleboard bring us closer to the completion of that famous edifice. Kind words are the music of the world and I hope I haven’t disturbed any protocol.

And speaking of protocol I’m reminded of this little episode I encountered a while ago:

At an ambassadorial banquet, after everyone was seated, one of the lady guests complained a little too loudly that, according to the official order of precedence, she ought to be seated next to the ambassador. She was found to be right and several of the guests had to get up and move down to make room for her. Feeling somewhat conscience-stricken at the fuss she had made, the lady said to the ambassador:

“You and your wife must find these questions of precedence extremely troublesome.”

“Not really,” was the gentle reply. “We have found by experience that the people who matter don’t mind and the people who mind don’t matter.”

First some comments of respect to your Past Masters.

Today we salute this Lodge and pay a special tribute to its Past Masters. Nothing great has ever been achieved without their enthusiasm, and they served their Brothers as Wor. Master
of their respective Lodges with fervency and zeal, and they left a bit of themselves wherever they went. If experience is a teacher, and if we can judge the future from the past, than we can look forward to great leadership from those who succeed them. Yet any Masonic term and year, regardless of arbitrary time, is like a circle. No year stands by itself, any more than any day stands alone. There is the continuity of all the years even in man. All our yesterdays are summarized in our now, and all the tomorrow's are ours to shape. And no Masonic year is complete. Even the seasons into which we divide the years overlap the arbitrary makers. It is the continuity that matters; tomorrow implies a now and a yesterday. And the end of a Masonic year is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.

We cannot learn to use the tools of our Craft until we are willing to become workmen in obedience. We cannot become skilled workmen by careless living or in the careless handling of our tools. Strong minds do not come by wasted hours. The strength of our Order - and our Lodges - has come down through the ages bearing the mark of the Eternal, It is this experience which works within us to change us and make us better men and better craftsmen, This process is not automatic and requires a constant seeking after truth; it requires that our relationship to the GAOTU is something more than association of words,, in a Lodge ritual; it requires not simply sit on the sidelines; our Masonic ship needs crewmen, no passengers.

I have often heard the term sideliners and I have come to the conclusion that the use of the term sideliners in Masonry is altogether wrong, it is a misnomer. The dictionary defines a sideliner as one who is an observer, not actively involved or participating in the main activity taking place, When we consider this definition and try to apply it to our membership we come to the only conclusion there are no sideliners in Masonry. No matter what position a man holds he has an integral part to play in our Fraternity. It is the duty of all to show the
world the true meaning of Masonry, to show by his actions, words and deeds the importance of being a Mason. It is not necessary for a Brother to hold an office in order to be an active participant in our work. Neither must a Brother know the ritual or even attend meetings. Far more important than this is for a Brother to live by the teachings of our Fraternity, to practice every minute of his life the principles we hold so sacred and continue to live under God’s rules, never ceasing in spreading the cement of Brotherly Love. It is the duty of all Brethren to see that the honor, duty and reputation of our Fraternity is firmly established and the world at large convinced of its good effects. As soon as a man enters our door, kneels at our altar, professes his faith in God and submits himself to the teachings of Freemasonry, he ceases to be a sidelinier and enters the ranks of the Craft from which he can never disassociate himself. For as long as a Brother lives with love in his heart, he is an active participant in our institution and then there are no sideliners in Freemasonry!

In the orders and pleasures of the Lodge work, we are apt to exalt the ceremonials to the first place, and to worship the form, rather than the substance. When asked what our Lodge is doing, we mention the number of initiates added to the roll, forgetting the real service of humanity which, as Freemasons, we are expected to render and which is the only justification of our profession.

Spreading the light by bringing new and promising candidates within the range of its influence, is worthy and commendable, but that is only elementary Masonic work. Looking after those who are in the Lodge, stimulating and encouraging their interest, is quite as essential as the initiating, passing and raising of new Brothers.

If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be written upon the heart. The spirit should never grow old . . . Conscience was our pace-maker when we asked for admission into Freemasonry; after being raised we found doors opening
to a new way of life. Since that moment the Spirit of Freemasonry is busy building a Temple from the rough ashlar of our soul.

A Mason’s conscience makes clear, that Masonry is more interested in capturing and catching men, than simply in fishing for them. The word

- “catch” is from Greek origin, meaning” life “, so its meaning also embraces the thought of
- “Taking men alive” which is symbolically “bringing them to Light”.

No Mason “graduates” until he is dead, and let us pray that we will graduate then with honour . . the choice is ours!

At this time, where happiness and pride are our symbolic guests, it is rather difficult to properly express our sentiments of appreciation, or to put in words a fitting tribute in reverence of this day of joy and light to commemorate the 17th Anniversary, when this regular “Outpost” Lodge was brought to light, and received. its Charter by the Most Wor. United Grand Lodges of Germany.

My poor vocabulary and lack of eloquence fails to express the true emotions of my heart, when attempting a dialogue with Brothers and friends of real merit and knowledge, that have blended with the Brotherhood in past centuries and repeated the same words at the altar of obligation, that were pledged by the great George Washington, my doctor colleague Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Wilhelm van Steuben, James Madison, George Mason, James Monroe, Paul de Lafayette, Joseph Warren, John Marshall or Douglas McArthur, - just to name a very few -, but also by Frederic the Great and many noble gentlemen in the Prussian and European history, who have travelled the same road before you and me. The gentle and noble art has worked its sweet mystery when it joined in
friendship and fraternal esteem the hearts of so many votaries of our royal art.

And this reminds me of a small talk I witnessed some weeks ago:

I’m sure you’ve heard about the two friends who ran into each other in front of the psychiatrist’s office. Hello, said the first. Are you coming or going. If I knew, his friend replied, I wouldn’t be here . . .

We are lucky! We know why we are here. We also know, no one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

The Charter Day is one of the highlights of each Lodge and we respectfully recognize your Charter Members and your Wor. Masters; their names are duly recorded and symbolically represent the reputation of this Lodge. Just to name a few . . . these names may stand for all of them: Wor. Bros. James Clark & James Allen, Surjit Singh & Columbus Black, Loren Young & William Grunewald, James Collins & Carl David . . . Robert Chilcote. And we certainly pay due respect to all resident members, your Wardens and Officers, and particularly to the non-resident Brothers, now residing in the U.S.A. Through their membership these Brothers prove their intimate relation with the Lodge in particular and their trust and confidence in our ACGL in general.

This Charter, symbolizing and active link between ourselves as a Lodge and the Grand Lodge, and growing out of the Ancient Charges and Landmarks of the Fraternity, belongs to the source of many of our emblems and symbols, even the legend of Hiram Abif and the Temple of King Solomon.

At this time a special salute to our German speaking friends is in orders

verehrte, liebe Schwestern, meine Brüder:

mein begrenzter Wortschatz ist nicht in der Lage, die herzliche Freude auszudrücken, die uns alle bewegt, Sie an diesem

Möge der Segen des Allmächtigen stets leitend unser gemeinsamer Begleiter sein.

Ich danke Ihnen!

Thanks to all those we have had the privilege of meeting, knowing and working with; we have been inspired by them all, from the newest Initiated to those who we admire so much in this and other Jurisdictions.

And our thanks to a Brother whom we’ll never meet again in this Terrestrial Lodge. The one whose spirit is here, who has done so much for unnumbered Brethren; that Brother “extraordinaire” who first dreamed of English-speaking Freemasonry in Germany, and then devoted his life to transform that vision into reality for the benefit of others. Our thanks to RM Bro. Peter M. Rasmussen will be, to do all that we are capable to insure that his vision continues to grow and flourish in the years to come.

Daniel Webster, in his peroration on Massachusetts, in his reply to Senator Hayne of South Carolina, said, in substance: . . . “The past, at least, is secure!”

So far as our Fraternity and this Lodge is concerned - The Past is secure, indeed! We have a glorious history in which we take the greatest of pride. At this time, we duly recognize and pay tribute to our predecessors in the East.
Our sincere thanks are due to all who served this Lodge during its 17 years history as Wor. Masters, Grand Lodge Officers and Lodge members. They have represented this Lodge with distinction and honor, and they have never failed to take on a difficult task when asked to do so. To single out individuals would mean that someone might be overlooked, but through some we were personally blessed in receiving more and further Light from Masonry; - your active working Brothers!

We, the Brothers of all other Lodges of the American Canadian Grand Lodge pledge you our continued support and assistance in the spirit, so aptly expressed by Bro. Edwin Markham:

“There is a destiny that makes us Brothers,
none goes his way alone,
all that we send into lives of others,
come back into our own”.

In closing, one final word of deepest thanks to our wives and sisters. We greet you well with deepest veneration. We to not know quite what to say to you for your patience, your faithful fellowship, your inspirational assistance and understanding, your tender loving care, which makes our own life deeper and more meaningful and our own spirit richer and nobler, except to say a very sincere thank you . . . and this we do!

In this spirit we salute this dynamic Outpost Lodge No. 895. And having expressed my reverence and thanks, no doubt incompletely, but if so unintentionally, I deem it a happy and an appropriate coincidence that I have the pleasure of showing you my fraternal affection in the words of the late Duke of Windsor:

“Four and twenty Yankees, feeling very dry,
went across the border to get a drink of rye;
when the rye was opened,
the Yank’s began to sing:
‘ God bless America’, but
‘ God save the King and “Outpost” Lodge No. 895”.

Thank you and God bless you everyone!

Hugo Thomas, Past Grand Master
American-Canadian Grand Lodge
25TH ANNIVERSARY

by

Dr. Hugo Thomas, Past Grand, Master
American Canadian Grand Lodge

at „FRANKFURT ON THE MAIN” Lodge No. 861
I extend

Fraternal Greetings’

to all resident and non-resident Brothers of “Frankfurt on the Main ° Lodge No. 861

and to all Brothers and guests here in attendance.

The CHARTER day, a memorable day of pleasure and honor, is one of the highlights in the history of each Lodge, and all Brethren gratefully look back across the years, when this good Lodge was brought to Light on the 25th Day of July, 1959 A.D. and 5959 A.L. and received its Charter by the Most Wor. United Grand Lodges of Germany.

With a pleasing sensibility I share the cordial and fraternal congratulations and best wishes for the years to come with the Grand Master of the American-Canadian Grand Lodge, his elected and appointed officers and with numerous Brothers of our common Masonic Faith dispersed all over the world, with all the Brethren of this good Lodge.

Our CHARTER is a written instrument issued by the Grand Lodge, a token of an official recognition and attestation to the Lodge after it had been regularly constituted. It is therefore not a certificate or a contract because such documents do not have their authority within them but derive if from outside themselves. An existing CHARTER is itself sovereign and absolute; it is a source of laws not a creature of laws. A Lodge CHARTER is a Lodge Constitution like the national Constitution of our countries. It is like our paper money which possesses the full power of legal tender in itself, and need not to be validated.
Freemasonry is its own authority; it is and always has been selfconstituting. The mere fact that we are regular Master Masons gives us the right to assist in making Masons. The original sovereignty of Freemasonry therefore lies within a Mason and it is in the exercise of that inherent sovereignty that Masons constitute Lodges and Grand Lodges and make Masons. The CHARTER is therefore also both an expression of, and an official attestation to, the complete authority within itself which lies in Freemasonry as it is possessed by the Masons who act together as a Lodge.

The CHARTER is one real and active link between ourselves as a Lodge and the Grand Lodge, and through the Grand Lodge, with world-wide Freemasonry.

The long chapter in our history means that our own CHARTER here in this Lodge goes back through the Book of Constitutions to the original Old Charges of 1350 A.D. It goes on through these Old Charges to the early period when Lodges had no written CHARTERS, because they believed themselves to have been originally recognized and officially approved in the Dark Ages. Ours is indeed an, ancient Fraternity and the CHARTER under which we meet is an evidence of that fact.

A 25 years Birthday of a Lodge is neither a long nor a short time, since Freemasonry is ageless and our ancient Brethren were working "since time immemorial", as writers and speakers are fond of saying. This makes one think of the Hour Glas, so reminiscent of the sands of time, which used to be exhibited in the ancient Lodges. On a day like this interest should be revived in bringing back its symbolic meaning.

Among the great things in our life that have brought us a humble pride, is the fact that we ARE a FREEMASON and a member of this Lodge.
Today we are proud to honor our 17 CHARTER MEMBERS

Bro. Wilber H. ARNBERG    Bro. Lawrence J. LAGE
Bro. Gilbert V. COLLIER    Bro. James A. MANN
Bro. Lorne W. CURRIE      Bro. John F. MARTIN
Bro. Aaron S. HICKS       Bro. Dwight B. OLSON
Bro. Wayne H. HOWLE       Bro. Peter M. RASMUSSEN
Bro. Fred JOHNSON         Bro. Wilbur A. SWEIGARD
                         Bro. Robert H. WALLS

.... and we respectfully recognize the PAST MASTERS of this Lodge

Wor.Bro. Lynwood CARINGER   Wor.Bro. Murray SENTNER
Wor.Bro. Merold G. NYBERG  Wor.Bro. Wiliam AROLD
and we duly recognize and salute all other resident and non-resident members, who diligently and faithfully served this Lodge and contributed to its glory and reputation.

It may well be said that while times have changed and progress has been made during the past decade, the basic principles which have been responsible for whatever greatness which we have attained remain the same.

Our Fraternal organization, older than any government, has more followers than any philosophy. Today we are humbly proud of the three great principles which have made Freemasonry grow since ages. Also this Lodge, as any other duly constituted Lodge, rests upon these three important fundamentals: the dignity of the Work and the ritual, the importance of Brotherhood and BROTHERLY LOVE, the non-sectarianism of Freemasonry.

In this mysterious universe we are inescapably linked with the past. As “F.O.T.M.” Lodge looks back across the years to the date of its foundation, we may feel like Daniel WEBSTER when he addressed the U.S. Senate on the floor in 1850: “The past, at least, is secure”. It would be idle to celebrate this Anniversary without a conscious rededication to the principles and Landmarks which have served so well. It is not enough to say that the past is secure. Nor is it enough to venerate the past. The only way in which our Fraternity can in any sense pay its debt to those, who have gone before us is to rededicate itself to the ideals in which they believed and for which they served. Even as we live, the present has become the past, and whether we like it or not, we must think of the future, for that is where we will spend the rest of our lives.

BRETHREN: we want you to be so proud of your Freemasonry that you will never neglect your Lodge. We want you to help and support your Lodge by attending, by interest, by taking part. The click of the Trowel should always be heard in some parts of the building. With faith in man, hope for humanity, loving kindness for our Brothers, Masons must always act and teach. Let each do that for which he is best fitted.
Thus we will render ourselves worthy of the honor which has been conferred upon us and merit the confidence our predecessors and Brothers repose in us.

Fraternally and sincerely,

Hugo THOMAS

Hugo THOMAS
Freemasonry is ...

Kindness in the home 

Honesty in business 

Courtesy in society 

Fairness in work 

Pity and concern for the unfortunate 

Resistance towards the wicked 

Help for the weak 

Trust in the strong 

Forgiveness for the penitent 

Love for one another — and — above all 

Reverence and love for God 

Freemasonry is many things — 

but most of all 

Freemasonry is a way of life 

Dr. Donald E. Bailey