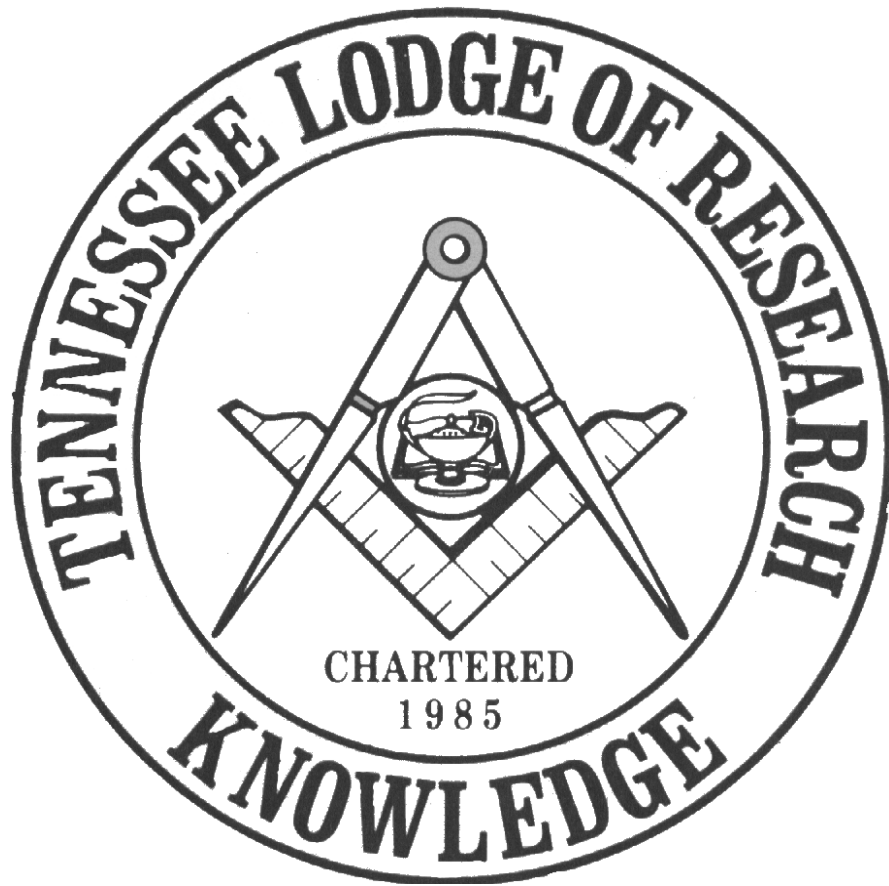


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**TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.
ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS**



2012—DAVID JOHNSON

**2012 ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.**

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EDITORIAL NOTE: The Forum Section

The Forum Section of the Proceedings is included for the exchange of opinions and comments on matters of Tennessee Freemasonry or on the contents of the Proceedings. We invite your opinions and comments and will include them in the Annual Proceedings of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

Commentaries should be type written and titled and suitable for correction using standard Microsoft Word Processing. All comments should have the author's name and Lodge attached. They can be sent electronically to the Secretary at the following email address:

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The Editorial Committee

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS:

Articles submitted for publication in the *Tennessee Lodge of Research Annual Proceedings* should be type written in Microsoft Word or a compatible program. Margins should be 1 inch on the right, top, and bottom, 1½ inch on the left. Page numbers should be centered at the bottom without embellishments.

The entire document should be in 12 point Times New Roman font, including the title, which should be centered at the top of the page in **Bold**. The **By** Line should be centered as should the author's full **Name**.

All quoted or paraphrased material should be cited parenthetically, and all sources should be listed on a Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations, notes, and Works Cited should follow the guidelines found in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th edition*. An overview of general MLA guidelines may be found online at the "MLA Formatting and Style Gude" web page of Purdue University: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

The Editorial Committee

PRINCE HALL MASONRY: OUR OTHER BROTHERS

By
James E. Gray, 32°

This paper was presented at the August 2010 meeting of the Knoxville Valley of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

The subject of Negro, Colored, or Prince Hall Freemasonry is a vast expanse of misinformation and confusion. I'd like to bring some light to the subject, clear up some of the confusion, and perhaps even defuse some of the hostility that white, "mainstream" Masonry seems to harbor when it comes to our black Brothers.

Let me preface these remarks with four citations from the *Lodge Secretary's Manual* published by the Grand Lodge of TN. In a section entitled "Dealing with Prince Hall Masonry," we are told several things:

Our relationship with Prince Hall Masonry is perhaps the most misunderstood facet of our Masonic Fraternity. . . .

First of all, the issues with Prince Hall Masonry have nothing to do with race. . . .

The issues with Prince Hall Masonry in this jurisdiction have to do with the way the grand lodges of Prince Hall Masons were established, and with our requirement that a grand lodge exercise exclusive jurisdiction over a geographical area.

I will return to, and reply to, these assertions a bit later; for now let us look back at the history of Negro Masonry and see whence it came, and whither it is traveling. Then we'll look into the relationship of predominately white "mainstream" Masonry with Negro, "colored" or Prince Hall Masonry and finally we'll see how the Grand Lodge of Tennessee's positions bear up under scrutiny.

Prince Hall History

Prince Hall Masonry is older than the United States of America, predating even the Declaration of Independence. It began with the initiation of Prince Hall and fourteen other free black men into Irish Constitution Lodge #441, of the 38th Foot Regiment on March 6, 1775. When the British Army left Boston in 1776, Lodge #441 granted Prince Hall and his brethren authority to meet as African Lodge #1 under certain limitations. For nine years these brethren, together with others who had received their degrees elsewhere, enjoyed their limited privileges as Masons.

On March 2, 1784 the African Lodge petitioned the Grand Lodge of England for a warrant or charter. The Lodge was chartered as #429 on September 29, 1784. **This 226 year-old charter is still in the hands of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.** In 1791 delegations from Philadelphia, New York, Providence, and Boston formed the African Grand Lodge. Prince Hall was elected Grand Master and subsequently was appointed a Provincial Grand Master by HRH, the Prince of Wales. This Grand Lodge, acting as a Mother Lodge, established African lodges in Philadelphia and Providence, R.I. in 1797. Today 5,000 lodges and 47 grand lodges trace their heritage from these humble beginnings.

Little is truly known of Prince Hall's personal biography, although myths and accepted legends abound. Reliable records about Prince Hall are those concerning his marriages, the Boston tax rolls, and petitions and depositions that are part of the public record. Three Boston area men of that name served in the Revolutionary army; although all served honorably, their specific identities are uncertain. Prince Hall died on December 4, 1807. His Masonic heritage is his main legacy. Negro Masonry first used the term "Prince Hall Masonry" in 1884; the name gained ground slowly and only came into common use after 1944.

The National Compact and National Grand Lodge

One of the main developments in "colored" Masonry during the 19th century was the formation of the National Grand Lodge. Between 1780 and 1860 the white, mainstream Grand Lodges made over a dozen major attempts at forming a national Grand Lodge, all of which failed. In "colored" Masonry, perhaps of necessity, this was not the case. Outside of Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts Negro Masonry was at a standstill by 1847. The establishment of the National Grand Lodge, or National Compact, in that year was a major impetus to its resurgence. The National Grand Lodge cited the authority of the Colonial Provincial Grand Lodges as the authority of its existence. From 1847 through 1878 the National Grand Lodge functioned as the supreme governing Masonic body in the United States for Colored men. By 1878 most of the state Grand Lodges proclaimed their independence of the National Compact; subsequently the question of the continued existence of the National Grand Lodge became a major conundrum for Prince Hall Masonry. Recent research confirms that the National Grand Lodge has, in fact, continued to function and that many present day lodges look to it for their authority.

Re-emergence of Prince Hall Masonry

For years litigation was pursued by the states of Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas which attempted to put Prince Hall Masonic bodies out of business. The Supreme Court of the United States rendered a decision in June, 1929 that was favorable to the Prince Hall Shriners and all Prince Hall Affiliations, giving Prince Hall Grand Lodges the right to continue their existence and to perform their ancient customs, traditions, and functions unmolested. Further, the Court recognized and sustained all existing Masonic bodies of Prince Hall affiliation as being legitimate and—according to the law—authorized to practice Masonry.

Over the years there has also been a lot of litigation among Colored Lodges and Grand Lodges concerning jurisdiction and legal names of these bodies. This situation continues even today, although Prince Hall Masonry is generally seen as the primary organizing body of Colored Masonry. Unfortunately, this unsettled legal situation has contributed to the objections raised by opponents of recognition of Prince Hall Masonry.

Early Recognition Problems

The question of recognition of Colored Masonry by white, mainstream Masonry has been with us for nearly two hundred years. Albert Mackey, in his *Lexicon of Freemasonry* (published in the 1870's) lists the common objections to the legitimacy of Prince Hall Masonry. However, most are based on poor information or on Masonic law as it stood in Mackey's time rather than that of Colonial times when Negro Masonry was founded. Half a century later, Arthur Waite's *New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* notes that Negro Freemasonry is not recognized under American

Masonic jurisprudence. Waite then admits to knowing little about Negro Masonry or its history.

The most notable early attempt at recognizing Colored Masonry occurred in 1897. The Grand Lodge of Washington State reported a resolution of recognition of the African Grand Lodge. In 1898 the Grand Lodge admitted the legitimacy of Negro Masonry. In reaction, nineteen state Grand Lodges withdrew recognition of the Washington Grand Lodge, while others threatened similar action. In the face of this massive opposition, Washington GL was forced to withdraw its recognition of Colored Masonry.

In 1947 the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts recognized Prince Hall Masonry, and once again, because of hostile actions of other Grand Lodges, the bill of recognition was withdrawn.

In state after state from 1818 to 1990—and beyond—Grand Lodges have adopted rules, passed resolutions and issued edicts and proclamations all in the cause of keeping Colored Masons separate **and unequal** from white, mainstream Masonry. But, in 1994 all that began to change.

UGLE Recognition and Recent Developments

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) historically carries great weight with English-speaking Grand Lodges. In December, 1994 the UGLE's decision to affirm recognition of Prince Hall Freemasonry gave great impetus to more recognition between Prince Hall Grand Lodges and predominately white Grand Lodges in the U.S. The UGLE's actions also set the stage for Prince Hall Freemasonry to once again enjoy foreign recognition, as it did in the 1870's and 1880's.

Beginning in 1995 and continuing through today, 41 American Grand Lodges have recognized Prince Hall Masonry. While there are a variety of definitions and extensions of that recognition, the case is essentially closed throughout most of the United States. However, there are ten Grand Lodges (*at the time this paper was submitted, -Editor*) that continue their separate and unequal treatment of Prince Hall Masons. Let us return to the statements of the Tennessee Grand Lodge which are typical of the situation in those ten states. Tennessee's position boils down to two "legal" arguments—and a bit more.

Tennessee and the Confederate Holdouts

Tennessee's first "legal" argument is "our requirement that a grand lodge exercise exclusive jurisdiction over a geographical area." This is easily disposed of. The "exclusive jurisdiction" concept is an historical artifact. When the U.S. was expanding westward, new states and new Masonic jurisdictions were being created. This policy was adopted to simplify the growth of Masonry in areas with somewhat unclear Masonic histories. It essentially became moot after 1912 when Arizona and New Mexico joined the Union, although it may have resurfaced briefly five decades ago when Alaska and Hawaii gained statehood. Since those days, the "exclusive jurisdiction" concept has served only one purpose—as an excuse to prevent recognition of Prince Hall Grand Lodges. In the last fifteen years, 41 Grand Lodges have seen fit to consign this doctrine to the "dustbin of history" which is where it belongs.

Tennessee's next "legal" argument concerns "the way the grand lodges of Prince Hall Masons were established. . . . We do not recognize their 'legitimacy of origin.'" This argument could easily be settled with some honest historic and legal research. But for now let us reply to this position with an opinion from a notable legal and Masonic authority:

There are plenty of regular Negro Masons and Negro Lodges in South America and the West Indies. Our folks only stave off the question [of recognition] by saying that the Negro

Masons here are clandestine. **Prince Hall Lodge was as regular a lodge as any lodge created by competent authority and had a perfect right (as other lodges in Europe did) to establish other lodges, making itself a mother lodge.** That's the way the Berlin lodges—Three Globes and Royal York—became Grand Lodges.

[Albert Pike, Ohio Grand Lodge Proceedings, 1876]

Those remarks were delivered to the Ohio Grand Lodge in 1876 by Albert Pike, the Grand Commander of our Supreme Council who was an eminent lawyer, **and** a former Confederate General. Sadly, Pike's words have largely been ignored for over 130 years.

Tennessee's two "legal" arguments represent the basic obstacles to recognition of Prince Hall Masonry. A recent book, *Out of the Shadows: The Emergence of Prince Hall Freemasonry in America*, lists those two—and eighteen other objections ranging from the legal to the ludicrous—and effectively refutes the lot of them.

So, what is left for us to stand on? Let me repeat that other statement from the Tennessee Grand Lodge:

First of all, the issues with Prince Hall Masonry have nothing to do with race. . . .

While working on this report, I have quoted that statement to 15 or 20 Masons—both white and black—and the reaction has been unanimous: laughter!

To put that Grand Lodge statement, the derisive reaction to it, and the current recognition situation into its true context let us conclude with a quick look at three maps:

[Show maps and tell what they are]

* *NOTE FOR PRINT VERSION:*

There are three very similar maps. Each map shows the U.S. with a shaded area representing:

1) the "slave" states in 1860 (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia);

2) the Confederacy (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia); and

3) the states which have not recognized Prince Hall Masonry (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia—per <http://bessel.org/masrec/phachart.htm>).

Conclusion

They say a picture is worth a thousand words.

FORM OF PETITION USED BY OPERATIVE MASONS, WITH CHARGES AND OBLIGATIONS

Author Unknown

Brother Darryl L. Chapman, Lodge of Research member and presenter, and Worshipful Master of Stooksbury Lodge No. 602 in 2012, had been going through and organizing the records and archives of Stooksbury Lodge when he ran across this old, typewritten paper, which he presented at our September 2012 meeting held at Stooksbury Lodge.

It appears to be from the book, Masonry Defined, A Liberal Masonic Education Compiled from the Writings of Dr. Albert G. Mackey 33° and Many Other Eminent Authorities by E. R. Johnson 32° and A. C. Monett 32°, pages 569-573. This book can be found online at: http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/masonry_defined.htm.

It will be of great interest to the craft to learn the ceremonies of conferring the degrees in the Operative Lodges, and to note their similarity to the ceremonies of the Speculative Lodges.

This information has been gathered from many sources but we are indebted to Bro. Geo. Thornburgh, Past Grand Master of Arkansas, for the complete forms of petitions, charges, etc.

The form of the petition to an Operative Lodge for apprenticeship was as follows:

“I, , being the son of a Free Man and years of age, humbly crave to be made an apprentice to the Ancient and Honorable Craft. I am prompted by a favorable opinion preconceived of the fraternity, and I desire full knowledge to enable me to work at the trade. I promise that I will conform to all the ancient usages and established customs of the Order.”

The candidate had to be proposed by one Mason, seconded by another and supported by five more. The application for apprenticeship was posted at the entrance of the quarry or workshop for fourteen days. On three occasions he must stand by his application, when the men are going to and from work, so that all may see him; and if anyone knows anything against him, it must be reported at the head office, and the matter investigated. If accepted, he had to appear on the appointed day—the sixth of the week—at high twelve, at the quarry or workshop. He applies at the door, and is admitted on giving the proper password, which had been given him. He is admitted within the entrance of the Lodge, usually a porch with double doors, and takes an oath not to reveal any part of the proceedings. This is sealed by his kissing the book. The candidate puts his fee on the lower ledge of a foot stone.

It may be interesting just at this point to describe briefly the Lodge room of the Operatives, as they are about to confer the first degree. There are three Masters. They sit in the west so that they face and can see the rising sun. The Junior Warden sits in the north so that he can see the sun at its meridian height, and the Senior Warden sits in the east so that he can see the setting sun. The altar is in the center of the Lodge; over it is suspended the letter G, and the Rough Ashlar stone is on its east side. There are three Deacons present, one for the Masters and one for each Warden.

Inside the porch the candidate is divested of all money and hoodwinked. Then three men come out of the Lodge, divest him of all his clothes, and dirty him with mud. The doctor then arrives and removes the hoodwink. He is told to “Wash and be clean.” The bath is ready and the candidate

bathes. Seven times does he dip. The doctor then examines him to see that he is sound in wind and limb and reports him "perfect in all his parts." Then he is elected by the "cleanhand" sign. He is clothed in a white cloak, whence the original symbol of white, signifying a candidate, is obtained, the word "candidate" meaning literally "I am white." The candidate is again hoodwinked, still clothed in the white cloak. He has also a blue cord looped around his neck, held by a man in front and a man behind, and a second blue cord around his center, held by a man on each side. The neck cord being longer than the center cord, the four men make a diamond, with the candidate in the center. This diamond had a reference to Operative Masonry, and the candidate and his four attendants make "five points," which has another reference to Operative methods.

The candidate now makes application at the inner door. The sword is held to his n. l. b. so as to draw blood. He is then admitted and led to the N. E. corner. Here he is questioned. What age are you? What is your character? What is your knowledge? Where have you been working? Have you been a member of any Guild or Company before? Do you swear you have never been expelled, discharged or "run away" from any work? In all cases of D. and D. I. W. D. you put y. t.? "In El Shaddai is all my t." Right. Rise.

The brothers in E., S., W., and N. will take notice that ----- is about to pass before them. He is asked if he sees anything. He replies "No," and the hoodwink is slightly raised, so that by bending his head a little forward he is able to see his own feet and two or three feet in front of them. He is then cautioned to keep strictly to the rack or tessellated border, and is led once around it. He has put one foot in front of the other, toe to heel, and so on; it is called "end on work," or "work in line." The candidate has to make this perambulation once correctly without failure. From the N. E. corner he goes to the S. E., then to S. W., then to N. W. Then he comes to the Junior Warden, who bars his progress. On due report the bar is raised and the candidate proceeds. Then back to the N. E. corner and to Senior Warden, who bars progress again. On due report the bar is removed and then a strip of scarlet is laid down leading to the Rough Ashlar stone on the east side of the altar, so that the candidate shall not step on the squares of the Mosaic Pavement as he is led to the Ashlar stone. Here he kneels with both knees bare on the rough Ashlar stone, with the left hand S. T. H. B. T. R. R. T.

It is interesting to note that this is still preserved as a sign in the Lodges under the Scotch Grand Lodge, as well as among the Operative Freemasons.

He then takes the following obligation:

I, do in the presence of El Shaddai and of this worshipful assembly of Freemasons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviers, Plasterers and Bricklayers, promise and declare that I will not at any time hereafter, by any act or circumstance whatsoever, directly or indirectly, write, print, cut, mark, publish, discover, reveal or make known any part or parts of the trade secrets, privileges or councils of the Worshipful Fraternity or Fellowship of Freemasonry, which I may have known at any time, or at any time hereafter shall be made known unto me.

The penalty for breaking this great oath shall be the loss of my life.

That I shall be branded with the mark of the traitor and slain according to ancient customs by being throattalld. * * * SO THAT MY SOUL HAVE NO REST BY NIGHT OR DAY.

Given under my hand and sealed with my lips.

So help me El Shaddai and the holy contents of this book.

The form of these oaths explains the archaic form of the obligation in the Speculative Ritual. People of the Middle Ages believed the soul could not rest unless the body was properly buried, hence the craving was for Christian burial. It is really the remnant of a Pagan idea transmitted to Christian times. The ancient Romans believed that the soul of an unburied body could not pass the Styx for at least a hundred years.

There is no doubt that in ancient times it was contemplated that these penalties should be actually inflicted; indeed, at a time when physical mutilation such as amputation of a hand, and hanging, drawing and quartering were still in our statute books, there was nothing incongruous in such an oath. Papworth and Gould record that in 1099 a Bishop of Utrecht was slain for extracting the grand secret from the son of a Master Mason.

After taking the obligation the candidate is requested to seal it with his lips. As his lips are brought to the book, a large seal of soft wax is placed underneath them; his head is forcibly pushed downward so that an actual impression of his lips is taken by the wax, and his obligation is “sealed with his lips” actually and literally. When the obligation is finished the Master says to the Deacons, “Give light that he may place his hand to the bond.” A pen is put in his hand, and he signs the bond, “Given under my hand and sealed with my lips.” The candidate is then assisted to rise with the words, “Rise, apprentice to the Craft of Freemasons.”

He is then given the grip, which is the same as that of the Speculatives, only it must be “covered” and the word is “Jabal.” Then the charge is given as follows:

Charge to the Apprentice to the Craft Of Freemasons

1. You shall truly honor El Shaddai, and his holy church, the King, your Master, and Warden; you shall not absent yourself, but with the license of one or both of them from their service, by day or by night.
2. You shall not purloin or steal, or be privy or accessory to the purloining or stealing of the value of six pence from them or either of them.
3. You shall not commit adultery or fornication in the house of your Master, with his wife, daughter or maid.
4. You shall not disclose your Master’s or Wardens’ secrets or councils, which they have reported unto you, or what is to be concealed, spoken or done within the privities of their house, by them or either of them, or by any Freemason.
5. You shall not maintain any disobedient argument with your Master, Warden, or any Freemason.
6. You shall reverently behave yourself toward all Freemasons, using neither cards, dice or any other unlawful games, Christmas time excepted.
7. You shall not haunt or frequent any taverns or alehouses, or so much as to go inside any of them, except it be your Master’s or your Wardens’, with their or the one of their consents.

8. You shall not commit adultery or fornication in any man's house where you shall be at table or work.
9. You shall not marry, or contract yourself to any woman during your apprenticeship.
10. You shall not steal any man's goods, but especially your Master's or any of his fellow-Masons, nor suffer any to steal their goods, but shall hinder the felon if you can; and if you cannot, then you shall acquaint the Master and his fellows presently.
11. All these articles and charges, which I have now recited unto you, you shall well and truly observe, perform and keep to the best of your power and knowledge.

So help you El Shaddai and the true and holy contents of this book.

From this charge you will see that the Operative Freemasons require their apprentices to respect chastity of the womenkind of Freemasons. It is also noteworthy that the dame of the house where they hold a Lodge is protected, and she is also sworn not to lead any member of the Craft into sin.

The candidate is then actually presented with his working tools, which are the chisel, the small maul and the straight edge, and is invested with the apprentice's apron.

He is next taken to the N. E. cornerstone. Here he is asked by the foreman how he is going to live until he draws his first week's money. If he says he is poor, then his foreman takes him before the Masters in the chair and reports that he has no means of living. The Masters crave charity for him and a collection is taken on his behalf. (This is, doubtless, the origin of the deposit Speculative Freemasons ask of their candidate.) If, however, he says he has money or will live with his father, no collection is made. For seven years he remains an apprentice, being taught his trade. During this time he wears his blue neck cord as a sign that he is still bound as an apprentice.

This wearing a collar as a sign of bondage is a very old custom. In Anglo-Saxon and Norman days, serfs and bondsmen were accustomed to wear collars of metal securely riveted around their necks. (In many jurisdictions the blue collar is now worn and in some Lodges in Arkansas they are found. They are worn by the officers and the jewels are suspended from the lower end of them.) At the end of the seven years the apprentice applies to be made free of his bond.

ACHIEVING HARMONY

By

Nicholas Leon Gatlin, 32°

Nick Gatlin is a member of Hiram Lodge #7 in Franklin, Tennessee, Franklin Chapter #2 Royal Arch Masons, Franklin Council #134 Cryptic Masons, the Tennessee Lodge of Research, and the Nashville Valley of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

As Masons, we've all heard Harmony described as the chief strength and support of all well-governed institutions; more especially, this of ours. On the surface, this appears to be an eloquent way of stating the obvious idea that we should all get along with each other, but there may be a far deeper significance to this seemingly superficial recitation concerning a single duty of the Senior Warden. The key to understanding it may require a journey that simultaneously takes us deep within ourselves, and to the far reaches of the cosmos.

First, what constitutes a "well-governed institution?" Let's look beyond the lodge room and consider that the entire universe, which has apparently sustained itself for billions of years, must surely be a well-governed institution! The perfection of the Creator is reflected in it, and we're instructed as Masons that we should seek to understand the Creator "by minutely analyzing his works."¹ Such analysis quickly reveals that the universe is far from docile. In fact, it's full of what we'd call opposing forces and violent transfers of energy and matter. Displays of extreme heat and cold, incomprehensible speed and inertia, brilliant light and deep darkness extend throughout a vast, ever-expanding space. It's nothing like what most of us would picture as harmonious or in equilibrium, but it obviously has the considerable strength and support of the Harmony that a well-governed institution requires. Perhaps our understanding of these contrary forces is not quite complete.

My current understanding of the Contraries is to see them as complementing one another, not opposing one another in the sense that one is seeking to permanently dominate the other. They each serve a purpose and are perfect for their own carefully and divinely-allotted time.

In a literal or physical sense, which is the favored position of a pendulum; far left, or far right? Are high tides better than low tides? Are mountains better than valleys? The fact is that none of the first of these opposites would exist without its counterpart. In fact, the contrary (or complementary) of each actually defines them. In a mental or psychological sense, the same is true. We would not know what happiness feels like if we were never sad. Relief would not actually feel like anything to us if there were no such thing as pain.

So is there really a relationship between the physical demonstration of this idea and the mental and spiritual aspects of it? I think so, and I believe that it is explained in the Hermetic Principles of Correspondence, Vibration, Rhythm and Polarity.²

In my opinion, any serious student of Masonry should be familiar with the basics of Hermeticism. The writings of Hermes Trismegistus are ancient, but in the thousands of years that have passed since the completion of his work, the scientific and spiritual principles that he identified have proven valid in the face of one modern discovery after another. For anyone seeking a condensed and simplified version of the work, *The Kybalion*³ is easy reading and readily available on the Internet at no cost. The author of this work is apparently known, but he published the document under the name, "Three Initiates" in 1912. (Since this was an obvious attempt to conceal

his identity, I will respect his effort to remain anonymous.) *The Kybalion* remains one of the most important documents in my Masonic study because it explains the basis for such a wide variety of scientific principles, religions and philosophical work. One might even argue that its ideas are an essential element in fully understanding most any esoteric concept; an argument that I find more convincing with each new bit of knowledge I discover. I will add one word of caution regarding *The Kybalion*. Some versions include an introduction that contains some rather superfluous references to certain astonishing and questionable feats that masters have supposedly been able to perform. In my opinion, these references detract from the understanding of the Seven Principles that make the remainder of the book so valuable. Even if the claims are true, their inclusion seems an unnecessary distraction.

Studying Hermeticism rightfully blurs the lines between the scientific and spiritual worlds, demonstrating that the truth in all things will prove consistent in any context when properly understood. The idea that the acceptance of one truth excludes the consideration of another is a creation of our own folly. All truth is interconnected, and all facts support and prove one another. Where gaps seem to exist, they are most likely due to our own ignorance and failure to recognize (or admit) when we have mistaken something for truth that isn't. The so-called "scientific community" and many organized religions seem particularly notorious for demanding that we accept concepts, theories or doctrines as complete sets of assumptions, even when portions of them are clearly unsound. I find that the simple precepts defined in Hermetic philosophy can help with the job of separating the wheat from the chaff in such cases.

For those who are unfamiliar with Hermetic teachings, a quick summary might be in order here. There are seven Hermetic Principles. I have previously cited four for the purposes of this essay, and offer the following admittedly oversimplified explanations of these four:

Correspondence— "As above, so below," or as Pike put it, "What is above equaling what is below."⁴ Everything in the universe is a reflection of a cosmic principle on at least two planes, including the physical, mental and spiritual.

Vibration—Everything in the universe vibrates internally and nothing is truly still. Atoms are held together by vibrations, and as we are rapidly discovering now, atomic components are built from smaller particles that also vibrate. A divine and cosmic energy connects, empowers and disciplines all things; even thought itself.

Rhythm—There are larger forms of vibration in which the movements are so slow or large that we don't think of them as vibrations. Some examples might be the tides, seasons of the year, night and day, and even ages of temperature extremes. All follow a strict adherence to natural law, sometimes predictable, but completely unaffected by human preferences.

Polarity—This principle encompasses more than the polarity of a magnet or electrical current flow. It also includes everything that we perceive as opposites or contraries, reducing them to varying degrees of the same things. For instance, we may identify something as being "hot," but when does something cease to be "cold" and begin to become "hot?" It may be too hot outside to comfortably go for a walk, but far too cold to melt steel on the sidewalk. In reality, our ideas of opposites are purely contextual and often arbitrary. Even something as simple as deciding which way is "up" is dependent upon where we are positioned in relation to the center of the Earth at the time we make the determination. If we move to a point that is a fraction of an inch closer or further away from this center, our reference changes.

The more one understands these Hermetic principles, the more valuable they potentially become. The explanations just provided are by no means complete, but hopefully they will suffice

for the purposes of this essay.

Each of these principles has something to do with the relationship between seemingly conflicting forces, or what we might call contraries. Contraries are almost always defined by movement or energy of some kind. Unless the contraries are in motion, there is no action, and therefore, no effect. If we have now adequately settled on the conclusion that the complete lack of action is not possible because of vibrational energy, then how is Harmony or equilibrium achieved?

To explain that, let's look at "harmony" in a musical sense. If I play a chord on a guitar, that chord is made up of something that we would call a combination of individual notes. But what is a note? The idea that a note is a single tone is not accurate. Each note is composed of a *set* of vibrational frequencies that are created when a string rapidly moves back and forth. The distance that the string travels away from the center and the amount of air it displaces in each direction determines how loud it is. The speed at which it travels this distance determines what we call the frequency or note. Eventually, the string will stop vibrating, at least perceptibly, and come to rest at that center, at which time no air is displaced and no sound is heard. So what we perceive as an individual note is actually *at least* two contraries. Are they working against each other, or are they complementing one another? What we hear as musical chords are actually combinations of individual "conflict" working together. If one can picture this for what it is, we have a very simple illustration of the entire universe.

In a musical sense, we hear harmonies when certain notes are played together at set intervals, and we have no problem identifying these combinations of notes or chords as harmonies. We hear them and *instinctively* recognize them as harmonies. Vast, intricate webs of sound go into a single piece of music, all created by what we may not recognize as contraries in conflict, but that's exactly what they are!

So how are Harmony and equilibrium achieved? Is it by stopping the opposing forces of a vibration? No, we already established that the vibration is responsible for the music, and if the "conflict" is reconciled, the string that is "at peace" produces no discernible sound. (Of course, this may not always be an undesired effect. It may be time for another string to play!) Normally we think of equilibrium as balance, and that it is usually evidenced by the lack of movement, but we've just illustrated with the guitar string analogy that this is not always the case. If a variety of notes are balanced according to their volumes so that each note can be detected individually, but no note is so loud that it draws undue attention to itself, we might refer to that as equilibrium. The note is "balanced" and in equilibrium with other notes, but it is quite active within itself. It seems to me that this is a good illustration of who we should be as people, balancing our own attitudes, actions and influences according to the needs of our current and ever-changing circumstances. This is the way of a perfect universe. Any opposing argument would seem to arrogantly demand acceptance that the Creator is inherently flawed. A perfect Creator, by definition, cannot produce flawed work.

Therefore, the fact must be that Harmony and a state of equilibrium are already perfectly achieved, and that the conflicting movements that we see and feel every day are not preventing the Harmony, but are actually *responsible for creating and sustaining it!* What remains for us is to seek a more complete understanding of this principle and realize that we are all part of this perfect vibration. The entire universe is playing a symphony, and our goal should be to recognize that we can be in tune with it *within ourselves*. When, and if we can, I think that we will all hear this music that's playing within each of us and all of creation.

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AN EXAMINATION OF RESPONSES TO A DECLINE IN SOCIAL CAPITAL, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP WITHIN AMERICAN FREEMASONRY

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INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement is considered vital for the existence and perpetuation of democracy, especially within America (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Boggs 2002; Fried 2002; Schultz 2002; Lichterman 2006). The study of civic engagement and social capital has influenced the work of many academicians and led to the formation of entire university centers. Furthermore, research and theories concerning civic engagement and social capital have been central in influencing American, European, and global socio-political and economic policy (Putnam 2000; Schultz 2002).

In a general sense, civic engagement can be defined as all collective interaction above the level of the family and below the government (Tocqueville 1838; Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000). The term civic engagement has also been referred to in previous studies as civic interaction, civic participation, and political participation. For the sake of consistency, I use the term civic engagement throughout. In this analysis civic engagement refers to the volunteer based interaction found in religion, interest groups, and membership associations.

Social capital is a term closely associated with the concept of civic engagement (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Fried 2002). Putnam (2000) views social capital as the communal value that arises from social networks; social networks lead people to help one another and the collective good. In other words, social capital and civic engagement are entwined. Social capital is the 'capital' or social 'surplus' that is produced by civic engagement (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Fried 2002). Social capital theory, specifically that of Tocqueville (1838) and Putnam (2000), exhaustively examines the concept of civic engagement.

This research is an exploratory analysis of civic engagement in America. I analyze civic engagement in America by examining Masons in America as a unique example of a volunteer membership association within the framework of social capital theory and civic engagement. Within this manuscript the term "Masons" is used to refer to an association that has gone by various names, including the Freemasons, Masonic Institution, Masonic Organization, Free and Accepted Masons and Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Specifically, I use an online survey of Mason members from three different Masonic lodges within Colorado to examine variations in civic engagement. These three lodges illustrate the two types of responses to decline in civic engagement by the Masons, namely the emergence of what I call Contemporary Lodges (CL) and Traditional Observance Lodges (TOL). Further, in order to explore possible civic engagement trends in America I compare the level of civic engagement between these two types of lodges in relation to the age of members, level and type of education of members, and lodge size.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I first explain key historical and current aspects of social capital theory and how they relate to civic engagement. Next, I demonstrate how the Masons are unique in relation to the theory of social capital. Then, I review specific studies that have examined the Masons with reference to components of social capital theory.

Social Capital Theory Roots: Tocqueville

Tocqueville (1838) never used the term “social capital,” yet his primary work, *Democracy in America*, is considered a foundational work for social capital theory and the study of civic engagement (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Fried 2002; Lichterman 2006). Tocqueville (1838) referred often to the notion of civil society. By civil society, he was referring to all social groups and subsequent actions above the family and beneath the government (Tocqueville 1838; Putnam 2000). Hence, his ideas have had a tremendous impact on contemporary studies of civic engagement, which, by definition, occurs within civil society.

Tocqueville studied American democracy on behalf of the French government during the 1830s. The enlightenment motto of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity was prominent in the minds of French Aristocrats such as Tocqueville, who were not sure of their future place in the country. In his (1838) observation of American democracy he noted what he thought to be a conflicting relationship between the concepts of freedom and equality, or “equality of conditions” as he deemed it (Putnam 2000; Boggs 2002; Fried 2002). Tocqueville (1838) viewed Americans as over emphasizing the democratic attribute of equality (Putnam 2000; Fried 2002; Lichterman 2006). In his opinion this threatened individual and collective freedom. According to Tocqueville, atomistic individualism is the resulting destructive force developing from equality of conditions. This force is destructive to democratic societies, namely America, because it fosters a soft despotism or tyranny of the majority (Putnam 2000; Fried 2002). That is, the people were fine with relinquishing their freedom so long as they felt equal with others and could elect their own representatives that would ensure that the equality of conditions stayed unimpaired. This prohibited freedom to anyone seeking to rise above the equality of conditions, fostered an individualistic mindset of civic irresponsibility, and led to government by the subtle tyranny of majority decree. Tocqueville (1838) concluded that the solution for this inherent flaw of American democracy was a robust civil society (Putnam 2000; Fried 2002; Lichterman 2006).

Tocqueville (1838) saw civic engagement as the balancing factor between the opposing forces of liberty and equality in America. Civic engagement allowed for the formation of civic groups or entities such as, religion, town hall meetings, and the press (Putnam 2000; Fried 2002). These civic entities comprised what Tocqueville called “civil society.” He viewed civil society as essential for liberty to exist in American democracy and civic activity as not only a right but a responsibility of the individual. He stated: “The Americans have combated by free institutions the tendency of equality to keep men asunder, and they have subdued it” (Tocqueville 1838:195). Thus, free institutions combat (through civic engagement) equality of conditions as viewed by Tocqueville by bringing people together who would have normally remained apart. Tocqueville’s ideas have influenced many contemporary theorists. Of special interest in this regard is Robert Putnam, to whom I now turn.

Contemporary Social Capital Theory: Putnam

There are multiple conceptions of social capital. Pierre Bourdieu, Nan Lin, David Schultz, and James Coleman are a few among noted contemporary sociologists who have explored and expounded on the theory of social capital. Robert Putnam is perhaps the most cited and well known social capital theorist. For the purpose of this paper I will analyze the concept of social capital according to the theory of Robert Putnam, who is considered the “modern Tocqueville”. While potentially useful for understanding the Masons as a formal organization, formal organizational theories are not covered in this thesis as the focus is not on formal organizations per se but rather on civic engagement and social capital as a result of organizational participation

Putnam (2000: 19) describes social capital as “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” Social capital is thus the coordination of group level activity (civic engagement) and the resulting positive societal outcomes. Putnam views civic engagement as positive for the individual and American society (Putnam 2000; Boggs 2002; Fried 2002; Schultz 2002).

Putnam categorizes social capital into two types: bridging and bonding (Putnam 2000; Fried 2002; Schultz 2002). Bridging capital results from “bridging” relationships between existing groups. According to Schultz (2002), bridging capital is similarly individual, such as having access to information that one can use to find jobs. Bonding capital is an increase in capital within a single group. Hence, social capital, according to Putnam, is a positive social force for both the individual and society resulting from civic engagement between (bridging) and within (bonding) social groups.

In *Bowling Alone*, perhaps Putnam’s (2000) most famous work regarding social capital, he presents a massive empirical study which demonstrates a sharp decline in American civic engagement and a corresponding rise in atomistic individualism during the 20th Century, specifically during its latter half (Putnam 2000). He used several sources of data to document this trend, including data from the Distributive Database Needham Lifestyle archives and from surveys he conducted regarding civic involvement. He analyzed the patterns of membership from 32 charter based civic organizations such as churches and the Girl Scouts and other forms of civic engagement such as voter turnout in Presidential elections (Putnam 2000; Boggs 2002; Fried 2002).

Putnam’s conclusion regarding a decline in civic engagement is thus an important negative finding. This research aims to explore the degree to which this apparent decline has affected American civic engagement by examining a prominent voluntary association with a strong and deliberate commitment to civic engagement, namely the Masons.

The Masons

The Masons have existed in America since prerevolutionary times (GLoV 2011; Hollingsworth 2011). They were on the forefront of promoting civic engagement and social capital within a democratic style of government in Europe prior to Colonial America. The Masons teach their members to be civically minded and active, stressing the practice of democratic concepts such as liberty, equality, and civic engagement (GLoV 2011; UGLE 2011). Masons have a democratic style of governance which they were practicing within Masonic Lodges before and during the establishment of those same methods in American government (GLoV 2011; Hollingsworth 2011; UGLE 2011). Hence, the Masons are considered by many to be a prominent organization devoted to civic engagement that has existed from the time of Tocqueville through that of Putnam.

Early American history is filled with activity involving Masons. Numerous members of the American Revolutionary army were Masons. President George Washington was a Mason, along with

34 of his generals (The George Washington Masonic Memorial 2011; St. John's Lodge No.1 2011). The majority of the commanders of the continental army were Masons and members of the "Army Lodge." George Washington was sworn in to the presidency by Robert Livingston, also a Mason. The Boston Tea Party was planned at a Masonic Tavern and implemented by Masons. As many as 15 signers of the Constitution were Masons, and 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence. The laying of the Cornerstone for the U.S. Capital Building was a Masonic ceremony (GLoV 2011).

It is thought by many scholars that the Masons have been instrumental in promoting ideas and concepts of social capital and civic engagement throughout the history of America. Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence until the present, approximately 33% of the 112 Supreme Court justices have been Masons. Numerous members of state and federal congresses have been Masons (Hollingsworth 2011; Bessel 2012a). It is commonly assumed that there is a connection between the Masonic affiliation of these men and their participation in creating democracy and social capital in America.

Some may argue that the Masonic Fraternity is anti-democratic, particularly with regard to the treatment of women and minorities. The majorities of Masonic Lodges are male only, and seemingly exclude females from membership. However, Masonic Bodies and Societies do exist for women. The Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, and the Rainbow Girls are but a few Masonic female organizations (GLoV 2012). Further, some Masons claim that due to the nature of the rituals performed, it is better to separate Masonic bodies on the basis of gender. Historically, Masonic Lodges have largely been segregated on the basis of race, specifically between black and white Lodges. Current trends, however, show an increase in racial integration among Lodges (Bessel 2012b). Further, Freemasonry publicly espouses a belief in the equality of mankind without distinction and Masonic membership reflects virtually every race. Prominent non-white Masons include W.E.B. Dubois, Jesse Jackson, Thurgood Marshall, Sugar Ray Robinson, and W.C. Handy.

Many fraternal and civic organizations developed from the Masons. Numerous American Indian, African American, Christian, and women's civic organizations are direct offspring of the Masons (Moffrey 2001; Kaufman and Weintraub 2004). Groups such as The Boy Scouts, The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, The Grange, and The Knights of Pythias were all formed by Masons or are offshoots of the Masons (Moffrey 2001; Kaufman and Weintraub 2004; The Independent Order of Odd Fellows 2009). Thus, the Masons are unique to the study of civic engagement in America because they are indirectly responsible for the development of social capital through their involvement in the development of so many civic organizations in America.

Despite their historic influence in developing American democracy and their promotion of civic engagement, the Masons have not been exempt from societal decline in social capital and civic engagement (Putnam 2000). Masonic Lodges began to experience membership declines in the 1960s. This decline has remained consistent year after year up through the present. The Masons have attempted to combat the recent decline in membership in many ways. Chief among their efforts has been the development of two different types of lodges with two very different mechanisms aimed at increasing membership and civic engagement. On the one hand, contemporary lodges (CL) have tried to recruit members by reducing requirements. On the other hand, traditional observance lodges (TOL) have focused on maintaining traditional practices with the hope that this will attract more civically minded recruits.

The Contemporary Lodge Movement

In general, Masons have responded to the decline in membership by making it easier for

members to join the organization. They have also tried to appeal to what appears to be a faster-paced, younger generation (MRF 2010). This has resulted in lowering the requirements for progression and membership in the organization. The cost of dues and fees has been lowered overall. One day classes are offered for the conferring of Masonic degrees. The requirement for memorizing Masonic lectures has likewise been removed from many lodges. All of these changes have resulted in the development of what I refer to as “contemporary lodges” (CL). Some Masons have reacted negatively to the development of CLs, calling for a return to the original, “higher” standards of Masonic membership and progression. This is what I refer to as the “traditional observance lodge” (TOL) movement (Lodge of Nine Muses No.1776 2010; MRF 2010; East Denver Lodge No. 160 2011).

The Traditional Observance Lodge Movement

Traditional Observance Lodges (TOLs) have recently begun to emerge in America (LVX Lodge No. 848 2009; MRF 2010). A TOL is a lodge that promotes a return to a higher standard of membership selection, requirements for progression, and Masonic education for its members (MRF 2010). The argument for TOLs by Masons is that CLs’ response to decline in Masonic membership was not merited or beneficial for the organization. TOLs and their supporters argue that a focus on quantity of membership has been at the expense of quality of membership and membership experience. TOLs typically require that a potential member be vetted much more thoroughly than in a CL (MRF 2010; East Denver Lodge No. 160 2011). Lodge membership is capped at TOLs with a typical membership ceiling of around 70 members. TOLs typically require a member to wait at least six months before progressing to the next degree of membership. Members are required to attend a certain number of meetings before progressing. Masonic research papers are often required to be compiled and presented by Masonic candidates and progressing members. Dues and fees are often higher for TOLs compared to their contemporary lodge counterparts (MRF 2010).

Hence, a dichotomy has emerged within the Masons in response to their decline in membership. In CLs there is a focus on raising membership numbers via lowering requirements. The TOLs represent a reaction against the development of CLs, stressing a renewed focus on higher standards for membership. This quantity versus quality dichotomy has possible implications for social capital and civic engagement among the Masons. Hence, this study aims to compare membership in contemporary lodges to traditional observance lodges in terms of civic engagement. The remainder of the literature review covers additional reasons why we might expect to see differences in civic engagement among lodges, namely on the basis of age, education, and group size.

Civic Engagement and Age

The development of CLs was, in part, due to an attempt to appeal to a younger, faster paced generation. Putnam (2000) claimed that the decline in American civic engagement is largely a result of a change in generational mindset concerning volunteerism (Rotolo and Wilson 2004). Putnam (2000: 132) claimed that the “long civic generation” was highly active in civic engagement. This volunteer mentality was shaped by the Great Depression and World War II (Putnam 2000). Putnam (2000) purported that post WWII generations are less volunteer minded, less civically involved and more individualistic.

Rotolo and Wilson (2004) researched Putnam’s generational hypothesis by analyzing data from the National Longevity Survey. He could only analyze the responses of women since only women were asked questions concerning volunteering during their preretirement years (Rotolo and Wilson

2004). The study showed that Putnam's (2000) assertion that current generations are less likely to volunteer is incorrect (Rotolo and Wilson 2004). To the contrary, the study found that younger participants contributed more hours of volunteering than older, retired participants (Rotolo and Wilson 2004). The study also found that the type of volunteering done by current generations is different. That is, older generations participated in 'traditional' forms of volunteer activity, such as church attendance and club memberships. Younger generations, the baby boomers of the civil rights era, were more prone toward political activism type volunteering (Rotolo and Wilson 2004). Hence, studies show that younger generations do not necessarily have less volunteer activity; rather, they have different types of volunteer activity. Hence, it is likely that age leads to differences in the amount and type of civic engagement among Masons as well. Because CL membership may be younger on average than that of TOLs (due to recent recruitment efforts targeted at younger generations), this may also contribute to differences in the type and quantity of civic engagement among members of the different lodge types.

Civic Engagement and Education

Traditional Observance Lodges place a heavier emphasis on the amount and type of educational experience received by Masonic members. Numerous studies indicate that there is a strong relationship between the level of one's education and his or her level of political or civic engagement (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Coleman 1988; Schultz 2002). Rotolo and Wilson (2004) noted that younger generations have higher levels of education and this may be the reason why he found that younger individuals were actually not less engaged than their older counterparts.

Hillygus (2005) analyzed responses from the Baccalaureate and Beyond longitudinal survey in order to analyze the relationship between education and civic engagement. Hillygus (2005) found that both level and type of education were related to level of individual civic engagement. Those respondents who had higher scores on verbal aptitude tests and those who received civic or social related higher education were more likely to be civically engaged (Hillygus 2005).

Therefore, education may influence differences in level of civic engagement among the Masons. Members with lower levels of education may be less civically engaged than those with higher levels of education. In addition to the level of education a person has, the field in which they receive a degree also likely influences their civic engagement. Given the emphasis on social issues within the humanities and social sciences, it might be expected that persons with degrees in these fields would be more civically engaged than people with degrees in other fields. Therefore, Masons with degrees in humanities and social sciences may be more civically engaged than Masons with degrees in physical sciences or business. Given the greater emphasis on education within TOLs, especially education specifically related to civic engagement and knowledge, it is expected that members of TOLs will have higher levels of education and be more heavily drawn from the humanities and social science fields than members of CLs.

Civic Engagement and Group Size

Not only do TOLs place a greater emphasis on traditional sources of education, TOLs also claim that the quality of Masonic civic education (within the lodge) is higher within TOLs. One factor that affects the quality of civic education within the lodge is group size (Lodge of Nine Muses No. 1776 2010; MRF 2010). Because TOLs tend to be smaller or cap their membership at around 70 members, it is argued they are in a better position to provide quality education to their members (Lodge of Nine Muses No. 1776 2010; MRF 2010). CL lodges can be well over 300 or 400 members in size. TOLs maintain that once a lodge has reached a certain size, the individual's lodge experience and contributions are lowered.

Studies show that group size affects the level of the individual's contribution and experience in relationship to the group's goals and activities. Studies indicate that the larger the group size, the lower the level of most individuals' participation in the group. This phenomenon is known as "social loafing" (Goodman 1986; O'Leary-Kelly, Martocchio, and Frink 1994; Shepperd 1995). Shepperd (1995) noted three reasons for this negative association between group size and individual contribution, namely that individuals feel that their contributions are unnecessary, unrewarded and too costly.

Group size may also impact civic engagement through its impact on governance. Barakso (2005) studied the National Organization of Women (NOW) and its relationship to civic engagement. NOW, like the Masons, is a democratically structured membership organization. Barakso (2005) found that the democratic practices of the organization fostered higher levels of civic engagement by its members. Both CLs and TOLs, like NOW, elect their leadership and vote on key organizational issues (GLOTx 2011; Hollingsworth 2011; UGLE 2011). However, TOLs claim that the size of group affects the ability to know and elect quality leaders. Specifically, TOLs claim that smaller groups, as opposed to the larger CLs, foster a better leadership selection process, which in turn leads to greater civic engagement. Therefore, TOLs which emphasize having a smaller, closer knit group, may have higher levels of civic engagement among their membership.

Summary

Putnam's theory of social capital, founded in the works of Tocqueville, serves as a foundation for numerous studies on civic engagement and social capital. The Masons are a civic organization that publically claims to support civic engagement and democratic concepts, concepts that are replete throughout social capital theory and civic engagement studies. The decline in membership for civic organizations over the past several decades has also impacted the Masons. Their response to these declines—the development of both CLs and TOLs—has important implications for the civic engagement of Masons.

The contrast in philosophy of these two types of lodges is also thought to be reflected in membership differences in terms of age, level and type of education, and group size. All of these factors may impact civic engagement. This study looks at each of these factors by utilizing an online survey of members of three different Masonic lodges in Colorado, one TOL and two CLs of different sizes. The foregoing review leads to the following hypotheses:

1. CL members will be less civically engaged than TOL members.
2. Age will be positively associated with civic engagement among Masons.
3. CL members will be younger on average than TOL members.
4. Younger Masons participate in different types of civic engagement than older Masons.

5. Level of education will be positively associated with civic engagement among Masons.
6. CL members will have lower levels of education than TOL members.
7. Masons with degrees in humanities and social science will be more civically engaged than those with degrees in other fields.
8. CL members will be less likely to have degrees in the humanities and social sciences than will TOL members.
9. Size of lodge will be negatively associated with civic engagement among Masons.

METHODS

Data Collection and Sampling

In this study, I explore civic engagement in America by examining factors that influence civic engagement among Masons, comparing civic engagement among CL and TOL memberships. I conducted an original internet survey using Survey Monkey Software. I surveyed members of three Masonic lodges, two CLs of different sizes and one TOL. Two CLs were surveyed in order to better analyze group size as a factor in influencing civic engagement. One CL with a membership size that is close to that of the TOL was surveyed and one CL with a substantially higher membership was surveyed. Masonic Lodges in Colorado were surveyed in this study. Colorado is considered throughout American Freemasonry as a state that has CLs of various sizes and stellar TOLs (MRF 2010; Hollingsworth 2011) with the leadership of Masonic Lodges in Colorado who were willing to contribute to this study and participate in the survey. An attempt was made to ensure that the lodges picked came from comparable but separate urban locations (e.g., community size, demographic composition). Due to heightened interest in privacy among Masonic lodges, more specific details about these lodges cannot be provided here.

Potential respondents were contacted at least three times: 1) An initial email pre-notification of the upcoming survey was sent on February 24th, 2012; 2) an email invitation with survey link followed a few days later on February 29th, 2012; and 3) a reminder email notification with survey link was emailed approximately two weeks later on March 10th, 2012 to all respondents, thanking those who responded and reminding those who had not responded to do so. All emails were first sent to lodge leaders who then forwarded the emails to their members. The survey link was sent to all members of one TOL with a membership size of about 70, to one CL of around 70 members and to another CL with membership of about twice that size. Since responses were kept anonymous, the reminder email was sent to all potential respondents (since there was no way to determine who specifically had responded). In the full text of this paper at the Members' Area of the Lodge of Research website, <http://www.tnlor.org>, see Appendix D for a copy of the email.

Due to the low response rate of the survey (10%), seven follow-up, interview style questions relating to the hypotheses were sent to the leaders of all three lodges. The answers from these questions were examined for themes relating to the study. Quotes from these answers were used to supplement the survey results. The answers to these questions will be presented in the discussion section (following the findings) when relevant.

Variables and Measurements

The primary dependent variable for this study is civic engagement. Measures based on Tufts University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement were used (Tufts University 2006). This measurement parallels that used by Putnam. Four types of civic engagement were measured; they are: civic activities, electronic activities, electoral activities, and civic voice activities. Civic activity includes membership in voluntary associations and religious activities. Electronic activity includes online social media activities. Electoral activity includes campaign and voting activities. Civic voice activity pertains to activities such as protests or boycotts. Table 1 includes measurement information for each type of civic engagement.

Responses to questions measuring the four types of civic engagement were combined to form an overall scale of civic engagement (range: 0-48; questions 16-21 and 23-40 on the survey). Summated scores for each subset of the overall scale (e.g., for civic activities, electronic activities, etc.) were also used to determine variation in types of civic engagement. Only 37 of the survey participants answered the civic engagement questions.

The full scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of .85, indicating strong internal consistency. The mean score for the full scale was 25.3, with a minimum possible score of 0, a maximum possible score of 48, and a standard deviation of 8.51. While some of the items do not fit as well as others (e.g., problematic item correlations; lack of unidimensionality in Principal Components Analysis), given the small sample size, I have chosen to keep the scale as constructed.

The sub scale "civic activity" had a fairly low Cronbach's Alpha of .60. The mean for the civic activity sub scale was 5.5, with a minimum possible score of 0, a maximum possible score of 12, and a standard deviation of 2.42. Pearson's correlation was used to assess the consistency of the sub scale for "electronic activity" because the scale consisted of only two items. Responses to the two items (social networking, blogging) were significantly correlated ($r = .352$, $p < .05$). The electronic activity sub scale had a mean score of 2.0, a minimum possible score of 0, a maximum possible score of 4, and a standard deviation of 1.40. The sub scale "electoral activity" achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of .79. The mean score for the electoral activity sub scale was 10.4, with a minimum possible score of 0, a maximum possible score of 16, and a standard deviation of 3.50. The sub scale "civic voice" was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of .81. The mean score for the civic voice sub scale was 7.5, with a minimum possible score of 0, a maximum possible score of 16, and a standard deviation of 4.27.

The independent variables for this study are lodge membership (TOL, small CL, and large CL), age, level of education, and type of education (field) (see Table 3). Additional Masonic affiliation variables were measured as potential control variables and to verify expected differences in lodge characteristics (see Table 2).

Analytic Approach

Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the civic engagement scale and subscales. For subscales with only two items, a Pearson's correlation coefficient was run for this purpose. Principal components analysis was also used to ascertain the dimensionality of the civic engagement scale. The following analyses were used for the corresponding hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: A t-test was utilized to compare the means of civic engagement for CL versus TOL members.

Hypothesis 2: Pearson's correlation was used to assess the relationship between age and civic engagement.

Hypothesis 3: A t-test was utilized to compare the mean ages for CL versus TOL members.

Hypothesis 4: To determine if age affects the types of civic engagement participated in, each sub-component of the civic engagement scale was correlated with age.

Hypothesis 5: A t-test was utilized to compare mean levels of civic engagement by educational level (< Bachelor's degree; Bachelor's degree or higher).

Hypothesis 6: A chi-square test was utilized to determine whether CL and TOL members differ significantly in terms of educational levels.

Hypothesis 7: A t-test was utilized to compare mean levels of civic engagement by different fields of study (social science and humanities versus all other fields combined).

Hypothesis 8: A chi-square test was utilized to determine whether CL and TOL members differ significantly in terms of having degrees in the social sciences and humanities.

Hypothesis 9: An F-test was used to compare civic engagement across the different size lodges.

FINDINGS

Participant Characteristics

Participants in the survey consisted of 39 Masons. Fourteen participants were from the Traditional Observance Lodge (TOL) and a combined total of 25 participants came from the Contemporary Lodges (CL). Eight respondents claimed dual membership in both a TOL and a CL and were asked to answer lodge specific questions for each type of lodge (two appropriately labeled spaces were allotted for each question). Length of membership ranged from four months to 60 years with a mean of 19.8 years. Thirty-five of the participants were Master Masons and three reported being either Fellow Craft or Entered Apprentice Masons.

Of the participants, 10 have less than a Bachelor's degree, 14 hold only a Bachelor's degree, and 11 hold a post graduate or professional degree. The highest number of respondents report that their degree or field is in business (12), nine are in physical science, six in Social Science, and eight report having a degree in an "other" field. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 93, with an average age of 54.9 years of age.

Lodge Characteristics

The primary distinction used in this thesis is between TOL and CL lodges. It is therefore important to verify that differences that are assumed to characterize these lodges are supported by the data. TOL lodges focus on putting a cap on their membership numbers as a mechanism for ensuring a quality, rather than quantity, experience. The survey results confirm a difference in size between the TOL and CL lodges. The TOL reported membership size ranged from 20 to 224 members, with an average size of 75.1 members, which incidentally is the approximate reported size

for TOL lodges throughout the country. CL membership size ranged from 40 to 250 members, with an average of 118.3 members. While my use of the TOL/CL terminology may not have been perfectly clear to respondents (causing them to occasionally misrepresent which lodge they were a part of), the means here do indicate a smaller size membership for TOL lodges.

Since TOL lodges reportedly place higher emphasis on education, it was expected that TOL members would be more likely to be expected to compile or present a paper about Masonic education or experience. Again, the data confirm this distinction. Of the TOL respondents, 50% reported that they were expected to compile or present a Masonic paper. Of the CL respondents, only one person reported an expectation to compile or present a paper on a Masonic topic.

It was further expected that it would take TOL members on average longer to advance to the next blue lodge degree compared to their CL counterparts; this was confirmed by the data. Over one-half (54%) of TOL members reported that it takes six months or longer for a member to advance to the next blue lodge degree. Of the CL members, only 14% reported that it takes six months or longer for a member to advance to the next blue lodge degree.

It was also expected that TOL membership dues would be higher than CL membership dues. Once again, the data support this distinction. The dues reported for TOL members ranged from \$72 to \$400 per year with an average of \$270 per year. CL members reported membership dues ranging from \$10 to \$156 per year with an average membership dues amount of \$113 per year.

Based again on the notion that TOL membership has heightened expectations, it was assumed that TOL members would more likely be expected to attend meetings of their lodge before advancing to the next blue lodge degree than CL members. Indeed, 67% of TOL members responded that they were expected to attend lodge meetings before advancing to the next degree. Only 25% of CL members reported that they were expected to attend lodge meetings before advancing to the next degree.

Finally, it was anticipated that TOL lodges would be more likely to hold meetings for the sole purpose of Masonic education than CL lodges. Of the TOL members polled, 75% reported that their lodge had held a meeting for the sole purpose of education or research within the past six months. Of the CL members polled, 57% reported that their lodge had held a meeting for this purpose within the past six months. In summary, the data suggest that all of the indicators used to distinguish TOL and CL lodges in terms of their emphasis on quality of experience are accurate.

Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis 1: CL members will be less civically engaged than TOL members.

To test this hypothesis, respondents were first asked to evaluate whether they thought their Masonic affiliation had impacted their participation in civic activity. Of all of the respondents, 59% reported that their membership in Masonry helped increase their participation in civic engagement while 36% reported that their Masonic affiliation did not increase their level of civic engagement activity. Roughly equivalent proportions of both TOL and CL members reported that Masonic affiliation had no effect on their civic engagement: 36% of TOL members and 39% of CL members.

This hypothesis was examined further through the use of the full civic engagement scale. The average score of civic engagement for CL and TOL members was roughly the same ($t = -.394, p = .696$). The average CL score for the civic engagement scale was 24.9 (std. deviation = 9.94) while the mean score for TOL members was 25.9 (std. deviation = 5.74). Thus, the data suggest that this hypothesis is not supported.

Hypothesis 2: Age will be positively associated with civic engagement among Masons.

A correlation test between age and the full civic engagement scale was used in order to test this hypothesis. The test demonstrated a slight negative association between age and civic engagement among Masons ($r = -.098, p = .579$). While insignificant (due to small sample size), this negative correlation may indicate that younger Masons are equally if not more involved civically than their older counterparts, a notion that runs counter to the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: CL members will be younger on average than TOL members.

In order to test this hypothesis the average age of CL and TOL members was compared ($t = 1.586, p = .123$). The average age of CL respondents was 58.8 years old (std. deviation = 19.25) while the average age of TOL respondents was 49.4 (std. deviation = 13.02). These exploratory data imply that this hypothesis is not supported.

Hypothesis 4: Younger Masons participate in different types of civic engagement than older Masons.

In order to test this hypothesis a correlation test was used with age and each civic engagement sub scale. Age was not significantly correlated with the civic activity sub scale ($r = -.024, p = .893$), the electoral activity sub scale ($r = .039, p = .829$) and the civic voice sub scale ($r = -.043, p = .811$). There was a statistically significant negative association between age and the electronic activity sub scale ($r = -.552, p < .01$). This indicates that younger Masons appear more likely to engage in electronic civic activity than older Masons. Thus, the limited exploratory data suggest that this hypothesis may be supported.

Hypothesis 5: Level of education will be positively associated with civic engagement among Masons.

In order to gauge if level of education was positively associated with civic engagement the mean levels of civic engagement for those with at least a Bachelor's (four year) degree were compared to the mean levels for those with less than a Bachelor's degree ($t = -.525, p = .603$). Masons with less than a Bachelor's degree scored an average of 24.5 (std. deviation = 6.69) on the civic engagement scale while those with a Bachelor's degree or higher scored an average of 26.2 (std. deviation = 9.29). This indicates a possible positive association with level of education and civic engagement among Masons. Therefore, the data suggest that this hypothesis may be supported (the limited sample size precludes adequate significance testing).

Hypothesis 6: CL members will have lower levels of education than TOL members.

In order to test this hypothesis the level of education was compared between CL and TOL respondents (chi-square = .244, $p = .970$). The comparisons indicated that 43% of CL members had earned a four year degree and an additional 29% of CL members earned a graduate/professional degree. Among TOL members, 36% reported having a four year degree with an additional 36% reporting a graduate/professional degree. Therefore, this hypothesis appears to be supported, (again, limited sample size precludes adequate significance testing).

Hypothesis 7: Masons with degrees in humanities and social sciences will be more civically engaged than those with degrees in other fields.

To test this hypothesis, the average civic engagement scale score was compared for Masons whose degree or field is in the social sciences/humanities versus Masons whose degree or field is not within the social sciences/humanities ($t = -.088, p = .930$). Masons reporting having a degree or being in a non-social science/humanities field scored an average of 25.7 (std. deviation = 8.72) on the civic engagement scale while those within social science/humanities scored an average of 26.0 (std. deviation = 8.53). Given the very small differences in these means, this hypothesis does not appear to be supported.

Hypothesis 8: CL members will be less likely to have degrees in the humanities and social sciences than will TOL members.

To test this hypothesis the type of degree (social science/humanities versus other) obtained by participants was compared between CL and TOL members (chi-square = 2.146, $p = .143$). The findings indicated that 29% of TOL members reported having a degree or being in the field of social science/humanities compared to 10% of CL members. Thus, the data suggest that this hypothesis may be supported (as before, limited sample size disallows adequate significance testing).

Hypothesis 9: Size of Lodge will be negatively associated with civic engagement among Masons.

To test this hypothesis the mean of civic engagement was compared for each lodge polled, the TOL lodge, a small CL lodge, and a large CL lodge ($F = .770, p = .471$). The mean for the TOL was 25.9 (std. deviation = 5.74) and the mean for the small CL was 26.5 (std. deviation = 10.80). The much larger size CL lodge had a mean of 22.0 (std. deviation = 7.89). This indicates a possible trend that as size of lodge increases the level of civic engagement among lodge members decreases. Thus, the hypothesis appears to be supported (although limited sample size precludes adequate significance testing).

DISCUSSION

This exploratory study aimed to examine civic engagement in America. This was done by using an exploratory analysis of the response by the Masons, a unique civic organization, to a decline in its membership in America. Specifically, this study explored possible differences in two approaches taken by contemporary Masonic organizations, namely the CL approach and the TOL approach. In addition to expectations with regard to differences in age, education and group size, a key hypothesis of this study was that each of these approaches would result in different levels of civic engagement among members.

Survey data from three lodges in Colorado were used to address the study's expectations. Since the survey data were limited by low response, leaders from each lodge were asked, via e-mail, follow up, interview-style questions that paralleled the study's hypotheses. Where relevant, their responses are incorporated in the following discussion to either counter or support results from the survey.

The first hypothesis addresses the core issues of this study, stating "CL members will be less civically engaged than TOL members." The data suggest that this hypothesis was not supported. It was expected that a TOL environment and focus on education would foster more civically minded

and engaged members. The results demonstrated that the vast majority of respondents (nearly 60%) felt that their membership in Masonry increased their level of civic engagement. As one young Worshipful Master of his lodge put it, “I definitely think being a Mason increase(s) our awareness of community volunteerism. I think that the idea is that many of us have led a selfish life for most of our lives due to societal pressures.” This statement indicates that Masonry overall may influence its members to be civically minded and active. It is noteworthy that Putnam (2000) argued that younger generations in America are developing an atomistic, individualistic mindset and behaviors which he considers dangerous to American democracy. The statement; “the idea that many of us (younger members) have led a selfish life for most of our lives due to societal pressures,” seems to directly support this claim by Putnam (2000) that American culture may be, in some ways, influencing younger generations, and in this case younger Masons, to perceive that they have a more individualistic mindset than older Masons.

While the average level of civic engagement for TOL members was slightly higher than CL members, there was not a statistically significant or substantively meaningful difference in overall civic engagement between CL and TOL members. In addition to having a limited number of survey responses (which increases the difficulty of finding statistically significant differences), a possible reason for this may be because Masonry, in general, tends to attract people who are already civically engaged. That is, of those polled, 95% reported volunteering for civic groups at some point in the past, with 79% having volunteered with civic groups (other than the Masons) within the past year. See Table 4 for a list of groups/organizations specifically mentioned by respondents.

Hypothesis 1 tested overall level of civic engagement between CLs and TOLs but did not account for the quality or type of civic engagement. It can be speculated that there is a difference in the specific types and/or quality of civic engagement between CL and TOL members. While the survey data cannot provide information about the quality (or extent of) civic engagement, it appears that there may be important differences in the types of civic engagement for CLs and TOLs. Although not statistically significant, CL members scored higher, on average, in terms of the civic activity subscale (CL mean = 5.9, standard deviation = 2.20; TOL mean = 4.9, standard deviation = 2.71). TOL members, on the other hand, scored higher on each of the remaining subscales. For electronic activity, TOL members had a mean of 2.3 (standard deviation = 1.14) and CL members had a mean of 1.8 (standard deviation = 1.54). For electoral activity, TOL members scored a mean of 10.4 (standard deviation = 2.50) and CL members scored a mean of 10.3 (standard deviation = 4.04). For civic voice activity, TOL members scored an average of 8.4 (standard deviation = 3.34) and CL members scored 7.0 (standard deviation = 4.73). Further study would be needed in order to see if type of lodge impacts the type, and especially, the quality of civic engagement.

The second hypothesis stated that older Masons would be more civically engaged than their younger Masonic counterparts. The results suggest that this hypothesis is not supported and in fact implied a slight trend opposing it. That is, there was a slight negative correlation between age and civic engagement. This runs counter to Putnam’s broader societal claim that younger generations are less civically engaged than older generations in America. The findings for the second hypothesis are further corroborated by statements made by lodge leadership in their responses to follow-up questions.

For example, one lodge leader states; “Being in the younger category I think that a lot of what the older members are in lodge for is very different than the younger group. The younger members tend to seek more networking opportunities where the older members are uninterested in this.” The key phrase in this quote is “networking opportunities.” This language suggests that younger Masons

are in fact seeking to connect with other individuals and groups. This is supported by another lodge leader who stated: “I like (that) several of our younger members have received help along the way through life via foster homes and the like and would like to give back in some way while building relationships along the way.” This supports the claim that civic engagement increases social capital, which in turn cultivates more civic engagement, and that younger members are seeking to be civically engaged.

Another reason that the findings indicate that younger Masons polled are not less (and possibly more) civically engaged than older Masons could be related to the findings of hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 states; “younger Masons participate in different types of civic engagement than older Masons.” The data seemed to indicate that younger Masons were more likely to be involved in social media networking, like Facebook or blogging, than older Masons. Therefore, it is possible that younger Masons are not less civically engaged than older Masons but rather participating in different types of civic activity. This was also demonstrated by Rotolo and Wilson (2004).

Hypothesis 3 stated that CL members would be younger on average than TOL members. It was thought that CL members would be younger than TOL members because CLs have generally lowered requirements for membership in order to make it easier for younger potential candidates to join. The findings suggest that this hypothesis is not supported. In fact, the findings indicate a possible trend that TOL members are considerably younger than CL members. Statements provided by lodge leadership may provide insight as to why this is.

The TOL leader stated: “younger Masons are looking for an experience rather than just a social club . . . older Masons tend to like the social aspect.” CL leaders stated that younger Masons were seeking networking and relationship building opportunities as quoted above. Thus, based on these statements, it can be speculated that certain aspects of TOLs may attract younger members because their unique environment and focus on education are more in line with the expectations that younger potential members have concerning Masonic membership. Further study would be required to explore this possibility.

It appears that level of education is positively associated with civic engagement among Masons, as stated in hypothesis 5. This finding parallels other studies that find that the higher one’s education, the more civically engaged they are likely to be (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Coleman 1988; Schultz 2002). Yet, all of the lodge leaders stated that they “did not think education background affected one’s involvement in Masonry.” However, the TOL leader stated that: “the educational background may affect a Mason’s ability to learn the deeply esoteric aspects of Freemasonry. This is not to say that backgrounds other than liberal arts are not able to understand the mysteries of Freemasonry.”

What is interesting here is that all three lodge leaders agree that any members, despite their education background, can be active in their lodge and civically engaged. However, the TOL leader notes that education background, specifically, level and type may be positively associated with one’s ability to grasp deeper aspects of Masonic experience and education. This may lend credibility to the idea that type of education may impact type of civic engagement and not necessarily overall level of civic engagement. Again, further study is required to better understand this possible dynamic.

It was expected, according to hypothesis 6 that “CL members will have lower levels of education than TOL members.” Further, it was expected in hypothesis 8 that “CL members will be less likely to have degrees in the humanities and social sciences than will TOL members.” The findings tend to support both of these expectations. However, it was expected that those with degrees in humanities and social sciences would be more civically engaged (hypothesis 7). The findings

suggest that this is not the case.

It is interesting that TOLs have a higher rate of members with graduate degrees and seem to attract more individuals with degrees in humanities and social sciences. This would seem to indicate that TOL members would be more civically engaged than the CL members surveyed, which, as previously stated, is not supported by the findings. This may indicate that Masonry has some type of nullifying effect for its members in relation to their level/type of education and level of civic engagement. In other words, despite one's educational background, simply being a Mason may impact civic engagement. It may also indicate that, as already noted, Masonry may tend to attract those who are already civically engaged. It may also be, as noted previously, that educational background impacts the quality or type of civic engagement rather than the overall level of civic engagement. Further study is required to substantiate these speculations.

Hypothesis 9 states that, "size of lodge will be negatively associated with civic engagement" and appears to be supported by the data and statements provided by lodge leadership. One CL leader stated: "I do feel that size of lodge impacts the participation in lodge events; however it is not simply the number of members, but number of active members." A leader from the other CL stated: "It is my personal opinion that Lodge size does matter greatly with a Lodge of say fifty members . . . it's easier to stay in touch with the members, keep track of them and each member feels a greater need for everyone to contribute for the better good." The TOL leader stated: "This small number allows members to get to know each other better. Since all members are relatively close, participation in Lodge events is greater." The statistical data along with these quotes support social loafing theory as discussed earlier, with members of larger lodges being less active on average than members of smaller lodges. This further suggests that a small lodge tends to foster or attract more civically engaged Masons.

CONCLUSION

Social capital and more specifically civic engagement are considered crucial for the existence and perpetuation of democracy in America. Tocqueville (1838) and more recently Putnam (2000) have conducted major studies on civic engagement. Putnam's (2000) highly cited and studied works demonstrate a strong, positive relationship between civic engagement and democracy in America. The Masons are an organization that has existed in America since prerevolutionary times. It is commonly thought that historical actions by Masons were instrumental in the development of democratic practices in America. The Masons are unique in American history and in relation to American civic engagement because they have existed from the colonial era through the present and teach their members to be civically minded and active. Further, they have influenced the development of other civic groups in America. This study explored civic engagement in America by examining the reaction by the Masons to a decline in its membership, an issue that has afflicted numerous civic groups and activities in American society. The reaction to decline in membership among the Masons has led to the development of two types of Masonic lodges in America, CLs and TOLs. This study compared these lodges in relation to their member's civic engagement activities and background characteristics.

It is interesting that TOLs have smaller sized lodges, have younger members, and have more members with degrees in humanities and social sciences. All of these factors, with the exception of age, would indicate that TOLs have a higher level of social capital and therefore produce more civically minded and civically engaged members. That, however, was not supported by this study.

TOL members were slightly more civically engaged than CL members in this study, but the limited survey response precludes any definitive statement in this regard.

It can be stated that Masons, at least the ones polled in this study, are very civically engaged. For example, nearly 90% of respondents reported having voted in local, state, and federal elections within the past four years, well above national averages. Nearly all respondents are members of other civic groups outside of Masonry. The question then becomes, does Masonry produce civic engagement or does Masonry attract people who are already civically engaged? It would be interesting to further explore the degree to which TOL members are engaged in different types of civic engagement than CL members, and what implications those differences may have for Masonry and American culture in general, if they do in fact exist. However, due to the limitations of this study, further study is needed to explore this possibility.

A chief limitation of this study is the low survey response rate (~10%). This low response rate may seem to conflict with the emphasis Masons place on voluntary activity and the importance of scientific research. However, it should be noted that while Masons stress the importance of civic engagement, we also place a high value on the privacy of Masonic lodge information. It could be that guarding privacy outweighed participating in the survey for most potential participants. Another explanation may be that only the most active members participated in the survey. By active members, I mean those who attend lodge meetings on a regular basis and stay highly informed on lodge functions. The results here would then further support the idea that smaller lodges have a higher level of participation among members. That is, approximately 30% of TOL members participated in the survey and around 10% of the lodge membership participated from the CL lodges. In any case, future research, as is the case for other secretive organizations of interest to Sociologists, will need to take this high value of privacy into account before we can make more definitive conclusions.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Masonic Civic Engagement

The following survey is completely anonymous. This survey is part of a research project being conducted by James M. Kinslow and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Middle Tennessee University. Feel free to stop this survey at any time. Your privacy will be protected at all times. Please answer the following survey questions. If you are not sure about a particular question, you may skip that question. Thank you for your participation.

***1. Are you a member of a Traditional Observance Lodge? (Please check one). (A Traditional Observance Lodge is one that meets certain Masonic criteria. If you are not sure if your lodge is a Traditional Observance lodge, please consult your Grand Lodge or Lodge leadership.)**

- Yes
 No

***2. Are you a member of a Masonic Lodge that is not a Traditional Observance Lodge? (Please check one)**

- Yes
 No

***3. Do you hold dual membership with a Traditional Observance Lodge and with a non-Traditional Observance Lodge? (Please check one)**

- Yes
 No

Please skip question 4 if you answered NO to question 3.

4. In which Lodge do you attend meetings more frequently? (Please check one)

- Traditional Observance Lodge
 Non-Traditional Observance Lodge
 About the same

Masonic Civic Engagement

5. Approximately how many members belong to your Lodge? If you hold dual membership with a Traditional Observance Lodge and a non-Traditional Observance Lodge please answer for both types of lodges. (Please type in the approximate membership number in the correct box).

Traditional Observance Lodge:

Non-Traditional Observance Lodge:

6. How long have you been a Mason? (Please type length in years and months in the box).

7. What is your current Blue Lodge Degree? (Please check one)

- Entered Apprentice
- Fellow Craft
- Master Mason

Masonic Civic Engagement

If you hold dual membership with a Traditional Observance Lodge and a non-Traditional Observance Lodge please answer for both types of lodges for questions 8-14. If you hold membership in only one type of lodge please answer for that lodge. Only answer for lodges in which you have actual membership status.

8. Approximately how many meetings does your Blue Lodge have a month? (Please select the best answer form the appropriate drop-down box).

Traditional Observance
Lodge:

Non- Traditional
Observance Lodge:

9. Approximately how many Lodge meetings are you able to attend per month? (Please select the best answer from the appropriate drop-down box).

Traditional Observance
Lodge:

Non-Traditional
Observance Lodge:

10. Are you expected to compile or present a paper for your Lodge? (Please select the best answer from the appropriate drop-down box).

Traditional Observance
Lodge:

Non-Traditional
Observance Lodge:

11. Approximately how long does it take an active Member to advance to the next degree in your Blue lodge? (Please select the best answer from the appropriate drop-down box).

Traditional Observance
Lodge:

Non-Traditional
Observance Lodge:

Masonic Civic Engagement

12. How much are the yearly dues for your Blue lodge? (Please type in the dollar amount in the appropriate box).

Traditional Observance

Lodge:

Non-Traditional Observance

Lodge:

13. Does your Lodge REQUIRE that you attend meetings before being advanced to the next Blue Lodge Degree? (Please select the best answer from the appropriate drop-down box).

Traditional Observance

Lodge:

Non-Traditional

Observance Lodge:

14. Has your Lodge held a Masonic meeting in the past 6 months for the sole purpose of an educational or research focus? Please exclude degree conferral only and business meetings from your answer. (Please select the correct answer from the appropriate drop-down box).

Traditional Observance

Lodge:

Non-Traditional Observance

Lodge:

15. Has your membership in Masonry helped increase your participation in voluntary community activities such as youth programs, religious activity, or voting? Please do not include your Masonic activity when answering. (Please check one)

Yes, a little

Yes, some

Yes, a lot

No

Masonic Civic Engagement

16. Besides the Masons, have you ever worked together with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

17. Besides the Masons, have you volunteered or done any voluntary community service for no pay? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

18. Have you volunteered with a religious group? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

19. Have you volunteered with an environmental organization? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

20. Have you volunteered with a civic or community organization involved in health or social services? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

Masonic Civic Engagement

21. Have you volunteered with an organization for youth, children, or education? (Please answer for organizations that do NOT require Masonic Affiliation.) (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

22. Do you belong or donate money to any other groups, either locally or nationally, such as a youth group like 4-H, Girl Scouts, or a Poetry Slam chapter, a charity, a PTSA or other association, a labor union, a political or social group, a sport team or any other kind of group? Please list.

23. Besides email, have you communicated with others through a media social network, such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Skype, etc? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

24. Have you participated in writing a blog? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
 Yes, but not in the last year
 No, Never

Masonic Civic Engagement

25. Are you registered to vote? (Please check one)

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure

26. Have you voted in a local public election in the last 4 years? (Please check one)

- Yes
 No

27. Have you voted in a state-level public election in the last 4 years? (Please check one)

- Yes
 No

28. Have you voted in a national public election in the last 4 years? (Please check one)

- Yes
 No

Masonic Civic Engagement

29. Have you volunteered for a political organization or candidate running for office? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the past 4 years
- Yes, but not within the past 4 years
- No, never

30. When there is an election taking place, do you try to convince people to vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, or not? (Please check one)

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No, never

31. When there is an election taking place, do you wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, or place a sign in front of your house? (Please check one)

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No, never

32. In the past 4 years have you given money to a political candidate, political party, or organization that supported candidates? (Please check one)

- Yes
- No

Masonic Civic Engagement

33. Have you contacted or visited a public official at any level of government to express your opinion? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

34. Have you contacted a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

35. Have you contacted a radio station or talk show to express your opinion on an issue? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

36. Have you taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

Masonic Civic Engagement

37. Have you signed an e-mail petition about a social or political issue? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

38. Have you signed a written petition about a social or political issue? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

39. Have you NOT bought something from a certain company because you disagree with the social or political values of the company that produces it? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

40. Have you bought something because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it? (Please check one)

- Yes, within the last year
- Yes, but not in the last year
- No, Never

Masonic Civic Engagement

In order for us to analyze your responses to the previous questions, we need to know a little more about your background. Please remember that your answers are anonymous—we have no way to connect your responses to who you are.

41. Please give your age in years. (Please type your age in the box).

42. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Please check one)

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate or GED
- Vocational or Trade School
- Some College
- Associate's Degree (2 year degree)
- College Graduate (Bachelor's or 4 year degree)
- Graduate or Professional Degree

43. Which category best describes the field in which you hold your highest degree? (Please check one)

- Physical Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Humanities
- Business
- Other

Masonic Civic Engagement

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Any information regarding the survey and/or study can and will be provided to you. You may contact me at KinslowLLL@yahoo.com if you have any questions regarding the survey and/or study. I will answer any question that I can, in as timely a fashion as possible. Again, the privacy of all participants will be protected. Thank you for your time and energy.

APPENDIX B

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR LODGE LEADERS

Follow-up Questions for survey:

Please type in a brief, yet thorough (1-2 paragraphs) answer under each of the following questions. You, of course, can choose to skip any question. You, your Lodge, and your location will not be revealed. Thank you for your openness, honesty, and willingness to take the time to answer these supportive questions.

1. In your opinion, how does the size of your Lodge impact individual participation in Lodge events? (Please state approximately how many members your Lodge has).
2. In your opinion, what, if any, do younger Masons (18-50) expect from Masonry that perhaps older Masons (over 50) may not?
3. In your opinion, do you think that more of a liberal education enhances one's involvement and satisfaction in Freemasonry? If so, how?
4. In your opinion, do you think that being a Mason increases one's awareness of and participation in community volunteerism? If so, Why?
5. In your opinion, what are the top three things new members are looking for in joining Freemasonry?
6. In your opinion, how do you think your lodge is meeting these desires of new members?
7. In your opinion, what three things can your lodge and Masonry in general do to enhance the quality of experience by incoming and current members?

TABLES

Table 1. Measurement of Civic Engagement

Question Number	Type of Civic Engagement/ Question Wording	Scale Coding	Responses
	<i>Civic Activity</i>		
Q16	Besides the Masons, have you ever worked together with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live?	2 1 0	Yes, within the last year Yes, but not in the last year No, never
Q17	Besides the Masons, have you volunteered or done any voluntary community service for no pay?	2 1 0	Yes, within the last year Yes, but not in the last year No, never
Q18	Have you volunteered with a religious group?	2 1 0	Yes, within the last year Yes, but not in the last year No, never
Q19	Have you volunteered with an environmental organization?	2 1 0	Yes, within the last year Yes, but not in the last year No, never
Q20	Have you volunteered with a civic or community organization involved in health or social services?	2 1 0	Yes, within the last year Yes, but not in the last year No, never
Q21	Have you volunteered with an organization for youth, children, or education?	2 1 0	Yes, within the last year Yes, but not in the last year No, never

Table 1. Measurement of Civic Engagement (cont.)

Question Number	Type of Civic Engagement/ Question Wording	Scale Coding	Responses
<i>Electronic Activity</i>			
Q23	Besides email, have you communicated with others through a media social network, such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Skype, etc?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
Q24	Have you participated in writing a blog?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
<i>Electoral Activity</i>			
Q25	Are you registered to vote?	2	Yes
		0	No
		0	Not sure
Q26	Have you voted in a local public election in the last 4 years?	2	Yes
		0	No
Q27	Have you voted in a state-level public election in the last 4 years?	2	Yes
		0	No
Q28	Have you voted in a national public election in the last 4 years?	2	Yes
		0	No
Q29	Have you volunteered for a political organization or candidate running for office?	2	Yes, within the past 4 years
		1	Yes, but not within the past 4 years
		0	No, never

Table 1. Measurement of Civic Engagement (cont.)

Question Number	Type of Civic Engagement/ Question Wording	Scale Coding	Responses
Q30	When there is an election taking place, do you try to convince people to vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, or not?	2	Yes, always
		1	Yes, sometimes
		0	No, never
Q31	When there is an election taking place, do you wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, or place a sign in front of your house?	2	Yes, always
		1	Yes, sometimes
		0	No, never
Q32	In the past 4 years have you given money to a political candidate, political party, or organization that supported candidates?	2	Yes
		0	No
<i>Civic Voice Activity</i>			
Q33	Have you contacted or visited a public official at any level of government to express your opinion?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
Q34	Have you contacted a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never

Table 1. Measurement of Civic Engagement (cont.)

Question Number	Type of Civic Engagement/ Question Wording	Scale Coding	Responses
Q36	Have you taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
Q37	Have you signed an <u>e-mail petition</u> about a social or political issue?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
Q38	Have you signed a <u>written petition</u> about a social or political issue?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
Q39	Have you NOT bought something from a certain company because you disagree with the social or political values of the company that produces it?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never
Q40	Have you bought something because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it?	2	Yes, within the last year
		1	Yes, but not in the last year
		0	No, never

Source: Modified from Tufts University Civic Engagement Quiz
http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/Final_Civic_Inds_Quiz_2006.pdf

Table 2. Measurement of Masonic Affiliation

Question Number	Question Wording	Responses
Q1	Are you a member of a Traditional Observance Lodge?	Yes No
Q2	Are you a member of a Masonic Lodge that is not a Traditional Observance Lodge?	Yes No
Q3	Do you hold dual membership with a Traditional Observance Lodge and with a non-Traditional Observance Lodge?	Yes No
Q4	In which Lodge do you attend meetings more frequently?	Traditional Observance Non-Traditional Observance About the same
Q5	Approximately how many members belong to your Lodge?	# of members
Q6	How long have you been a Mason?	Length in years and months
Q7	What is your current Blue Lodge Degree?	Entered Apprentice Fellow Craft Master Mason
Q8	Approximately how many meetings does your Blue Lodge have a month?	1, 2, 3, 4, more than 4
Q9	Approximately how many Lodge meetings are you able to attend per month?	1, 2, 3, 4, more than 4

Table 2. Measurement of Masonic Affiliation (cont.)

Question Number	Question Wording	Responses
Q10	Are you expected to compile or present a paper for your Lodge?	Yes No Not sure
Q11	Approximately how long does it take an active Member to advance to the next degree in your Blue lodge?	Less than 1 month 1-2 months Between 2 and 6 months More than 6 months
Q12	How much are the yearly dues for your Blue lodge?	Dollar amount
Q13	Does your Lodge REQUIRE that you attend meetings before being advanced to the next Blue Lodge Degree?	Yes No Not sure
Q14	Has your Lodge held a Masonic meeting in the past 6 months for the sole purpose of an educational or research focus?	Yes No Not sure
Q15	Has your membership in Masonry helped increase your participation in voluntary community activities such as youth programs, religious activities, or voting? (Please do not include your Masonic activity when answering.)	Yes, a little Yes, some Yes, a lot No

Table 3. Measurement of Independent Variables

Question Number	Question Wording	Responses
Q41 <i>Age</i>	Please give your age in years.	Age in years
Q42 <i>Education</i>	What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	Less than high school graduate High school graduate or GED Vocational or Trade School Some College Associate's Degree (2 year degree) College Graduate (Bachelor's or 4 year degree) Graduate or Professional Degree
Q43 <i>Field</i>	Which category best describes the field in which you hold your highest degree?	Physical Sciences Social Sciences Humanities Business Other

Table 4: Additional Organizations Mentioned by Respondents*

Organization mentioned	# of mentions
Amateur Radio clubs	1
American Contract Bridge League	1
Boy Scouts	5
CCFA	1
Children's Miracle Network	1
Church	1
Colorado Springs Rescue Mission	1
County Sheriff	1
DeMolay	1
EWI	1
Gates Camp of Boy & Girls Club of Denver	1
Girl Scouts	4
Goodwill	1
GOP	1
heartsapart.org	1
Humane Society	2
Jobes	1
Kiwanis	1
Lions	1
Local animal shelter	1
Memorial Health System Foundation	1
Miss America Organization	1
National religious organization	1
National Rifle Association	2
NRA-PVA	1
nowilaymedowntosleep.org	1
Red Cross	3
Salvation Army	1
U. S. Olympic Committee	1
United Way	1
University	1
YMCA	1

*Do you belong or donate money to any other groups, either locally or nationally, such as a youth group like 4-H, Girl Scouts, or a Poetry Slam chapter, a charity, a PTSA or other association, a labor union, a political or social group, a sport team or any other kind of group? Please list.

THE FOUR MASONIC ELEMENTS

By

Dr. David E. Stafford, 32°, KCCH

Past Master and Fellow, Tennessee Lodge of Research, F. & A. M.

Freemasonry has been described as being veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Through the centuries of time, the allegories and symbols of the Craft have been obscured and made only partially recognizable to the meanings they held in antiquity. The ritual, as used in each jurisdiction, has evolved and been pruned in such a manner that within the work are blurbs and sections that have little meaning in its present context or to modern Masons; however, it is within these scattered gems of purpose that a studying Mason may find great enlightenment. One such portion of the ritual may be found with the seemingly haphazard mentioning of the four elements, water, fire, earth, and air, usually found at the conclusion of the stereoptics in the Entered Apprentice Degree. Their inclusion within the ritual seems a little awkward and misplaced, but as will be discussed within this paper, other Masonic rites use the elements in a more prominent and pronounced manner than does the common York/American Rite system. In either event, it raises the question as to why the classical elements of water, fire, earth, and air were ever introduced to the rituals of the Craft.

The American Ritual

The rituals used in American lodges are for the most part similar. Most US grand lodges confer a derivative of the Preston/Webb ritual. There are but few exceptions. The variations within the majority of the rituals adopted by US grand lodges are usually only associated with verbiage and sequence of events. Although this ritual does illustrate the importance of our Mother Earth, the elements are not mentioned at all within the ritual of the First Degree as practiced under the auspice of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, to whom the author owes allegiance. The following is from the 2003 edition of the Tennessee ritual, and it is very similar to Indiana's (Taylor, 1975).

Our ancient brethren, we are told, served their Master with *Freedom, Fervency, and Zeal*, which are symbolically illustrated by chalk, charcoal, and clay. For there is nothing more free than chalk, which upon the slightest touch leaves a trace, nothing more fervent than charcoal, which when properly ignited melts the most obdurate metals, and nothing more zealous than Clay or our Mother Earth, for from the earth we came and unto the earth we must all inevitably return.

Another common passage found within the Preston/Webb Rituals pays little to no attention to freedom, fervency, and zeal and a larger amount to the elements. McCoy (1855) and Sickels (1868) are both examples. It will later be shown how this passage is extremely similar to the wording of an ancient Greek authority. On page 98 of Daniel Sickels' 1868 edition of *The General Ahiman Rezon and Freemason's Guide* the ritual reads:

Our Mother EARTH alone, of all the elements, has never proved unfriendly to man; the bodies of water deluge him with rain, oppress him with hail, and drown him with inundations. The air rushes in storms, prepares the tempest, and lights up the volcano; but

the earth, ever kind and indulgent, is found subservient to his wishes. Though constantly harassed, more to furnish the luxuries than the necessities of life, she never refuses her accustomed yield; spreading his path with flowers and his table with plenty; though she produces poison, still she supplies the antidote, and returns with interest every good committed to her care; and when at last he is called upon to pass through the “dark valley of the shadow of Death,” she once more receives him, and piously covers his remains within her bosom: this admonishes us that from it we came, and to it we must shortly return.

The Freemason’s Guide to the Symbolic Degrees (Reed, 1968) welds the two afore quoted passages together in the Entered Apprentice Degree. The combination is found in the same place within the ritual, after the discourse on the virtues and before the charge. The same is done in the *Kentucky Monitor*, the *Louisiana Masonic Monitor*, New York’s monitor, and the *Masonic Manual of Missouri* (Carman, 1952; Huckaby, 1927; Missouri, 1952; Pirtle 1990). The Tennessee ritual includes the latter discourse not in the First Degree but within the Masonic Funeral Service.

These three variations appear to be the most common within the York/American Rite Craft Degrees as practiced in the United States. Within the context of the entire discourse of the third section of the First Degree, the inclusion of references to any of the elements seems a little out of place. The reason for the inclusion of any of these variations has been questioned for at least the last sixty years, and it would probably be safe to say for much longer (Barbour, 1946; Wells, 1947).

The Elements in Other Rites

In various rites and obediences, a candidate for the First Degree of Freemasonry must endure a series of trials to prove his sincerity and character. Perhaps the trial that would be familiar to most American Freemasons would be the chamber of reflection, for many have experienced a similar trial in at least one of the concordant bodies. According to Mackey (1927), the use of the chamber of reflection prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree is common in the French and Scottish Rites, neither of which are widely practiced within the regular grand lodges in the United States. The chamber of reflection will be discussed and examined later in this work.



In a 1946 article found in *The Philalethes*, Barbour discusses the use of the four elements as trials in the Rite of Misraim. Pike and Cummings (2001) spent a great deal of time in combating the legitimacy of this rite and that of Memphis in the United States. They clearly assert the spuriousness of the Rite of Misraim, the Rite of Memphis, and the one formed through their union. All three of these are frequently, albeit perhaps harshly, called Masonic bastards (Stevens, 1899). The modern irregularity of the rite in the United States is without question; however, according to Barbour, Marc Bedarride, a former Grand Master of the Rite of Misraim in France and accused charlatan, recorded a “quite lengthy, detailed, and perhaps imaginary” description of the rite’s trials. The description includes the proselyte being caused to transverse an underground cavern, pass between two engulfing

flames, to wade a swift current of water of unknown depth without extinguishing his torch, being

exalted through space where his light is darkened by a blustering gust of air, and finally being hastened into a “chamber of horror” just outside of the room where he is to be initiated. This is a dramatic account of this obedience’s trials, but it illustrates the passage presumably required of those seeking enlightenment within the French Rite of Misraim, at least in spirit.

Although extremely unpractical within the setting of a lodge hall, the description corresponds, in narrative, to the trials detailed within Pike’s (1993) *Porch and the Middle Chamber: Book of the Lodge* and Ambelain’s (2006) *Freemasonry in Olden Times: Ceremonies and Rituals from the Rites of Mezaraim and Memphis*¹. At least one current Rite of Memphis and Misraim in the United States is purportedly in the use of Ambelain’s work (Brother Methodius, personal communication, July 15, 2008). Robert Ambelain is of Martinist fame. It appears the ritual is more heavily influenced by esoteric and occult thought than is mainstream American Masonry; however, the ritual shows a very strong similitude to Pike’s Craft Ritual. This is not surprising since both find their origin developing within France. Ambelain’s ritual warrants a review by anyone who is interested in variations of Masonry.

Pike’s Craft rituals are not widely known within the United States. He revised the Scottish Rite version of the Craft Degrees not to be worked within the halls of a lodge but instead as a perquisite reading for a York Rite Mason venturing through the Scottish Rite’s fourth through the thirty-second degrees (Pike, 1993). This objective explains the frequent digressions within Pike’s ritual to clarify the differences between York Rite work and Scottish Rite work. It was believed by Pike that the rites contrasted so greatly in presentation that the York Rite Mason would not be able to fully understand the lessons within the Scottish Rite without some exposure to its Craft Degrees. Pike believed that after familiarizing himself with the Scottish Rite version of the Three Degrees that a candidate for the “higher” degrees would not be puzzled by their order. To provide one example of the differences between the American/York Rite Craft ritual and that of the Scottish Rite, within the American/York Rite ritual, the ruffians are apprehended and punished before the conclusion of the Third Degree. This is not so within the Scottish Rite workings of the degree, it is not until the completion of the 10th degree, or Elu of the Fifteen, that the fullness of retribution is paid to the ruffians. The following is an examination of Pike’s use of the elementals within the First Degree.

Pike’s “Blue Degrees” and the Elements

Pike’s version of the First Degree involved four tests or trials by the elements. The first trial experienced by the candidate is that of earth and involves the Chamber of Reflection. The following three trials are known as “The Journeys” and are made up of circumambulations around the lodge with various barriers and experiences to encounter. Each journey is accredited with an element, ordered air, water, and fire. The following is a description of each trial paraphrased from Pike’s (1993) *Porch and the Middle Chamber: Book of the Lodge* and (1996) *Esoteric Work of the 1st through 3rd Degree, According to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*.



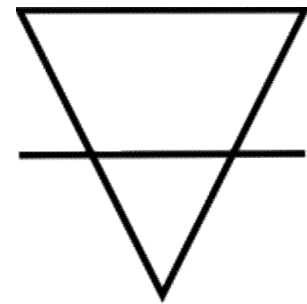
Chamber of Reflection



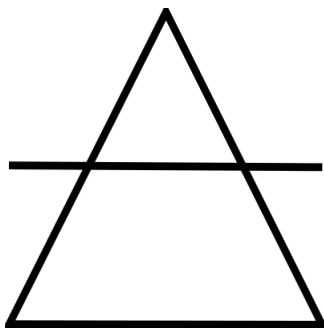
The first trial of a candidate for the first degree is that of earth. The proselyte is delivered to the lodge by the individual who recommended him to Masonry. The profane is promptly left in the hands of a conductor, who blindfolds the proselyte and leads him about the lodge in the allusion of descending into a deep pit or catacomb. The candidate is then seated on a stool and turned over to the instruction of the preparer. The room is prepared with images of death and despair. Present also is a cup of water, a

piece of bread, and dishes of salt, sulfur, and mercury. The proselyte is left to explore the crypt and answer four written questions before him. Each question is related to the candidate's duties he owes to himself, fellow-creatures, his country, and his creator, respectfully. He is instructed that once he has answered the questions and followed all instructions to ring a bell signifying his completion.

The preparer observes the candidate through a hidden wicket, and when the candidate begins to answer the questions a disturbance outside of the chamber occurs. The proselyte hears chains rattling, cries, and a loud explosion followed by silence. Once he answers the questions, the candidate is required to write a will, drink the water, eat the bread, and reflect upon the salt, sulfur, and mercury. The latter substances' connections to alchemy are explained. They are described as being representative of man's three fold being: body, mind, and spirit. The salt is a reminder of the endless cycle of the dead becoming part of the living. The smoke from burning a particle of sulfur represents good and evil thoughts. The mercury with its inability to be easily divided into portions is representative of the spirit in simple oneness. After the proselyte has completed his tasks, the preparer blindfolds him and leads the candidate back through the path from whence he arrived at the chamber.



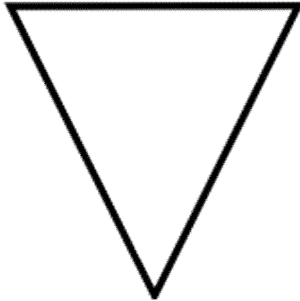
The First Journey



The first journey represents trial by air. During this journey the candidate is conducted three times around the lodge. He is caused to traverse objects on the floor as if passing over rocks and through hollows. All the while, sounds of thundering and loud clasps are made about the journeyman. The candidate is stopped by the Junior Warden and made to make an alarm by striking the Junior Warden on the left shoulder three times. At this point, the candidate is given a light electric shock accompanied by a loud clasp of thundering sounds. After

answering the Junior Warden's brief interrogation, the first journey is completed. The candidate is then informed that the element air is a representation of vitality or life. In a deeper explanation, the trial by air is said to be emblematical of the whims of life and more especially the quality of tolerance and progress from a terrestrial to a celestial state of being.

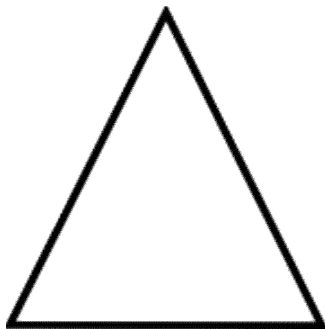
The Second Journey



The second journey represents trial by water. During this trial, the candidate is conducted three times around the lodge. After each circumambulation, the candidate's right hand is dipped in a laver of water. The lodge is completely silent during the journey. After the third revolution, the candidate is stopped at the Senior Warden and made to make the regular alarm by striking him three times on the left shoulder. It is explained to the candidate that baptism by water is a symbol of purification and used by the Essenes and John the Baptist. It is to be a reminder to the candidate that all men must be driven by a desire to serve his fellow creature; otherwise, when fortune finds opportunity to invest him with rank and honor, he will serve himself and not the people who gave him opportunity.

The Third Journey

The third and last journey represents trial by fire. To best convey the venture taken by the candidate on the third journey, much of the description to follow is taken directly from Pike's (1996) *Esoteric Work of the 1st through the 3rd Degree. According to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*.



The profane is once again conducted three times around the lodge. "He is continually exposed to heat, which is produced by means of a long metallic tube, having at one end a mouth-piece and at the other a spirit-lamp, surrounded with wire-gauze. The tube contains lycopodium or arcanson powder, which, blown upon the spirit-lamp, inflames, and passes through the wire-gauze, making a hot flame. Torches may be used, with cotton saturated in alcohol, and powered with lycopodium, which rains out in flames when the torch is shaken" (p. 12). The candidate is to clearly feel the heat from the apparatus but not be burned. Upon the last circumambulation, the candidate is stopped by the Worshipful Master and caused to make an alarm on the Worshipful Master's shoulder just as before. The candidate is then taught that through the baptism of both water and fire, he is symbolically free from all sin and vice. He is then instructed that the flame teaches all Masons to aspire for perfection and labor with aspiration, ardor, and zeal (very similar to freedom, fervency, and zeal in the York/American ritual).

Ambelain's Ritual and the Elements

Ambelain's *Freemasonry in Olden Times* contains two separate sets of rituals, those of the Rite of Memphis and the Rite of Mizraim. It is suggested that any reader with an interest in various Masonic Craft rituals spend some time in studying these unique and beautiful systems. There are some interesting differences between Ambelain's ritual and that of Pike. The first variation of Ambelain's ritual from that of Pike's is the absence of mercury, sulfur, and salt from the Chamber of

Reflection. The order of the trials is different in the rituals. In Ambelain's ritual the order is water, air, and fire (air, water, and fire in Pike's).

The first journey includes the candidate being conducted around the lodge with immense noise and harassment. At the conclusion of the circumambulation, at the Junior Warden, the candidate's hand is plunged into pure water for purification.

The second journey being a test of air, the candidate is lead around the lodge in silence, although obstacles are still present. Stopping at the Senior Warden, the Master of Ceremonies blows three times on the candidate's forehead.

The third and last journey is a trial by fire. The candidate is once again conducted around the lodge and stopped by the Worshipful Master. The Master of Ceremonies takes the right hand of the candidate and passes it three times through the flame of a lit candle.

These differences are only presented to give the reader a little broader view of how the elements are used in different rituals. It is hoped that a reader with an interest will seek out these rituals and read them fully, for they all have a great many gems of purpose to impart to the Masonic student.

The Elements in Literature

Throughout antiquity and the more modern era, the four elements have been included in literature ranging in genre from poetry and science fiction movies to academic works on conservation and physics (Besson, 1997; Laurie, 1929; Rupp, 2005; Sylvester, 1979). Of particular interest is that the majority of the passage concerning the four elements from Sickel's monitor, and various other York Rite renditions, is lifted from the ancient writings of Pliny the Elder. Practically word for word, depending on translation, the Sickel and McCoy monitors recite Pliny's discourse from Book II, Chapter 63 of *Naturalis Historia* (Laurie, 1929; Pliny, 1987). *Naturalis Historia* was completed around the year 77 AD, and it is considered to be one of the largest works, consisting of 37 books, to have survived from the era of the Roman Empire until today (Rupp). Pliny reads:

It is the earth that, like a kind mother, receives us at our birth, and sustains us when born. It is this alone, of all the enemies around us, that is never found an enemy to man. The floods of waters deluge him with rains, oppress him with hail, and drown him with inundations; the air rushes on in storms, prepares the tempest, or lights up the volcano; but the earth, gentle and indulgent, ever subservient to the wants of man, spreads his walks with flowers, and his table with plenty; returns with interest every good committed to her care, and though she produces the poison, she still furnishes the antidote, though constantly teased more to furnish the luxuries of man than his necessities, yet even to the last, she continues her kind indulgence, and when life is over, she piously hides his remains in her bosom.

Joshua Sylvester (1979) in the robust work *The Divine Weeks and Works*, first published in 1621, presents a stanza that is very reminiscent of Pliny the Elder's writing. All four elements are referred to; however, it is the earth that is most revered. Pay particular attention to the commonality of line 467.

459: The Earth receives man when he first is born:
460: Th'Earth nurses him; and when he is forlorn
461: Of th'other Elements, and Nature loaths-him,
462: Th'Earth in her bosom with kind buriall cloaths-him.

- 463: Oft hath the Aire with Tempests set-upon-us,
 464: Oft hath the Water with her Floods undon-us,
 465: Oft hath the Fire (th'upper as well as ours)
 466: With wofull flames consum'd our Towns and Towrs:
 467: Onely the Earth, of all the Elements,
 468: Unto Mankind is kind without offence:
 469: Onely the Earth did never it displace
 470: From the first seat assign'd it by thy grace.

In recent literature, the four elements have received considerable attention for their prominent inclusion in Dan Brown's (2000) work *Angels and Demons*. The book fictionally connects the four classical elements with the practice of an Illuminati conspiracy and assassin. On page 360, Brown depicts what he refers to as The Illuminati Diamond, an artistic creation forming the words Earth, Air, Fire, and Water into a square figure. The novel repeatedly mentions political figures' connections to Freemasonry and Freemasonry's supposed and illusionary connection with symbols such as the eye within a triangle and the Great Seal of the United States. In the fictional novel, bodies are found branded with an anagram of one of the four elements somewhere on their person.



There are numerous other references in literature that compare favorably to the subject at hand; however, it would be beyond the scope of the current focus to expound more fully upon them. Let it be made very clear, the similarity of our modern ritual to these older works does not in any way point to the age of the fraternity; yet, it does indicate that the ideas and thoughts propagated within the lodge are linked to those of a more ancient time.

The History of the Four Elements

It would now be prudent to briefly examine the development of the four elements. Throughout all ages and even today, man sought to identify the *prima materia*, prime matter or primary material, of all substances (Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). The debate over the fundamental building blocks of all material is as old as civilization itself. It was the group of thinkers belonging to the school of natural philosophers, in the sixth century BC, who first begun to seriously debate the elements (Rupp, 2005). Thales is accredited with being the first to develop a theory of elements. He proclaimed that water was the most basic of all elements and that all things were made of some variation of this base material. The debate continued for centuries. Anaximander, Thales's student, proclaimed that air was the basic unit of matter. Heraclitus proclaimed the simplest element must be fire, and Xenophanes asserted that all things were made of the fundamental element of earth (Rupp).

It was Empedocles (494-435 BC) who is accredited with combining the theories of his predecessors and developing a four-prong theory of the elements, although Buddha's teachings of the four elements pre-date Empedocles'. In *Tetrasomia* or *Doctrine of the Four Elements*, Empedocles postulated that all things were made up of various combinations of earth, air, fire, and water. According to Rupp (2005), the development of a set of basic elements was not exclusive to Greece, the cradle of Western Thought. Japanese and Hindu traditions taught of a five element belief. Both taught the four classical elements and a fifth element akasha, aether, or the void which explains the unseen, spiritual influences of life and nature. Within the Greek philosophy, the

presence of a fifth element, ether, was regularly discussed and debated. Aristotle added a fifth element he called aether, later it was termed quintessence. The peoples of India developed a three element theory and those of China a five element theory. The Indian theory contained fire, water, and earth to which the Chinese added wood and metal. The Indians later expanded the theory to include air.

The Greek thought of the four classical elements has been greatly confused in modern time. When the Greeks debated and discussed the four elements they did not have a physical substance in mind. When the Greeks discussed earth, they did not necessarily intend for it to be taken as soil; although it would often be represented as such. The four classical elements more readily referenced physical states of being. The following excerpt clearly explains:



For Aristotle, matter (*hyle*), inert and shapeless by itself, gained its shape and properties by the action of form (*morphe*) which could be expressed by such factors as hot, cold, dry and humid, giving in turn, by their combination, four elements: earth (cold and dry), water (cold and humid), air (hot and humid) and fire (hot and dry). The elements were eternal and indestructible and by *synthesis* (chemical reaction), *mixis* (mechanical mixing) or *krasis* (dissolution) gave birth to different substances whose properties depended solely on the contents of each element.²

During the Middle Ages, Western thought was stifled and oppressed. Alchemy and the study of the four elements was overcome in the Western world by superstition and blind faith in the church; however, in the East, the same period was a time of great growth in science, literature, philosophy, and overall intellectual achievement. Alchemy “developed in close relation with metallurgy and medicine” within the Islamic Arabian-Persian world (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007, p. S6). It was during this time that the Arab scholar Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan, more readily known as Gerber (720-780 AD), lived and worked (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer). Gerber was profoundly interested in alchemy, and he believed that all metals were made up of a combination of sulfur and mercury. Gerber’s sulfur-mercury theory was expanded by Al-Razi (850-940 AD), a Persian physician, to include salt (Rupp, 2005).

“In the late Middle Ages (12-14th centuries), alchemy was studied by such eminent personalities as Albertus Magnus—Albert von Bollstadt (1193-1280), professor of philosophy and theology at the Universities of Cologne and Paris, or Arnaldus de Villanova (1235-1313), rector of Montpellier University” (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007, p. S6). In the 16th Century the Greek theory of elements and the Arabian three elements were combined. “Paracelsus (Phillip von Hohenheim, 1493-1541) determined that, though the Greek four were indeed the fundamental components of all matter, earth, air, fire, and water in turn were composed of the three Arabic ‘principles,’ mercury, sulfur, and salt” (Rupp, p. 23).

The classical elements composing of either four or five elements dominated philosophic, scientific, esoteric, and mathematical thought from Empedocles through Socrates, Plato, Aristotle,

Gerber, Paracelsus, and their dominance began to weaken in the middle of the 17th Century with the scientific research of Robert Boyle. Boyle's (2008) *The Sceptical Chymist* signaled the end of the four elements dominance in science. For the next 100 years, the dominance of alchemy and the four elements over Western society waned. The death of alchemy has been symbolically represented by Antoine Lavoisier, who listed thirty-three elements classified as gases, metals, non-metals, or earths in his 1789 dissertation entitled *Elementary Treatise on Chemistry* (Donovan, 1996; Rupp, 2005). From this point, the number of identified elements increased at a steady if not amazing rate (Rupp). It is noteworthy to mention, however, that even today the classical elements and alchemy are used in astrology, esoteric thought, and several other occult philosophies.

It was not uncommon for cultures to connect their belief of the elements with other basic knowledge such as colors, seasons, symbols, directions, religious iconography, virtues, or planets, attributing one of each to a specific element. The Greeks were no different from their global companions. The Pythagoreans, those philosophers who followed the teaching of Pythagoras, had a natural affection for numbers, and to them, the world of nature and reality seemed to divide itself nicely into units of four. They observed four elements, "four prime faculties, four societies, four seasons, four ages of man, and four parts of living things" (Rupp, p. 12). It was the Pythagoreans who are accredited with developing four of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, the quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music (Stahl, Johnson, & Burge, 1991). Hippocrates took this fascination with four and connected the four elements to his four essential fluids of the human body (yellow bile, black bile, blood, and phlegm).

Ginsburgh (1995) asserted that the Hebrew people saw a correspondence between the four classical elements and the letters of the Tetragrammaton. In Ginsburgh's view water correlates with Yod, fire with Heh, air with Vav, and earth with the final Heh. Bogdan (2007), Castells (2005), and Ozaniec (2005) concurs that there is a correlation between the name of God and the four classical elements. According to some writers, the four classical elements when corresponded with the Tetragrammaton may be further associated with the four senses, four evangelists, four angels ruling over the corners of the world, and the four triplicities (Castells (2005); Goldstein, 1990; Labriola & Simmonds, 2000; Ozaniec). "A triplicities is a set of three zodiacal signs: there are four triplicities in all, each of which is associated with one of the four elements" (Goldstein, p. 1). Bogdan stresses that the illustration of this connection is displayed more fully or clearly in rituals of the Order of the Golden Dawn than they are within Freemasonry. Kabalistic philosophy is deeply rooted within the study of the Tetragrammaton. The Tetragrammaton and Kabalistic philosophy are repeatedly seen within the degrees of the Scottish Rite, including the Craft Degrees (Hutchens, 1995a; Hutchens, 1995b).



Within the American/York Rite's "higher" degrees is a very clear example of how units of four were associated with each other. In the Royal Arch Degree, the candidate is caused to pass through four veils, each representing one of the principal tribes of Israel. The first veil represents the tribe of Dan and is represented by a blue banner bearing the representation of an eagle. The second veil represents the tribe of Rueben and is represented by a banner of purple bearing the representation of a man. The third veil represents the tribe of Ephraim and is represented by a scarlet banner bearing the representation of an ox. The fourth veil represents the tribe of Judah and is represented by a banner of white bearing the representation of a lion. According to Royal Arch and early Christian tradition, each of the four veils is said to represent one of the four Christian Gospels of John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark, respectively. The representations of the eagle, man, ox, and lion are further described as corresponding to four astrological symbols of the Zodiac: Scorpio, Aquarius, Taurus, and Leo, respectively.

In *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike (1956) connects even more units of four with the four representations on the Royal Arch's banners while discussing the twenty-eighth degree of the Scottish Rite.

On page 791, Pike presents an illustration connecting the eagle with azoth and air; the man with mercury and water; the ox with salt and the earth; and the lion with sulfur and fire. Pike continues to explain how the Zohar further connects each illustration on the banners with an angel: the lion with Michael; the ox with Gabriel; the eagle with Uriel; and the man with Raphael.

Alchemy

The four classical elements are intimately related to the ancient science of Alchemy. The discipline, not unlike Freemasonry, is divided into two denominations: material and spiritual or operative and speculative (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007). Alchemy was very en-vogue with the thinkers of the Renaissance (14-17 centuries) but fell out of popularity with the rise of the "rational and critical philosophy of the enlightenment" mind (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, p. S6). It is not to be assumed however that alchemy instantaneously

disappeared from the social, political, and scientific scenes.

Whereas the material practice of alchemy sought to explain and manipulate the physical world, the spiritual alchemist sought to use the terminology, science, and ideas of the material to explain the psychological, spiritual, and sociological existence of man. Alchemy was interested in transmuting one thing into another. Of course the most widely known idea of alchemy is the search for a technique of converting base metals into silver or gold; however, within the spiritual denomination of alchemy there was a search to return man to a pure oneness with the divine creator. Although the once prominent theories of alchemy lost position in the open scientific world view, its spiritual half found refuge in the esoteric beliefs of organizations such as Freemasonry and the Rosicrucian movement. The traditional quest within alchemy was transmutation, or change, into another substance or form (Von Franz, 1980). This quest in relationship to the four elements can still be found within *The Elemental Trials* of Freemasonry.

Before going farther, it would be advantageous to explore what connections the framers of the Craft have with alchemy and its practice. The beginnings of Freemasonry are shrouded in mystery. At what point the operative lodges transformed into an organization accepting men of stature and prestige is blurred; however, it is generally accepted that Elias Ashmole, Robert Moray, and Christopher Wren were among the first to transcend the barriers and become speculative or accepted Masons (Beresiner, 2004; Koltko-Rivera, 2007; MacNulty, 1998). It is also noteworthy that all three of these men were founding members of the Royal Society. It is possible that more members of the Royal Society were Freemasons; however, even of the three afore mentioned, Wren and Moray are occasionally questioned as Freemasons. It is not suggested that the Royal Society has any connection in origin to Freemasonry; however, it is implied that both organizations developed during the transition from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment thought. It is also suggested that the men in both organizations probably shared similar interests, one of which being alchemy and the rapidly developing science of chemistry.



Elias Ashmole was born on the 23rd of May 1617 at Lichfield, Staffordshire England (Beresiner, 2004). Ashmole was made a freemason in 1646 within the lodge at Warrington (Koltko-Rivera, 2007). From an early age, Ashmole found a fond interest in esoteric teachings. He had a passion for botany, astronomy, and alchemy. He became fast friends with William Backhouse, a noted alchemist, and this relationship was so strong that, according to Koltko-Rivera, Ashmole became the alchemical successor to Backhouse. Ashmole also had an interest in Rosicrucianism; however, there seems to be no record of him ever being a participant in Rosicrucian activities. Ashmole published several works with esoteric and alchemic connotations including *Fasciculus Chemicus*, *Theatrum Chemicum Brittanicum*, and *The Way of Bliss* (Beresiner; Koltko-Rivera; MacNulty, 1998).

Robert Moray was born March 6, 1609. He was initiated into Masonry in 1641 at the Lodge in Edinburgh. Moray was a lover of hermetic philosophy and alchemy, and he was the patron of Thomas Vaughn, an active alchemist (MacNulty, 1998; McGregor, 2005).

Christopher Wren was born October 20, 1632 (McGregor, 2005). It is believed that Wren was initiated into Freemasonry in May 1691 as evidenced by John Aubray's *Naturell Historie of Wiltshire*. There is little to no firm evidence, however, to substantiate the assertion that Wren was definitely a Freemason. His interests in intellectual endeavors, however, are unquestionable. Wren was raised in an Anglican family that leaned towards the Royalist agenda during the civil unrest in England. He was educated at an early age by his father and Reverend William Shepherd. He attended Westminster School for several years. Following a change in prosperity, the Wren's resided with William Holder. It was here that Wren was exposed to William Scarburgh, a physician. Scarburgh was a member of a small group of thinkers who met weekly to discuss such topics as alchemy, physics, astronomy, statics, and the like. Wren was allowed to attend many of these meetings. Christopher Wren was among the first twelve founding members of the Royal Society and served as president for several years (McGregor, 2005).



The Elemental Trials as Illustrations of Transmutation

“According to Aristotle, the prima material combines with the four qualities of coldness, dryness, heat, and moisture, to develop into the four elements. He believed that manipulating these qualities would change their elemental composition, resulting in transmutation” (Vorhand-Ariel, 1998, p. 110). Within alchemy, it was believed that the elements could be manipulated in order to produce a mystical substance, or the philosopher’s stone. This belief in manipulating what was found in nature into a supernatural substance, transmutation, transposed itself into the philosophy of Rosicrucian and Freemasonry. Nowhere within all of Freemasonry is this more clearly evident than in the elemental trials.

Earth

Within the York/American Rite, it is taught that “our Mother EARTH alone, of all the elements, has never proved unfriendly to man”. The ritual further “admonishes us that from” the earth “we came, and to it we must shortly return”. The element of earth represents man’s alpha and omega, his beginning and his end. Man’s body was molded together with the dust of the earth and water. His mortal temple was an earthen clay vessel into which God breathed air through his nostrils to transmute him into a living soul. The first living man was Adam, who is recognized within Masonic tradition and myth as being the first Freemason. The name Adam comes from *adamah*, meaning earth or ground (Mackey, 1927; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). It may be of interest to mention here that according to Jewish law it is unlawful for a corpse to be cremated. One explanation for this edict is that a body that is returned to the earth “is capable of bringing forth new life”; whereas, a body that is turned to ash through burning by fire represents complete destruction (Kaplan, 1990, p. 149). The Jewish religion and Freemasonry both teach that man is an eternal being that awaits resurrection after death. It is therefore proper that man’s body be laid under the solemn clods of clay as a symbol

of his awaiting resurrection and return to the endless cycle of life.

It is appropriate that the Masonic rituals of elemental trials begin with the candidate being placed deep within the earth. It may be interpreted as a symbol of his beginnings. When the profane candidate leaves the Chamber of Reflection, he is born anew and prepared to receive instruction as a tabula rasa or blank slate (Zeldis, 2008).

Air

The word wind is intimately related to the word spirit. It has already been mentioned that it was breath that made man a living soul. God breathed air into man's nostrils to make him a free moral agent, made in the likeness of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Arabic word *ruch* and the Hebrew word *ruach* are words meaning both soul and wind (Kaplan, 1990; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). Jung (1989) asserted that it was only natural for man to associate air with the soul, for life begins with a baby's first gasp for breath and ends with a man's last struggle to breathe. When a man breathes his last breath and the air leaves his body, his soul vacates the carnal clay vessel and transmutes to eternal reward or damnation.

Water

The second journey within Pike's ritual is the trial by water. In Western, alchemist, and Jewish thought, water has a deep rooted connection with creation, birth, and renewal (Rupp, 2005; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). The first two elements mentioned within the Christian and Jewish Bible are earth and water. In modern science, it is taught that life on earth began within the primordial ooze of the ancient oceans. The process of a mother delivering a baby is signaled by the breaking of her water. Through a study of ancient civilizations, it is found that the earliest societies developed on the banks of the fertile rivers of life: the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, and the Yellow Rivers; thusly, it might be suggested that water has always been a source of life and fertility to the human race (Kaplan, 1990; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998).

Water has played a vital part in the rituals of the world's major religions. Although much of the Christian world views baptism and ceremonial immersion as a rite isolated within their practice, *mikvah* is a ritual bath practiced in Judaism (Vorhand-Ariel). The Holy Scriptures of the Jews require followers to participate in a ceremonial immersion in order to purify themselves. Causes for such a requirement are varied but include women after childbirth or menstrual cycles, converts to Judaism, and the *Cohen Gadol* or High Priest before performing a ceremony representing the people (Vorhand-Ariel). Within the Muslim religion, practitioners are required to go through purification by water before prayer. It is thereby a safe assertion that the washing of the body in water is an ancient symbol of the purification of the immortal soul and the carnal vessel. Its use within the Craft is no different. The alchemist used water as a sign of transmutation and purification. Before setting to work, the alchemist prepared his tools and vessels by immersing and washing them in a bath of water (Vorhand-Ariel). Perhaps it is only fitting for the first degree of Freemasonry to purify and prepare a candidate for the Ancient Mysteries within a symbolic water baptism.

Fire

To the ancient Hebrews and to alchemists, fire was the most active of the elements. It was fire that served as a catalyst. According to Vorhand-Ariel (1998), "Heraclitus regarded fire as an agent of transmutation and as a symbol of renewal, representing light, spirit, the sun, radiance, and

purification” (p. 111). The alchemists used fire, as well as water, as a source of purifying their tools. The alchemist and metallurgist both used fire to refine metals and make them pure. It separates the base from the precious metal (Tramer, Volts, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007). Fire was used by them to transform a crude convoluted mixture into a separated collection of base and precious metals. “The *Zohar* says the flaming sword [referred in Genesis as being placed east of the Garden of Eden] symbolizes the trials with which God overwhelms man that he may be purified and restored to the way of goodness” (Vorhand-Ariel, 1998, p. 112). It might be mentioned here that the tiler’s sword was traditionally wavy in shape to represent the sword placed in the Garden of Eden (Lawrence, 1999; Mackey, 1927). As afore mentioned, fire is a symbol of renewal and has been since time immemorial. Perhaps one of the best images of this is the traditional phoenix. The phoenix is a mythical bird that after an extensive life combusts into flames and is reborn from its own ashes. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche (2003) wrote, “You must be willing to burn in your own flame: how could you become new unless you had first become ashes?” (p. 49). The ancients implemented a trial by fire perhaps similar to Pike’s variation of the Entered Apprentice degree. Perhaps it is a reminder to the neophyte that he must set aside or destroy his old image of life and self to receive the teachings of Freemasonry and become a new and better creature.

Conclusion

At the onset of this work, the question was raised concerning the inclusion of the classical four elements within the Entered Apprentice Degree in various ritual variations. The examination of this topic has transcended time passing through the studies of religion, philosophy, and history. In the study of the elements, the topic of alchemy repeatedly revealed itself. It has been illustrated how the discipline of alchemy dominated the religious, political, scientific, and social aspects of human existence. Tramer, et al. said of alchemy, “alchemy, an integral part of the medieval world-view, was doomed to death by the spirit of enlightenment well before its official death which coincided with the appearance of the modern chemistry of Lavoisier and Dalton. [Now] Only its phantom is still alive” (p. S5). It is most probable that a very prominent place where alchemy is still shining is within Freemasonry. The early speculative Freemasons came from the ages of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It is without question that these patriarchs of the Craft were knowledgeable in both denominations of alchemy and their relationship with the four classical elements. It is proposed, and hopefully supported, that sporadic mentioning of the four elements within the York Rite system and the blatant use of the elements within the rites of continental Europe are direct decedents from the reign of alchemy in pre-Enlightenment Europe. The early framers of the Craft, during the Renaissance, probably drafted the rituals to include the philosophies of spiritual alchemy that aligned with the spiritual needs and goals of the fledgling organization of Speculative Freemasonry.

¹ For other rituals, reference Arturo de Hoyos’ *Rituals of the Masonic Grand Lodge of the Sun Bayreuth, Germany*, Kessinger Publishing, 1997 and Hoyos and S. Brent Morris’ *Committed to the Flames: The History and Rituals of a Secret Masonic Rite*, A Lewis Publishing, 2007.

² Tramer, A., Voltz, R., Lahmani, F., Szczepinska-Tramer, J. (2007). What is (was) Alchecmy?, *Acta Physica Polonica A*, 112(Suppl.), S5-S18.

Elements			
Water	Fire	Earth	Wind/Air
Zodiac			
Aquarius	Leo	Taurus	Scorpio
Gospels			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Daniel's Vision			
Man	Lion	Ox/Bull	Eagle
Principal Tribes			
Reuben	Judah	Ephraim	Dan
Angels			
Raphael	Michael	Gabriel	Uriel
Alchemy			
Mercury	Sulfur	Salt	Azoth
Greek gods			
Neptune	Vulcan	Juno	Jupiter
Hippocrates 4 Humours			
Phlegm	Yellow Bile	Black Bile	Blood
Platonic Shapes			
Icosahedron	Tetrahedron	Cube	Octahedron
Colors (Pike)			
White	Red	Black	Blue

(Barbour, 1946; Pike, 1956; Rupp, 2005; Wells, 1947)

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**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JANUARY 2012**

MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION: ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

By: Richard E.Fletcher

Richard E. Fletcher, Past Grand Master of Vermont, served as Executive Secretary of the Masonic Service Association for 24 years, retiring at the end of 2011. In his position, he was the editor of The Short Talk Bulletin for nearly a quarter century and his selection of articles and treatment of editorial material has left a lasting impression on thousands and thousands of STB readers.

Shortly before his retirement, Walter R. Hoenes, Administrative Assistant to the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, interviewed MW Brother Fletcher and published an article, "Q & A with Dick Fletcher," in the Voice of Freemasonry magazine of the Grand Lodge of DC. This issue of the STB contains the words of MW Brother Fletcher, excerpted from the article written by W B Hoenes.

-STB Editor

Looking Back

During World War I, the Grand Lodges of the United States wished to show their support for our Armed Forces serving overseas. The Federal Government said we will not deal with 49 separate organizations, but if you can form one organization we will be happy to work with them. It didn't happen during World War I, but shortly after—MSA was formed in 1919. Our original purpose was to be a support organization for military personnel.

After that original formation in 1919 it became clear MSA was in a position to do things at a national level. So our Education/Publications, Hospital Visitation Program, and Disaster Relief all came into existence prior to 1923. These three programs have remained constant. We still publish the Short Talk Bulletin, we still visit Veterans in VA Hospitals, and we still put out Disaster Relief Appeals.

The major change during my time as Executive Secretary has been expanding MSA from a national to an international association. We became the Masonic Service Association of North America in 1995, which means that we now have Canadian Grand Lodges as members, as well as the York Grand Lodge of Mexico.

The MSA success story of which I am most proud is the creation of the Masonic Information Center and our ability to work with the media in communicating factual, accurate information about Freemasonry. We have also published material that has been extremely helpful to the entire Masonic community. The letters and emails we have received have been very positive and clearly indicate that what we have done has been useful.

The Masonic Information Center has responded to technology changes by having some of its material on the internet available for download.

Looking Ahead

MSA, like all organizations, must change to meet current needs. Very likely in the future, the Short Talk Bulletin will be delivered in a different format. I foresee that printing of the Short Talk will give way to electronic distribution. In fact, the whole future of printed material may very well change in format to electronic. The Short Talk Bulletin is one of the most popular publications put out by MSA. Today's generation of young men are looking for Masonic Education and that is what the Short Talk provides. The change may be in the format of how it is delivered to the subscriber, but the need for the Short Talk will remain very strong.

The future of the Hospital Visitation Program will depend on how the Veterans Administration approaches medical service to our veterans. With the end of the huge numbers of veterans who served in World War II and Korea, the Veterans Administration is going to be faced with fewer veterans in VA Hospitals. This will affect our Visitation Program.

It is very difficult to look ahead and see how the VA Healthcare System is going to transition to the time when there will be fewer veterans needing treatment. Very likely, the VA Hospitals will open up to a broader patient base and partner with other area hospitals. Some VA's now work closely with medical schools in their area. But, the Federal Government has a very real and a very firm commitment to providing medical care for our veterans and that will continue.

Grand Lodge Issues, Opportunities

The major stabilizing of membership that Grand Lodges and lodges must address is the ever increasing number of demits and NPD's. If we cannot present Masonry in such a way as to be attractive to our present members, then what will we do after we have attracted new members and brought them into the fraternity?

We have been fortunate lately with books and movies that have portrayed Freemasonry in a very positive manner—including Dan Brown novels and Nicholas Cage movies. They have generated great public interest and we must take advantage of that. In my opinion, the program that has done well is the concept of the "open house," where lodges within a Grand Jurisdiction will all, on the same day, open their doors to the general public, with members present to discuss Freemasonry.

Any Grand Lodge that has sponsored such a program has found it to be very successful. The public responds well and has a far more positive feeling about the fraternity after such an experience.

Unfortunately for Freemasonry, as for other mainstream organizations, several generations lost interest in any organization that was deemed to be "mainstream," resulting in membership losses throughout all organizations, including Freemasonry.

However, there has been an obvious societal change in the current generation. Today's young men are different and seem to be very, very interested in value-based organizations that show there is a deeper meaning to our lives than the concept of "what's in it for me."

The best way to present Freemasonry to today's young men is simply to be ourselves, to reflect what Freemasonry is truly meant to be and to become knowledgeable enough about the fraternity to be able to talk intelligently with prospective members.

The greatest challenge to today's Mason? To become more knowledgeable about the fraternity.

News Media Questions

We always have media inquiries, but the vast majority of them center around a news event, such as the release of a new book or movie or a negative story about a Mason involved in wrongdoing.

At one time, responses to the media were almost exclusively by telephone and occasionally by letter; today, it's almost all by email with some phone calls.

Depending on the nature of the story, the questions do follow a normal pattern such as a book or movie plot and the Mason's reaction to it, and of course—the negative, the Masonic reaction to a Mason accused of wrongdoing. The media seem obsessed with Masonic secrecy and, in many cases, their questions evolve around plots and conspiracies and secrecy. They invariably want to know what it is that Masons are really hiding.

The biggest misconception about Freemasonry is the conspiracy theory nonsense; particularly that Jews and Freemasons are in a plot to rule the world. Anti-Masonry has two forms: religious extremism and conspiracy theories. Both of these views have taken a firm hold in the minds of many people. Fortunately we have been able to confront these myths and outright lies and expose them for what they really are.

The biggest misconception about MSA is thinking we are a jurisdictional authority or a broad-based charity. We get many calls expecting us to settle quarrels or to have funds available for almost any use.

Advice, Wife, Personal Future

My advice to the new Executive Secretary is to say simply, "You now have an opportunity to work with some of the finest people you will ever meet. MSA has always been and must always be a support organization working with Freemasons and the Grand Lodges in North America."

My wife, Judy, has always played a very, very significant role at MSA. Her work ethic is outstanding and as one of our former Commissioners said to me: "Judy is the best public relations rep MSA has ever had." Judy works very closely with our MSA Hospital Reps all around the country and is a great promoter of MSA when we attend Grand Lodge sessions.

Our plans are to remain in the Washington, DC, area. We have been here for 24 years and have come to be very fond of the area. We have been made to feel very welcome, both by the Masons and their families, so we feel very much at home here.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, FEBRUARY 2012**

MASONIC INFORMATION CENTER

2011 ACTIVITIES

John Robinson, noted Masonic author, and founder of the Masonic Information Center, once said: “On National Public Radio one of the things that always amazed me was the reaction of people when they learned that the Masonic lodge in the town or city where they lived was, in many cases, older than the town itself. They just seem fascinated with this information.”

Thanks to the positive public reaction to several movies and books recently released, that the observation has proven to be very true. Many Grand Lodges are now holding special days in which all lodges in the Grand Jurisdiction are open to the public. When people go through the buildings and listen to comments from Masons prepared to talk to them they are, in many cases, reacting just the way John Robinson described. The *Lodge Open House* is one of the most positive actions taken by Freemasonry in recent years.

To those Grand Lodges who have started this practice please continue it and to those who haven't, you really need to give serious consideration to such a program. It has proven to be enormously successful in creating a more positive relationship with the community at large. In many cases, it has also resulted in inquiries about membership.

FREEMASONRY IN THE NEWS

As noted in the beginning of this report the concept of the *Lodge Open House* has proven to be very, very successful. The Masonic Information Center is supportive of this concept and we were able to show that support in a number of interviews with the media during the year 2011. Just for example, on Monday, January 31, 2011, *USA Today* featured an article centered around the open house program. In the article lodges in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire were mentioned as being part of the program.

On Thursday, November 3, 2011 *The Washington Times* ran an article, particularly pointing out activities by the Grand Lodge of Maryland and how successful the open house program has been in that jurisdiction. The article also quoted material from the Masonic Information Center report, *It's About Time*.

In a very wide ranging interview Peter Hebert discussed Freemasonry with the Masonic Information Center in a broadcast on his BlogTalkRadio show which aired in 3 parts in August 2011. In his introduction to this particular show Peter Hebert said:

Masonic Temples and Freemasons are in almost every city. This prerecorded segment of *On the Money* with Peter Hebert is titled “The Masons on Trial.” Who are the Freemasons? What is their past? Why so many conspiracy theories? This three part series consists of an exclusive interview with Dick Fletcher of the Masonic Service Association. The reason this interview was sought was the result of a former law professor, who asked if I thought the Masons were the behind the scenes hand that guided events including the financial crises. The question and answer format as well as the discussion is friendly, and

I have no concluding thoughts regarding Freemasonry other than what is in this interview and in the writings of high profile Masons.

FREEMASONRY AND RELIGION

The misunderstandings about the relationship between Freemasonry and Religion will always be with us. Some will always distort the meaning of that relationship to fit their own personal views. But it must be remembered: The only question of a religious nature asked of a potential member is—Do you believe in God? Or sometimes expressed as: Do you believe in a Supreme Being? How one chooses to believe is the business of the individual not of Freemasonry.

Let it also be known that while the Middle East continues to be a place of great turmoil, in that entire region the only place where the Christian, the Jew, and the Muslim can come together in peace and harmony is in a Masonic lodge.

This can happen because Freemasons are tolerant and respectful of each other's religious beliefs. To that end the Masonic Information Center has prepared a *Statement on Freemasonry and Religion* which has been published in our Annual Report each year since 1993. This Statement appears in its usual place—the inside back cover. Please take a moment to read it for a better understanding of the relationship between Freemasonry and Religion.*

TWAIN AWARD PROGRAM

During the Annual Meeting of the Masonic Service Association/Masonic Information Center, held in conjunction with the Conference of Grand Masters in February of each year, the Twain Award winning lodges are announced. The winners are then featured in the March Issue of *Focus* newsletter. That list is reprinted in this report together with the center page comments.

It is the practice of the Masonic Information Center to prepare a News Release to be sent to all local newspapers within the area of the Twain Award Winning Lodges. The News Releases explain the purposes of the Twain Award and list some of the accomplishments of the winning lodges.

We again prepared a bookmark listing the 2010 Twain Award Winners which was sent to each of the winning lodges.

Each year when a lodge enters the Twain Award competition they are sent a DVD titled *Tools, Tips, and Inspiration for Seeking a Twain Award* intended as a guideline for those entering the program. If you are interested in a copy of this DVD please contact the Masonic Information Center at 8120 Fenton Street, Ste. 203, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or email msana@ix.netcom.co.

We congratulate those lodges who won a Twain Award in 2011 and look forward to the 2012 program.

Well Earned Recognition 2010 Twain Award Winning Lodges

Listed below are the lodges, which in 2010 demonstrated high energy, fresh enthusiasm, new creativity and visible productivity in communicating a positive identity of Freemasonry within the lodge and throughout the greater community.

Alabama

Helion Lodge #1, Huntsville, Alabama

Arizona

Oasis Lodge #52, Tucson, Arizona

Kansas

Henri Lodge #190, Tonganoxie, Kansas

Maine

Bay View Lodge #196, East Boothbay, Maine

Massachusetts

John T. Heard Lodge, Ipswich, Massachusetts

Minnesota

Helios Lodge #273, Cambridge, Minnesota

Nevada

Boulder City Lodge #37, Boulder City, Nevada

New Hampshire

Benevolent Lodge #7, Milford, New Hampshire

New Jersey

Atlas Pythagoras Lodge #10, Westfield, New Jersey

New Mexico

Temple Lodge #6, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Sandia Mountain Lodge #72, Albuquerque, New Mexico

New York

Harmonic Lodge #699, Amherst, New York

North Carolina

Statesville Lodge #27, Statesville, North Carolina

Ohio

Tippecanoe Lodge #174, Tipp City, OH

Oklahoma

Sand Springs Lodge #475, Sand Springs, Oklahoma

South McAlester Lodge #96, McAlester, Oklahoma

Washington

Daylight Lodge #232, Seattle, Washington

SUMMARY

The Masonic Information Center continues to publish material that is factual and accurate about the fraternity. We have a number of brochures, especially the very popular *Who are the Masons* and the longer brochure *What's a Mason* currently available. These publications have proven to be very helpful to give to new members or those considering petitioning for membership. They are also very popular as handouts at county or state fairs. If your lodge is going to host an open house they are very valuable handouts as they contain information helpful to anyone with a question about the fraternity.

Your continued support of the Masonic Information Center will ensure that we are able to continue our work. We especially want to thank the Masons, Lodges, Grand Lodges and Appendant Bodies who, over the years, have shown great support for what we are doing. Thank you for your interest.

*Space limitations prevented this statement from being included with this STB. Please go to <http://www.msana.com> where the statement is posted.

- STB Editor

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, MARCH 2012**

HOW MASONS REACTED TO AN EMERGENCY

By William H. Koon II

With this issue of The Short Talk Bulletin, a new series of articles begins, featuring stories about Freemasonry in today's world. Upcoming issues will depict how the Masonic Fraternity has made a difference in the lives of people living in the 21st Century. Additional articles in the series will appear, from time to time, in months ahead. As the series continues, if you have a suggestion for a story, please contact the Masonic Service Association.

Worshipful Brother and Most Eminent Sir Knight William H. Koon II, who is active in leadership roles of numerous Masonic organizations at the local, state and national levels, is serving as Grand Master of the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar, of the United States of America.

-STB Editor

“Unsullied honor, unwearied zeal in a brother's cause and universal benevolence.”

These words are taken from the charge given to a Knight Templar after he has been knighted and as he is assisted from a kneeling position by the Eminent Commander of his Commandery. But the words, to me, are reminiscent of a story.

At a time long ago, in a land far away when the world was a simpler place, lived a man who only a few years earlier had joined the nearby Masonic Lodge and the local York Rite in a Midwestern community. That same year, impressed with what he encountered, he joined the Scottish Rite in a Valley some 75 miles away. This man was 36 years old, with a wife and a son of 16, and they lived on the family farm.

It was a warm spring evening. The man's wife was doing the supper dishes and had offered him another cup of coffee. Just then, the power went out. Since the radio had been broadcasting tornado warnings, the man hurried his wife and son to the basement so they would be safe. As they were going to the basement, they passed the back door of the home, which was suddenly illuminated by lightening, and for a brief moment the signature funnel cloud could be seen a half mile away.

Panic ensued and steps to the basement were taken two at a time, and they all found themselves sliding under the family pool table on the linoleum floor.

As they huddled there together, the world, as they'd known it, was about to crumble. Their heads nearly imploded from the vacuum created by the funnel cloud, and the room shook as the fireplace crashed in the basement some ten feet away. Suddenly, all was quiet, the air pressure returned to normal, and from under the pool table they ventured out to find devastation all around them.

On ascending the steps from the basement and walking through what had been their home, all was ruin. Outside the barns were gone, the cars were gone, and all that remained was a lone, battered John Deere tractor with one fender. Fortunately, it started, and with the Mom on

the lone fender, and the son riding the hitch and the Father driving, they made it the quarter mile to their nearest neighbor. The man went with the neighbor to check out other neighbors whose homes had been in the storm's path.

Remaining behind, the Mother and son saw flashlights flickering over where their home had been, and, walking the quarter mile back to the devastation, the Mother and her son discovered looters already at work.

With flashlight in hand, the Mother grabbed a pipe wrench from the hand of a tall, strapping youth, and asked, "What are you doing with this?" The young man answered that he had found it. She replied with a few colorful metaphors, that it had not been lost, and with another few descriptive adjectives suggested he leave.

The father found the remains of their next closest neighbor in the field behind their home, and her husband barely alive in the fence near their barn. That very day, the couple had celebrated 50 years of marriage. Fortunately, their large family, present the entire afternoon, had left before the storm and were safely in their homes. A few hours later, the Salvation Army arrived with coffee and sandwiches and was the first charitable organization on the scene.

When morning came, not much was left of what had been the family's home.

It was Monday morning—following Palm Sunday that year—and by 8 a.m., a man arrived on the farm driving a pickup truck with "Ohio Window Cleaning" on the door. He was a member of the Father's Masonic Lodge, and told him he thought he'd need something to drive and an employee in another vehicle took the visitor back into town.

He had promised to return with help later.

An hour later, another member of the Father's Commandery and a nearby Lodge, brought out a new travel trailer for the family to stay in so they could protect what was left of their belongings from looters.

Through the week, other Masons provided clothing for the family because all of their apparel had been impregnated with fiberglass insulation and was unwearable. Other Masons came with trucks to help load other belongings and move them to safety. Food was provided and necessary essentials to everyday life were attended to.

On Good Friday, and all through the Easter weekend, members of the Father's Lodge, his Chapter, Council, and Commandery descended on the farm in force. They tore the house down level with the ground floor, and roofed it over to provide protection for what was left of their belongings.

The Commander's wife spearheaded the roofing operation, taking over from her husband whose work was not to her liking. Other Masons and their children helped clear the fields of tornado debris. On Monday after Easter, another Mason came with his bulldozer and cleared the rubble which had been the barn and started burning debris and feeding the fire with his dozer. He spent a week at that farm until all had been cleared.

The date of the tornado was April 11, 1965. I was that 16-year-old boy. That young Mason was my Dad.

There was never a doubt as I approached my 21st birthday about whether I would join the Masonic Lodge. The only question was when did the Lodge meet in relation to my birthday. I was raised a Master Mason three months after that birthday, and knighted in Commandery one day after my 22nd birthday.

When my father returned his sword to its scabbard at the conclusion of that knighting, and grasped my hand, he said, "Arise Sir Knight Koon and with this hand receive a hearty welcome

into the bosom of an Order whose grand characteristics are unsullied honor, unwearied zeal in a brother's cause and universal benevolence.”

I knew why those good men had helped my family. I KNEW because they had REMEMBERED that charge.

That day, nearly 50 years ago, forever changed my life.

ALL of those good men who helped my family are now gone. I sincerely hope that when they passed behind the veil, they each received from the Grand Master of the Universe those welcome words, “Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” I hope they received their just due. To my thinking, they certainly deserved it. I also wonder if I would be where I am today had it not been for those good men. I have always felt I owed them a debt which could never be repaid to them, but rather paid to the Fraternity—a Fraternity which had touched them and molded them into better men than perhaps they would have otherwise been.

As I near the end of my term of service to the Knights Templar, from whence those touching words at the beginning of the article come, I wonder, “Have I done enough?”

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, APRIL 2012**

MOST EXCELLENT KING SOLOMON

By Dr. J. C. Montgomery, Jr

Most Worshipful Brother Montgomery served as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri in 1978-79. He is a Fellow and Past Master of the Missouri Lodge of Research, and former editor of the Royal Arch Mason International Journal and the Missouri Freemason. Recognized as an outstanding Masonic author, he holds a doctor of divinity degree from Central Methodist College and is a retired United Methodist Minister. This STB encompasses excerpts from an article, originally published in the Winter, 2011 issue of the Missouri Freemason.

-STB Editor

I wonder if you have ever had the experience of sitting through a degree or listening to the “same old, same old” ritual and all of a sudden a phrase, a word, even an action caught your attention in a new way. Now I don’t know how many Third Degrees I have witnessed or taken part in during my seventy-one years as a Master Mason, probably a good many. But it was the second section; the Lodge had become the theater. In the first act brave and steadfast Hiram ABI had lost his life. In the second act the scene is a Lodge room within the nearly finished Jerusalem temple; the officers have taken their stations, King Solomon is in the East. He addresses the Senior Warden. That officer responds:

“Most Excellent King Solomon.”

That moment jarred me. Ordinarily we address Grand Masters as “Most Worshipful.” The word “Excellent” is really found in the York Rite. Why should this be different? Hiram ABI, presumably a Grand Master from the Craft in Tyre, is not accorded that title. And then the deeper question came to mind. What was there that was “excellent” about Solomon anyhow? Why did the ritual develop in this way?

First of all, we should remember that our ritual (as we have it) is of English origin. The word “Excellent” is an honorific just like “Excellency” and in such usage was applied to royalty or nobility. Likewise the word “worshipful” is applied to certain offices. In this sense, it is certainly correct to speak of “Most Excellent King Solomon.”

Can we apply this to the man himself? But before we make any judgement it might be better to speculate how the ritual itself came to its present form. I use the word “speculate” because we really do not know the full story.

There may have been several reasons why the eventual ritual of the Master Mason degree, indeed the teachings of all degrees, became centered around the lessons of the Temple. The most obvious one is simply that the operative Masons were builders. It was not much of a stretch to see a link between the building of Solomon’s temple and the erection of the magnificent cathedrals. The operative Masons saw theirs as a holy calling, as did Solomon.

Everywhere in England, indeed also in Scotland and Ireland, there were the examples of

building, the cathedrals and the castles. And where better to look for building and the builders than in the stories about Solomon and the first temple in Jerusalem?

A second thought about the development of the ritual, especially the second section of the third degree: How would this teaching of the Fraternity be communicated? Obviously by lectures, or the one-on-one instruction of the apprentice by an older fellow of the Craft. But lecturing, even this, gets boring, and something more striking was needed. Beginning in the 1300's there developed in both England and the continent the community dramas known as the "mystery" or the "morality plays." In the research that I have done, the various guilds or workers associations each took part putting on different scenes, almost always of a religious nature. For example, the baker's guilds at York and Coventry always did a playlet depicting the Last Supper. The plasterers did the Creation. You would laugh to learn that the water-carriers did the story of Noah and the Flood, and the shipwrights the building of the Ark. Yes, the Masons had a part, but it was not the building of the temple, rather the coming of the Wise Men in the Christmas story.

There was, however, one play which had to do with the building of the Temple. It was called "Hiram's (Hiram's) Dream." It depicted the vision which Hiram the architect had for the Temple. Unfortunately as the Protestant Reformation prevailed in England and the plays were barred as being Catholic, that and many other manuscripts were lost or destroyed. Nonetheless a century and a half later the format of the mystery play found its way back in the legend of the Third Degree, the building of the Temple, and the appearance of the one we address as "Most Excellent King Solomon."

It may seem anti-climactic because this has been a long way back to the question, what was excellent about Solomon? Here I want to touch on some features of the king's life, trying to look at it with an historian's eye but a Mason's heart. It is difficult not to be "preachy," because the most of what we know comes from the Holy Scriptures, especially the First Book of Kings with echoes in Chronicles, the early historians Josephus and Eusebius, and some of the findings of modern archeology.

We should not forget that the Temple was an historic fact, that Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram the skilled craftsman were actual historical figures. It would not be surprising if across the nearly 3,000 years since they lived, legends and myths did not develop. Indeed they were the sort of leaders about whom stories would cluster. Parenthetically it should be noted that almost every culture has a story about a faithful workman who lost his life in the defense of his integrity. Small wonder that this found its way into Masonic teachings.

Nonetheless it is fair to say that Solomon and his reign represented both heights and depths of ancient Israelite history. Here I am indebted to John Kenneth Kuntz, a younger ministerial colleague in Missouri, who went on to a distinguished academic career as a professor of religion at the University of Iowa.

First, Solomon left a record of administrative achievements. Ignoring traditional tribal boundaries, he reorganized the nation into twelve administrative districts. These provisioned his court and served as a source of labor for his building programs.

Second, Solomon had a strong military policy. His military machine boasted 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen (I Kings 10:26). In modern terms we might call it "a quick strike force." He strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem and put military centers and cavalry posts around the nation's perimeter.

Again, Solomon pursued an active foreign policy; much after the custom of the time, it was through marriage. This was a custom of many nations even until modern times, except that in the

case of Solomon it seems to have been quite a harem. By marrying Pharaoh's daughter, Solomon secured the city of Gezer as part of her dowry. It served as a defense outpost for Israel. Because of his alliance with Tyre, Solomon could expand his architectural and maritime ambitions.

The nation had been primarily agrarian and pastoral. Solomon brought them into the world of commerce and industry. He established a trade program centered on the Gulf of Aqaba. He entered the caravan trade with the Sabeian kingdom of Arabia through the visit of the queen of Sheba (I Kings 10:1-10,13). We have heard of horse traders; Solomon became a middle man in the business of chariots from Egypt and horses from Cilicia, all of which passed through Israelite territory and presumably paid excise fees both ways.

Then, of course, there was Solomon's building program: a full administrative complex, a house for Pharaoh's daughter, a judgment hall, and "the house of the Forest of Lebanon," which was both an armory and the treasury. And our Masonic ritual gives us embroidered Biblical details of the Temple, not alone a place of worship but a symbol of imperial power. We may think of the three inner pillars designated Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty.

The final achievement of Solomon is that this was an age of enlightenment for ancient Israel. Open to the world of that day in material ways, it became culturally productive. Solomon fostered a court-centered wisdom movement. It is an exaggerated statement that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and composed 1,005 songs (I Kings 4:31-32) and that the Hebrew Scripture books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Solomon are attributed to him. Perhaps there is a Solomonic nucleus in the Proverbs.

By all of these criteria, the ancient king richly deserves the title of "Excellent," yet we know that for all of his achievements the reign of the powerful monarch sowed the seeds of the kingdom's failure. The grandiose programs drained the resources of the land. He had encouraged a social stratification which violated the Mosaic covenant which embraced all Israelites as equal before YHWH. He violated Torah by his foreign marriages and his tolerance of alien faiths.

Yet Solomon remains important for us as Freemasons. The lessons of the temple are not so much a narrative of history as they are an invitation to the kind of life we build and the faithfulness we show. Finally, in the drama of the second section Solomon keeps his word. But the real hero is not the king. Rather it is you, the faithful Mason, who learns and lives those lessons. As the line from the song, "The Impossible Dream," goes: "And the world will be better for this."

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, MAY 2012**

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES IN DEGREE WORK

By Thomas L. Winter

Right Worshipful Brother Winter is a Past Master of Eclipse Lodge #259 in the Grand Lodge of New Jersey. He is a Past District Ritual Instructor, and a member of the Education Committee and the Committee on Ritual for the Grand Lodge of New Jersey. This paper, fully titled, "Scripture Passages in the Three Symbolic Degrees: Their meanings as they relate to Freemasonry," was originally presented in 2011 at New Jersey's Masonic Literary organization, The Society of Saints John.

-STB Editor

ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

Psalm 133

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD command the blessing, even life for evermore."

It is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell or meet together in unity. This verse states that as brothers, we are joyful and at ease when we are meeting together. Brethren who are thus joined together receive the benefits of the goodness and pleasantness that unity produces. That is why we should yearn for this unity, because it is right, good and fitting and because it is lovely, attractive and appealing.

Verse 2 and 3 offer two examples of unity. Aaron was Moses' older brother and spokesman and was consecrated Israel's High Priest. The precious ointment or sacred oil used in the consecration ceremony was infused with many spices and aromatics thus giving off a very pleasant aroma and was only used in this one ceremony; that of anointing the high priest. A small amount of this precious oil was enough to drip from his forehead, through his beard and enter the cloth of his robe overpowering earthy aromas down to the bottom or skirt of his garment. If one were to smell that aroma again, it would bring back memories of a pleasant, happy ceremony.

The dew of Hermon would never have reached the mountains of Zion at Jerusalem as it is too far away. Thus, we must view dew as the giver of life in an arid region, symbolically. By comparing unity to dew, this togetherness was declared to be conducive to growth and prosperity. Dew is one of the sources of nourishment for strong and healthy plants. As such, unity promotes strong, healthy growth, and prosperity. Therefore, the Lord commanded that it is vital the brethren live in peace and happiness with each other. By extending the fellowship of a lodge we sense that Masonic brotherhood will never end.

FELLOWCRAFT DEGREE

Amos 7: 7-8

“Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the LORD stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the LORD, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.”

In construction, the plumbline tests whether what was erected is perpendicular to the square, that is, if it is straight up and down or upright. It provides a standard against which one can measure what he has built. Metaphorically, when God draws near with the plumb line, He is looking for those people who are living and abiding in His grace and His law. As Freemasons, we treat the plumbline as the emblem of truth and right.

God was very disappointed with the Israelites. He and He alone delivered the nation of Israel from Egyptian slavery to freedom. Through his many miracles, He continued to prove his love for His Chosen People, yet the Israelites continued to be stubborn and disobedient. On numerous occasions, God tried to bring his people back into fellowship with him but the Israelites always fell back into their bad behavior.

God chose to give Israel one more chance as the prophet Amos described God standing on a wall made with a plumbline. This wall represented the founding of the just and upright nation of Israel. However, the plumbline in His hand represents God’s strict view of the judgement He will use when judging His people’s inequities. Further by stating that He is setting the plumbline in the midst of His people, He is stating that He will be judging their actions not from afar but in their midst. There will be no mistake. God will be with them, viewing their behavior, determining their righteousness.

Plumbs, squares and levels are all used in building temporal edifices and must be accurate for the building to stay erect. As Masons, we are taught to use them symbolically to keep our moral building erect. The plumb is specifically used to judge our own moral work and the work of others. As Masons, we must judge our own work by our own plumbline, not using another's plumb. If our moral edifice is raised by our own plumb, square and level—in other words, our own moral standards—then the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe will favorably judge us.

MASTER MASON DEGREE

Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall how themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of none shall be brought low;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

One can safely assume that the author of Ecclesiastes is Solomon as the writer identifies himself as “the son of David, King of Jerusalem.” This verse takes more study than the others as its meaning for Masons does not come easily.

“*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them.*” This alludes to the fact that as we grow older, each of us fondly remembers the glorious days of our youth when all things were possible. With the hindsight of age and experience, advice is given to youth to gather the harvest while they are young. As we age, we change and are not able to enjoy things with the same lightness of heart, tasks that were easy in our youth take longer or are impossible to do.

“*While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened nor the clouds return after the rain*” refers to the beginnings of the aging process. Failing eyesight is one of the first signs of aging. Also, as we get older, the cloud and rain reference alludes to a longer period of rest and recuperation after activity.

“*In the day when the keepers of the house, shall tremble*” refers to the hands, arms and legs that tremble with age. “*And the strong men shall bow themselves.*” As we age, our spine contracts and as the result, we tend to stoop and are no longer able to stand tall. “*And the grinders cease because they are few,*” refers to tooth loss, common in old age. “*And those that look out of the windows be darkened,*” is another reference to failing eyesight. “*And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low,*” refers to hearing loss. The elderly no longer can hear the noisiness of life. “*And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird,*” means that a long period of sleep is no longer necessary and rising early becomes the norm. “*And all the daughters of music shall be brought low.*” Age brings on changes to the vocal chords making them thicker. The elderly voice is no longer melodious, sounding more guttural.

“*Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high.*” In youth, we easily scaled heights that in age, we are afraid to attempt. “*And fears shall be in the way.*” Elderly are often more timid and apprehension is a common trait. “*And the almond tree shall flourish.*” The almond tree's blossoms are white flowers which refers to our hair becoming white or gray as we age. “*And the grasshopper shall be a burden.*” In our youth, hope springs eternal. Farmers during the time of Solomon were fearful of a plague of grasshoppers. The effort to rebuild after a catastrophe is not that easy with the elderly. As we age, muscle tone is often lost and lifting even a small amount becomes an effort. “*And desire shall fail.*” In our youth, we often dream and have an expectation that some dreams will come true. As we age, we realize that our time is rapidly coming to a close. “*Because man goeth to his long home,*” refers to the grave. “*And the mourners go about the streets.*” Ancient people often had official mourners who made public proclamations about the deceased.

“*Or ever the silver cord be loosed,*” refers to the spinal cord. In age the muscles of the back can no longer support the body. “*Or the golden bowl be broken.*” The golden bowl refers to the human skull. The broken reference alludes to diminished mental capacity. Senility and Alzheimer's disease is common in the aged. “*The pitcher be broken at the fountain,*” or having the desire to urinate but being unable to do so. “*Or the wheel broken at the cistern.*” The wheel refers to the heart and the cistern refers to the blood in the body. If the wheel (heart) is broken, then the cistern (blood), the giver of life, can no longer circulate. “*Then shall the dust*

return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” The internment scripture passage that Masons use in the funeral oration is “*Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust.*” As the body decomposes, our earthly remains return to earth and our spirit is returned to God who gave it.

As the candidate for the Master Mason Degree hears *Ecclesiastes 12* he might conclude that this part of Master Mason Degree is very sad. This piece of scripture describes how the physical body ages and fails. Hopefully these accurate descriptions will make the candidate carefully consider the choices he made thus far.

While the passage accurately describes the deterioration of our physical “temple,” as we travel through life’s joys and tears, we must remember that our ending is the same as our beginning. The Lord created us, gave us His Commandments of Law and it is to Him that we return . . . which is the Final triumph . . . the one treasure in life that cannot be taken away.

Masonry encourages you to live your life properly. Brotherhood and the unity it provides make living worthwhile. Living a moral life not only creates a happy life but also is pleasing to our Great Creator. We are able to view old age as no longer being “the evil days,” but reminds us of the harvest . . . the love, the friendships, the experience and the fond memories . . . the true cornucopia of receiving “plenty.”

When our toils of Earth shall have ceased and all our chastening sorrows have been done away, may He raise us to the enjoyment of fadeless light and immortal life in that heavenly kingdom where faith and hope shall end and love and joy prevail forever. SO MOTE IT BE.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JUNE 2012**

“HIERARCHY OF NEEDS” AND MASONIC MEMBERSHIP

By Kevin B. Todd

Most Worshipful Brother Todd is currently serving as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge, F. & A. M., of Ohio. A native of Lakewood, Ohio, he is a graduate of the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics with an Associates Degree in Aerospace Maintenance, and of Kent State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree. He is a senior design engineer with the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corporation, where he designs aircraft components, tools, and manufacturing processes for civilian and government aircraft projects. He is an instrument rated private pilot. As part of his many Masonic activities, he served as Secretary of his Lodge and District Deputy Grand Master, before his initial appointment into the Grand Lodge Line of Officers.

-STB Editor

Masonry is like a large rock in the middle of a river. It stays in one spot with the river moving around and sometimes over it. Masonry had grown to its maximum size in the 1950's and has slowly receded (with a few exceptions) ever since. I have been asked more than a few times if I know why that happened. What did the Masons of the 1950's do differently than we do today to achieve those membership successes? What special programs did they offer to attract the quantity of good men that joined in those days? The simple answer is, "not much." As a matter of fact, there are more programs available to the Masons of today than existed 60 years ago. Masonry in those days was truly the benefactor of the changing times. To further the analogy, the rock in the river did not move or get any larger, but an island grew up around the rock in the middle of the river. In the times since then, the river has eroded that island to the point where the rock is itself in danger of erosion. What's the answer to this dilemma? Do we want to move Masonry (the rock) out of the mainstream to the quiet back water where it is no longer in danger of erosion? Do we harden and reinforce Masonry to be able to resist the erosion? Perhaps the course of the river (society) may change on its own to avoid our rock and thereby avoid erosion. There is no single easy answer to this issue. But whatever else we do, we must begin to understand the nature of the situation. What is going on in society that is causing a decline in membership of our fraternity? What is going on in the fraternity that affects the declines that we are feeling in our current environment?

One thing is for sure, Masonry is growing in areas outside of the traditional strongholds of our Craft. Is the next big surge in Freemasonry going to be in Eastern Europe or in China? And to understand why that is happening, you need to see what is happening in those societies. To better understand their environment, you need to know about the five levels of needs, known as "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs."*

1. **Physiological Needs:** These include the most basic of needs that are vital to survival, such as the need for water, air, food and sleep. These needs are the most basic and instinctive needs because all other needs become secondary until these physiological needs are met.

2. **Security Needs:** These needs include the need for safety and security. Security needs are important for survival, but are not as demanding as the physiological needs. These include the desire for steady employment, health insurance, safe neighborhoods and shelter from the environment.
3. **Social Needs:** These include the needs for belonging, love and affection. Relationships such as friendship, romantic attachments, and families satisfy the need for companionship and acceptance, as does involvement in social, community or religious groups.
4. **Esteem Needs:** After the first three have been satisfied, esteem needs become increasingly important. These include needs that reflect on self-esteem, personal worth, social recognition and accomplishment.
5. **Self-Actualization Needs:** This is the highest level of the hierarchy of needs. Self-actualized people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others and interested in fulfilling their maximum potential.

Do you recognize your own place or that of others in this hierarchy? You need to understand that you can move up and down this hierarchy with a changing environment too. And you can be at more than one level on different aspects of your life. As the river (society) changes, you will find yourself and others with new and different needs.

Just consider what happened in the middle of the 20th Century to propel the Fraternity of Freemasons to the level of membership that it achieved in the 1950's. Millions of good men were sent to war . . . for years . . . to secure the freedom of our world as we knew it. Their human struggle in those difficult times pushed them down on their hierarchy to at least the second level (Security Needs) if not the first level (Physiological Needs) for years at a time. They all came home to a world where they were at first 100% occupied with satisfying their Security Needs by getting employment and shelter. Once that was accomplished, they transitioned to the search to satisfy their Social Needs. Do you recognize the fraternal aspects of a Masonic Lodge here? It definitely fills the need for companionship and acceptance in a social or community setting, doesn't it?

So what changed? Society (the river) changed. In the 1960's government social programs were instituted that provided the basic security that was so missing when those millions of good men came home in the '40s and '50s. Then other avenues were available to men to fulfill the need for belonging and acceptance. Society was less accepting of groups fulfilling this need and it was more into the individual satisfying this need. Perhaps you remember the "dawning of the age of Aquarius?" The age of communication and the internet further advance this change by providing a sense of belonging to something larger and avoided the perceived downfall associated with personal contact and individual interactions.

So think about it for a moment. What exactly were you looking for when you joined your Masonic Lodge? Where did it fit into your hierarchy of needs? If you are an officer of your lodge or a district officer, why would you do that? How does that fit into your hierarchy of needs? When you joined your lodge, were you satisfying a Social Need? Then when you became an officer, did that move you up a step to a need for Esteem (things that reflect on self-esteem and accomplishment)? So what are you looking for next? Perhaps something that fulfills your need for personal growth and achieving your maximum potential?

What can make it all work again? We, as Masonic organizations, need to position ourselves in that river, this society, to take the best advantage of the ebb and flow of this environment. We

need to provide the resources for the good men looking to satisfy a need that will position them higher on the hierarchy of needs than they find themselves now. That is not simple or exclusive. We need to continue to attract good men to Freemasonry who find themselves at different levels on the hierarchy.

We are working hard to develop leadership training and programs to help good men feed their Esteem and Self-Actualization needs. That is all good. It is the right thing to do at this point. However, we need to do a better job of selling it. Reminding a good man that his grandfather was a Mason does establish a connection, but does nothing to create the desire . . . the need to join.

We need to work at publicizing those Masonic virtues and programs that emphasize those things that create, increase or improve self-esteem, personal worth, and social recognition and accomplishment. We need to maximize the exposure to our programs that concentrate on personal growth.

If we continue to concentrate on programs whose purpose is to satisfy Physiological and Security needs, then we can only expect those men to join us for whom those things are a concern. And our society provides ways to satisfy those needs outside of Freemasonry anyway. One of the most common things said about men not joining Freemasonry is that they are too busy with their occupations, their families, their community activities. I submit to you that those are the very men we would attract if we position Freemasonry in the right place for them. They are not turned off to Freemasonry. We have just not pushed the right buttons for them yet.

I am not saying we should give up on our programs that help meet the hierarchal needs for Security, Safety, or Social needs, but we do need to stress the higher benefits of being a Mason. We need to promote those aspects of Freemasonry that result in increased self-esteem and personal growth.

The future will arrive without help or direction from any of us. But if we take an active part in the world around us, we can have a tremendous impact on what the future has in store for us and for our families. We need to accept responsibility for what we do today, our own futures, the futures of our families, the future of our communities, the futures of our lodges, and the future of Freemasonry. The future of Freemasonry is up to you.

**Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology, proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation."*

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JULY 2012**

GEOMETRY AND THE DIVINE RATIO

By David R. Ritchie

The Reverend and Right Worshipful Brother Ritchie is serving as Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin and writes a regular column, "Thoughts for the Journey," for the Wisconsin Masonic Journal. He is a member of two Lodges in Wisconsin, is active in the York Rite, Scottish Rite and Order of Eastern Star, and is a member of the Shrine. Rev. Ritchie serves as pastor of Waldwick Community Church in Waldwick and also farms in rural Darlington.

-STB Editor

As Masons we have a special tie to geometry and often this tie is coupled with the divine.

Why do we as Masons see God's handiwork in mathematics? In the Fellowcraft charge we are told that geometry or Masonry is of a "divine or moral nature." Later in the same charge we are told that mathematics not only proves the "wonderful properties of nature" but that it also demonstrates the "important truths of morality."

In the beautiful "G" lecture, again from the Fellowcraft degree, we are told that through geometry we can "trace nature through her various windings" and find out nature's most hidden secrets. From the same lecture, we find that again, through geometry, we can discover "the power, the wisdom and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe." We can view with awe and delight the "proportions of this vast machine."

That sounds like a lot to expect out of geometry.

If you were like me, geometry was one of those classes in school that you needed to get through, but with the theorems, proofs and constructions, geometry was far from my favorite class. The only person who was ever excited was the teacher. So why as Masons are we so excited by geometry? Why do we view it as of a divine nature?

The answer is twofold. First, when Speculative Masonry was beginning in the late 1600s and early 1700s, man was unfolding the mysteries of nature and science at an unprecedented rate. This was the "Age of Enlightenment." The men of science and mathematics were looking to tie these new discoveries into their faith. The thing they rediscovered had been known to the ancient Egyptians, Romans and Greeks. The Oriental cultures had been using it for centuries. It was used extensively by the great minds of the Renaissance.

This discovery that seemed to tie everything together was a number, 1.618, which was represented by the Greek letter "phi."

This number, 1.618, is actually a ratio and is referred to as the golden ratio, the golden mean, the divine/golden section, the divine mean, or the divine proportion. There is a long equation and some in-depth math that explain the number, so I will let you look that up yourself. Dan Brown in his books talks about this divine proportion. The amazing thing about this number is where and how it shows up.

This divine ratio is found in architecture from the pyramids, statues, and tombs of Egypt, Chinese and Japanese temples and gardens, the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and the Empire State Building in New York. The most famous example, though, is the Parthenon in Greece. The building contains

hundreds of examples of this golden ratio throughout. The shape of the building is according to this ratio; the pillars, the space between the pillars, the statues that line the top, etc. . . all conform to the divine mean. The buildings rated as the most aesthetic worldwide are all examples of this ratio. So, as builders, we Masons should find this ratio intriguing, but where does the divine come in?

This same ratio is found in the way sunflower seeds align on the face of the flower, all the key features of a penguin, the branching of trees, the number of petals on a flower, the breeding of rabbits, plant growth, the alignment of the planets in our solar system, the chambers in a nautilus shell, and the arms in a spiral galaxy. The list of where this ratio appears seems endless.

The human face contains hundreds of examples of the divine ratio from our smiles to the distance between the eyes to the chin, etc. . . . The surprising thing is that the closer one's features conform to this ratio, the more beautiful or handsome the person is deemed. The further off this ratio, the more homely.

The human body contains thousands more. Policet's statue of Aphrodite, often deemed the masterpiece of feminine beauty; Botticelli's painting, "The Birth of Venus;" or the famous "Venus De Milo," by an unknown artist of Antioch, are all constructed almost perfectly with this ratio.

DaVinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Turner and Seurat all used the divine section to create their masterpieces of art. The keys on an organ or piano are laid out according to the ratio, the fingerboard on a guitar, musical scales, musical frequencies and most stringed instruments conform to the divine ratio.

The perfect shape for a musical amplifier is a rectangle which is based on this ratio.

A cross section of human DNA contains at least ten instances of the golden mean.

For the men of the Enlightenment the answer was obvious. Wherever God placed his hand, the number 1.618, phi, or the divine proportion, was left behind. Whatever the Grand Architect created—feathers on a bird, seeds in a flower or the arrangement of their petals, the beauty of the human face, the alignment of the planets and the stars themselves—the golden section was evident. Wherever the Grand Artificer of the Universe inspired, the Cathedrals and gardens, music, painting and sculpture, man was able to find this ratio.

Like an architect draws up his building, so the Grand Architect must have drawn up his plans for the flower, the nautilus shell, the human form, the planets, and the stars. God's beauty and blessing is reflected in geometry. To study the liberal art of geometry was to study the divine nature of all things.

Today, science has explained much of what was a mystery in the 1700s. The golden ratio is no longer held to be proof of God's existence or plan, but the sheer number of times it appears in things natural and man-made are staggering.

It is with little wonder why our brothers of this time found that by a study of this ratio, or geometry, "we discover the power, the wisdom and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe and view with delight the proportions which connect this vast machine."

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, AUGUST 2012**

SECRECY AND TRUST

By David J. Williamson

Right Worshipful Brother Williamson is Grand Chaplain Emeritus of the Grand Lodge of New York, having served as Grand Chaplain there from 1992 to 1998. He is currently a Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and serves as pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Hermitage, PA. He also was Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut for four years, during which time he wrote "The Grand Chaplain's Pulpit" for the Connecticut Freemason. As Grand Chaplain Emeritus, he continues to write "The Grand Chaplain's Corner" for New York's Empire State Mason. This article was taken from his column in the Fall, 2011 issue.

-STB Editor

I've been thinking about secrets lately.

On the one hand, as part of our initiation, we all obligated ourselves to never reveal Masonry's secrets. In fact, until 2004, the first of the Scottish Rite's degrees (the 4th Degree) was the "Secret Master" (and it retains that name and theme in the Southern Jurisdiction). We post a Tiler outside the doors of our meetings to ensure that our deliberations and degree work remain confidential.

But Masons aren't the only ones who have secrets. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (a/k/a HIPAA) made it very difficult for family, friends, and even clergymen to learn about when and why you're in the hospital or receiving medical care.

New members of Congress and state legislatures and town councils learn quickly that bills are really passed in "executive sessions" and cloakroom gatherings where compromises are reached, underlying agendas are addressed, and deals are made. Juries deliberate in secret. More and more churches have boards of elders (often hand-picked by the senior pastor) instead of congregational meetings.

On the other hand, it seems like our society values secrecy less and less.

I recently considered creating a Facebook page, and was horrified to discover how much personal information people routinely post on the internet for the whole world to see. Wikileaks has published government secrets with impunity. Jurors routinely give interviews to the press after a case is decided. Hackers steal tons of credit card and other personal data on a regular basis. "Sexting"—sending naked photos of yourself via email or text message—isn't limited to naive teenagers.

Aging KISS guitarist Gene Simmons and his longtime girlfriend Shannon Tweed's relationship counseling sessions with a therapist are on TV, or you can watch shows like "Billy the Exterminator" and see who has cockroaches in their homes. And our beloved Masonic rituals have been videotaped, passed around on the internet, and even broadcast on cable television.

What do we do about all this?

Historians tell us that in the early years of Freemasonry, someone published an exposé which included the passwords of the First and Second Degrees (this was before there was a Third Degree), and the brethren reacted by switching the two passwords.

Later, some of our brethren allegedly took the life of an alleged cowan named William Morgan for publishing the secrets of Masonry, particularly those of the York Rite. Many Grand Lodges at one time forbade the printing of our ritual, but commercial printers stepped in and met the “demand” of the brothers—I own several of these 19th and early 20th century cipher rituals. Shades of Orwell’s 1984 are popping up everywhere as more and more people suggest that privacy is rapidly becoming an old-fashioned notion.

There are up sides to this trend, to be sure.

I prefer to have fewer back-room deals and more transparency in how governments, corporations, charities, lodges, and grand lodges are run. A lack of secrecy exposes the real values of our elected and appointed leaders—which are often very noble, but more complicated than what they can usually fit on a campaign bumper sticker.

Closely tied to that idea is the notion that a lack of secrecy promotes participation—just think of how many of us ask questions of our doctors and participate in making our own healthcare decisions since *Reader’s Digest* and the internet made medical information so easy to find and understand.

And a lack of secrecy promotes excellence. How many Worshipful Masters would list “business” as the agenda for the next lodge meeting if they knew that prospective petitioners would learn that’s all the lodge really did? Consider how much more you’d probably give to the Masonic Brotherhood Fund or put in the church offering plate if you knew that everyone else would soon learn how much you give!

But if anything, the Masonic lessons of secrecy are more important than they were in years gone by.

I’m not talking about passwords and grips and signs. They, like the Tiler on guard at the outer door, are symbols.

They remind us that every man needs trusted brothers in whom he can confide his doubts, his struggles, and his challenges.

Every one of us needs someone who can “whisper good counsel” in our ear. Life is more complicated than it’s ever been, and to cope with the confusion (intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual), we don’t need gossips; we need true friends. As the world becomes more and more disconnected, we need each other.

The Bible understands this situation.

In the book of Deuteronomy, the author says, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God.” And in Psalm 51, the writer says, “Teach me wisdom in my secret heart.” What are they talking about?

Jesus gives us a good clue in his Sermon on the Mount: “Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street comers, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:5-6 NRSV).

We’re becoming a more transparent society every day, thanks to forums like C-Span, Facebook, the blogo-sphere, and the TSA. Like the early days of the telephone and email, this transparency is providing new opportunities and new relationships and new challenges for all of us.

But you and I aren’t perfect, and this new transparency tends to magnify our shortcomings.

So we need to draw near to God, to our families, and to our friends, and know that we have someone we can trust with our lives, our reputations, our struggles, and our dreams. Masonry calls us, now more than ever, to be that trusted brother to our fellow Masons, to our wives, to our

children, and to our parents.

Putting our trust in God, we can be assured that our faith is well-founded.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. What do you see as the true “secrets” of Freemasonry?
2. What special secrets of Freemasonry are discussed during your Lodge meetings?
3. What is the value and importance of having and keeping Masonic secrets?

(Thanks to Dan Hrinko, Worshipful Master of Arts & Sciences Lodge in Ohio, for this month’s “Questions.”)

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, SEPTEMBER 2012**

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS: REFLECTIONS ON AN OBLIGATION

By John R. Hartsock

This is the second Short Talk Bulletin in the periodic series, featuring stories about Freemasonry in today's world. There are actually two stories in this STB. Each story in the series will depict how the Masonic Fraternity has made a difference in the lives of people living in the 21st Century. Additional articles will appear, from time to time, in months ahead. If you have a suggestion for a story, please contact the Masonic Service Association. Right Worshipful Brother Hartsock is a Past District Education Officer and Past District Deputy Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of Ohio. He is serving as Secretary for Madison Lodge #221 in West Jefferson, Ohio.

-STB Editor

As the Executive Officer of the University Police Department at The Ohio State University, I recently had the sad and difficult duty of handling the funeral arrangements for a fellow officer, friend and Brother Mason killed in the line of duty, Officer Michael Blankenship, a member of Westgate Lodge #623.

During the course of that difficult task, I was reminded of one of our important obligations as a Master Mason—one that we tend to take lightly at times, but one that is a fundamental precept of our order. It was the source of that reminder that made it so striking, for it appeared without warning and was totally unexpected.

As is usually the case at a police funeral, an Honor Guard was posted during viewing hours at the funeral home. As supervisor of the Honor Guard and family liaison officer, I had just completed changing the guard on the casket and was walking through one of the numerous small rooms in the funeral home. I observed a young girl sitting by herself in a corner crying so hard that her entire body was shaking.

I approached her and holding out my hand, asked whether I could help her. She looked up at my uniform, then took my hand in hers and turned it over so that my ring was visible, then said, "You're a Mason!" and jumped to her feet and hugged me. After she composed herself, she explained why she had hugged me, and it is THAT story that we as Master Masons need to hear.

The girl is tiny, maybe 4'10" tall and 85 pounds soaking wet, just 17 years old and a Freshman at Ohio State. She is from a small town in Tennessee; her father was a Master Mason and was killed in an accident when she was 11.

Every month since his death, someone from the Lodge has contacted her family to assure that they were doing well. Sometimes it was in person, sometimes by telephone. When visits were made in person, she would notice that many times another man or men would arrive within a couple of days to fix something on the house. As she and her younger brother grew, she noticed that many of her teachers and businessmen in the town were always interested in how the family was doing and "did she need anything." She came to recognize that all of them were Masons.

When she got ready to leave for college, she received an envelope containing 10 new \$100

bills, with a note enclosed saying “This is to help with expenses not covered by your scholarship.” She doesn’t know where the money came from other than it is from her father’s Lodge.

Officer Blankenship taught Women’s Self-Defense classes for students, staff and faculty as part of his job with the Police Department. This girl had been one of his students.

Before taking the classes however, she had called her Mother and asked her to sign a permission form (since she was not yet 18). Her mother was reluctant, fearing she might be injured due to her small size. “It’s OK, mom. The instructor, Officer Blankenship, is a Mason,” she said on the telephone. The discussion was ended with an approval.

She had completed taking her last class of self-defense course from “Officer Mike” less than an hour before he was killed.

“I will aid and assist all worthy distressed Master Masons, their widows and orphans.”

In less than 10 minutes, I was taught the real meaning of that phrase by a small Lodge somewhere in Tennessee, through the mouth of a 17-year old girl, whose last name I don’t even know. I gave her my business card with both work and home telephone numbers and instructions to use it if she had any problems or needed help. I gave her a second card to be sent to her mother.

The full meaning of what she told me didn’t really hit until the next day. Long hours and high stress slow down the thinking processes. When it did hit, it was like a ton of bricks—she by example, posed the question, “Have you met and are you meeting your obligations to your widows and orphans?”

All I can ask, my brethren, is that each us reflects on that question, then act accordingly.

Moist Eyes

By Pete Martinez

Right Worshipful Brother Martinez is a Past District Deputy Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of Texas, and has been very active in the Texas Lodge of Research, serving as Master and Webmaster He is also a Past Master of Tyler Lodge and Canton Lodge.

-STB Editor

I was working the Texas Department of Transportation fair booth at the East Texas State Fair in 2000. It was senior citizens day and the “old folks” (I can say that because I am one) were passing by.

I was standing behind a gondola of give-a-way items when a man spotted the Square and Compasses on my lapel. He smiled real big and came around behind the gondola and stuck out his right hand. He gave me “that certain friendly grip” and I asked him what Lodge he belonged to. He just kept on smiling and said nothing.

After a couple of more questions with the same results, his wife walked up and told me he had Alzheimer’s and couldn’t remember what Lodge he belonged to or even where he was at the moment. But the Square and Compasses triggered something in his mind and he knew what to do about it.

My eyes still get moist when I think about it.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. R.W. Brother Hartsock poses a powerful and challenging question, “Have you met and are you meeting *your* obligation to our widows and orphans?”
2. Our obligations contain many important responsibilities beyond those illustrated in this example. What examples have you seen of brothers meeting their obligations in their daily lives?
3. What opportunities are available to us to fulfill our obligations?
4. What can we learn from the example set by our brother with Alzheimer’s, who still recognized the commitment he made to the Fraternity?

(Thanks to Dan Hrinko, Past Master of Arts & Sciences Lodge in Ohio, for this month’s “Questions.”)

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, OCTOBER 2012**

DOES FREEMASONRY WORK POLITICAL MIRACLES?

By John Melius

Much political debate has been occurring across America in recent months. While Freemasonry does not get involved in politics, individuals do become active. Does Masonic experience impact how an individual citizen reacts in the political arena? This article addresses the issue.

Brother Melius, a member of Potomac Lodge #5 in the District of Columbia, is a 33rd Degree Mason. He is a professional artist and accomplished a large number of paintings and portraits on display at the House of the Temple in Washington, the headquarters for the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction.

-STB Editor

My introduction to Freemasonry was unusual. As an artist working with the U.S. Capital Historical Society, I was commissioned to do a painting of George Washington laying the cornerstone of the U.S. Capital. Since this was a key Masonic event performed by our Founding Fathers, I did months-long, in-depth research into Masonic rituals of that period to be historically correct, and I was able to do that even though I wasn't a Mason.

That research on past Freemasons and meeting impressive gentlemen who were current Freemasons made me ask how I could become a Mason. I became a Mason because it was clear in my research that Freemasonry played a powerful role in creating the highest moral ideals that led to the political compromises that established the checks and balances which help to unify our country into a nation.

What was not clear was how Freemasonry accomplished this political miracle. A recent book, [The Righteous Mind Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion](#) by Dr. Jonathan Haidt, helped me to understand the psychology of men and men working together in groups, and how Freemasonry can change their moral values to work together better.

Dr. Haidt's decades-long research on morality has yielded surprising and interesting insights. Inadvertently, his book also helps us understand the extensive and undervalued impact of Freemasonry on Western Culture, and on the United States of America.

Sampled data shows that our moral judgments arise automatically, instantaneously and long before we can reason out our judgments. Our morality is formed by our innate and evolved intuition and shaped by social learning mostly by the people that we trust in childhood. Moral judgments are more reflex than reason. However, through a trusted institution like Freemasonry, we can work through our reasoning and our faith to hone and shape our moral values.

The book provides data that also has surprising insights into the differences between conservative and liberal moral values (judgments), which are the cause of long-term distrust between them. When distrust becomes intense, political paralysis is inevitable.

Dr. Haidt's test data reveals six fundamental moral values, which form the basis for our moral judgments. They are: 1 caring (or charity); 2 fairness (or equal opportunity); 3 loyalty;

4 authority; 5 sanctity; and 6 liberty. Liberty was found to be valued more or less equally by both liberals and conservatives. It is noteworthy that liberals and conservatives do not equally esteem the other five values.

Change is inevitable. How society deals with change is the question that all politics and governments must handle to be successful. Perhaps the differences between conservative and liberal valuations stem from their differing desires regarding change. When conservatives and liberals basically disagree on the moral values for changing or maintaining the status quo, there can be little hope for compromise.

Enter the brilliance of Freemasonry. It helps conservatives and liberals appreciate and respect all six moral values. By building an appreciation for all six moral values, Freemasonry helps to build mutual respect and deep lasting friendships between conservatives and liberals in a neutral trusting environment.

Freemasonry is often misrepresented as a secret society. Freemasonry is a well-known society that is not secret, but rather uses secrets to build trust between its members. Trust between Freemasons and trust of Masonic rituals are critical elements in the success of Freemasonry.

Through the trust gained by sharing the experience of Masonic degrees, lectures and civil discourse, the moral value of loyalty is developed. Respect for the moral value of authority builds with the trust that is earned by every member as he responsibly performs increasingly authoritative roles within the lodge. The moral value of sanctity is developed through Masonic lectures, which endow ideas, objects, and events with infinite value to help bind Masons together as a more unified group.

Freemasons are all equal voting members within the organization with equal opportunity to rise to any office. The moral values of fairness are featured so prominently within the lodge that Masonic concepts have become common American expressions such as “on the level” and “on the square.” The importance of charity as a moral value is demonstrated by many Grand Lodge, Scottish Rite, York Rite, Shrine and other charitable programs. Freemasons swear to help other Freemasons in need thus providing a trusted basis for caring.

There is a psychology of how individuals change when interacting within groups. We are all naturally selfish individuals who are inclined to form groups to work together for a common good. Dr. Haidt notes that individual altruistic behavior within groups has long been compared to “beehive” activity, which produces extremely rewarding individual life experiences.

Interestingly, the beehive was a major sacred symbol within Freemasonry as it was developing during the 18th century while helping to create the Enlightenment. Many of the rituals and ideas that were developed then are still in practice today.

The physical performance of Masonic rituals also helps to create psychological cohesion and trust. A “regular” Lodge builds trust through the physical participation of its members. Trust is psychologically enhanced by larger attendance. Masons follow traditional rules of order during lodge meetings that build strong leadership skills as well as strong civil discourse. Masonic ritual is full of trust-building psychological activities.

Something as simple as having each member wear an apron is psychologically powerful in its effect on unifying diverse individuals.

The similarities between Masonic rituals in different jurisdictions also allow strangers to visit new Masonic lodges and be welcomed as part of a local group. These psychological tools

make Freemasonry a hotbed for creating excellent executives, legislators, judges, and businessmen. In the process of memorizing rituals and moral lessons in a meaningful way, everyone memorizing this material “retrains” his own reflex moral values to some effect.

How we handle change is our only real choice in government. As a nation, should we care about the psychological changes that Freemasonry brings to our culture? History answers that question best!

When the United States had a high number of Freemasons per capita in the 1940s and 50s, we had political compromise and cooperation through which we won World War II, developed the strongest economy and physical infrastructure in the world, created the broadest reaching and most successful education system in the world, among many other significant accomplishments. Coincidence?

On the other hand, when we had a low number of Freemasons per capita, we had the American Civil War, with massive confrontation and destruction. Coincidence?

And what about today? We have seen several decades of membership decline in our Fraternity with a parallel decline in civility between our politicians. Coincidence?

Freemasonry, I believe, is a powerful, effective influence for bringing about positive developments in governmental, social, economic, and individual performance. Freemasonry prepares members for contributing to society through its rituals, lectures, and civil discourse to develop trust in the high moral values between men of good intentions.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. How have the 6 moral values listed in this article been part of your personal Masonic experiences?
2. How can your Lodge further emphasize these moral values in the way the ritual is exemplified, candidates taught, and in the activities of the Lodge in the community?
3. How is trust in others, particularly Brother Masons, an important part of working together for making improvements in the world around us?

(Thanks to Dan Hrinko, Past Master of Art & Sciences Lodge in Ohio, for this month's "Questions.")

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, NOVEMBER 2012**

BEN FRANKLIN MEETS VOLTAIRE

By Larry Jacobsen

Brother Jacobsen is a Past Master of Shiloh Lodge #327 in Omaha, Nebraska, and a 33rd Degree Mason. He is a member of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska Education Committee and editor of the quarterly "To Light" Masonic education publication. He is a professional architect.

Brother Jacobsen is the chair of the Scottish Rite Valley of Omaha's Ethics Initiative, which funds an Ethical Literary program for selected public schools in Omaha and also an internal program on ethics in the Valley of Omaha—making the connection between lessons of the ritual and 21st Century ethical issues and dilemmas.

-STB Editor

“So what?” you might ask. An American diplomat encounters a French philosopher, both well known and renowned in their respective endeavors. But it was Freemasonry that brought these two iconic figures together, and that makes the encounter all the more interesting.

Ben Franklin we know quite well, not only as a Mason, but as an 18th Century Renaissance man—writer, inventor, scientist, media baron, and one of early America's most respected political leaders. Walter Isaacson, author of *Benjamin Franklin—an American Life*, provides a thoroughly researched chronicle of Franklin's life, particularly Franklin's lengthy tour of duty in France as a diplomat seeking the support of the French in the American colonies war with England.

Voltaire is equally in the pantheon of history's intellectual elite. He was a Mason and revered among his contemporaries—a French Enlightenment writer, historian, philosopher and known for his advocacy of civil liberties, including freedom of religion, freedom of expression, free trade and separation of church and state.

Franklin and Voltaire were, as Walter Isaacson described, “soul mates—both were aging embodiments of the wit and reason of the Enlightenment, playful yet pointed parodists, debunkers of orthodoxy and pretense, disciples of deism, tribunes of tolerance, and apostles of revolution. That the two should meet seemed predestined.”

While in France, Franklin paid his first visit to Voltaire in 1778 as a ceremonial gesture asking Voltaire to give his blessings to Franklin's grandson Benny Bache. Later that year they appeared together at the Academic Royale and gave each other a French embrace, wildly acclaimed by the audience. Voltaire by this time was 84 and ailing and would die within a month.

Lodge of the Nine Sisters

And so we come to the Lodge of the Nine Sisters. This was a Parisian lodge whose name refers to the nine muses of the arts and sciences from Greek Mythology. This lodge evolved from a traditional businessman's social club into a movement led by the philosophers and other

freethinkers who challenged the orthodoxy of both the church and the monarchy. Its membership boasted important thinkers, artists, scientists and statesmen.

It was formed in 1776, and in 1778 Franklin and Voltaire joined the Nine Sisters Lodge, Franklin went on to become Venerable Master of the Lodge from 1789-1791, a tribute to his reputation among the French intellectual society.

This lodge was also influential in organizing French support for the American Revolution, so the organization provided Franklin with influential supporters and enjoyable evenings. But, as Isaacson noted in his book, it was risky. Both the king and the clerics were wary of this renegade lodge and of Franklin's membership in it.

Exacerbating this situation, Voltaire, on his deathbed waved off priests seeking to give him last rites, and at his memorial service in November 1778, some influential friends thought it wise to avoid the service, but Franklin not only attended, but also took part in it. Isaacson's research provides a rare glimpse into the Lodge of the Nine Sisters and Voltaire's memorial service:

The hall was draped in black, lit only dimly by candles. There were songs, speeches, and poems attacking the clergy and absolutism in all forms. Voltaire's niece presented a bust by Houdon (Houdon, a member, also did a bust of Franklin for the lodge, which is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.) Then a flame of light revealed a grand painting of the apotheosis of Voltaire emerging from his tomb to be presented in heaven by the goddess of Truth and Benevolence. Franklin took the Masonic wreath from his head and solemnly laid it at the foot of the painting. Everyone then adjourned to the banquet room, where the first toast included a tribute to Franklin—"the captive thunder dying at his feet"—and to America.

Louis XVI, though partial to the Masons and who may have actually been a Mason, was somewhat annoyed by the Lodge of the Nine Sisters and sought to have the lodge expelled. After some months of deliberations, the Lodge of the Nine Sisters reorganized itself and Franklin took over as Venerable Master. He later would induct many Americans into the Lodge including naval warrior John Paul Jones, the spy Edward Bancroft, and Franklin's own grandson Temple.

All this was part of the much broader political soup that preceded the French Revolution, during which Louis XVI would meet the guillotine along with countless influential acquaintances Franklin made during his years in France.

Like the Masonic symbols that enlighten us to a higher understanding of ourselves and our relationship with others, the Franklin/Voltaire encounter is also a symbol—a symbol of the fruit that flourishes from dialogue on important ideas. Both Franklin and Voltaire had been given a gift for communicating and acting on ideas so relevant to their time, but can also translate to all time. We are now removed from their encounter by more than 230 years, and yet their ideas resonate as strongly as ever with us today.

Franklin carried the banner and led the life of middle class values. Those virtues included diligence, honesty, industry and temperance. As for civic virtues, it was Franklin who helped create the social order that promoted the common good.

And as for Franklin's view of religious tolerance, Isaacson noted, "it was in fact no small advance for civilization in the eighteenth century. It was one of the greatest contributions to arise out of the Enlightenment, more indispensable than that of the most profound theologians of the era."

Voltaire, though operating at a higher philosophical level, coined phrases that one might mistake for Mark Twain and would be relevant openers for discussion anywhere today:

- “What we find in books is like the fire in our hearths. We fetch it from our neighbors, we kindle it at home, we communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all.”
- “Love truth, but pardon error.”
- “It is dangerous to be right in matters where established men are wrong.”
- “Opinions have caused more ills than the plague or earthquakes on this little globe of ours.”
- “I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition.”
- “Let us read, and let us dance; these two amusements will never do any harm to the world.”
- “Man ought to be content, it is said; but with what?”

So What?

So it is with a slight degree of envy that we reflect on the meeting of these two unique characters from the past. They will forever live in the realm of recorded history.

The recent movie *Midnight in Paris* by Woody Allen comes to mind. A young writer seeking to find his own way in the world is magically transported back in time amidst Hemmingway, Stein, Picasso and other great creative thinkers, writers and artists of the past. There was the momentary illusion that life different from his own is better, but the young writer quickly recognizes that his life is his because of the here and now, good or bad, and he leaves inspired and confident of his place in the world.

So where do we go to revive that spirit of Franklin and Voltaire in the 21st century?

Try a Masonic Lodge meeting, but with a twist. After concluding the necessary protocols, gather together and pose a question, perhaps Voltaire’s “Man ought to be content, but with what?” and let the discussion grow.

The biggest problem may be calling an end to the discussion. The ideas discussed will not likely transform the world, but an open discussion of virtues and values will likely transform an individual—or two—or three . . . and maybe the entire culture of the Lodge.

We don’t live in the past. We don’t even live in the present—that just transferred to the past when you read it. We live for the future and we have so much to do, and there are just not enough venues like a Masonic Lodge to grow that spirit of communicating and living your ideals.

Isaacson noted that Franklin did not embody each and every transformative ideal, but he did embody the most practical and useful ones. The Mason’s working tools are a good start, and a noble one at that.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Are there people you have met, who, like Franklin and Voltaire, discuss ideas and bring Light to those around them?
2. How can your Lodge imitate the example of the Lodge of Nine Sisters and discuss ideas, beginning with those ideas embodied in the symbols and lessons of Freemasonry, to bring further Light to the Lodge and everyone in attendance?
3. How can the discussion of ideas turn into plans, and those plans turn into actions, and those actions improve the man? . . . improve the Lodge? . . . and improve the world around us?

(Thanks to Dan Hrinko, Past Master of Arts & Sciences Lodge in Ohio, for this month's "Questions.")

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, DECEMBER 2012**

A TIME OF MIRACLES AND WONDER

By Bruce R. Bellmore

The author is a member and twice Past Master of Hiram Lodge #1, the oldest Lodge in Connecticut, founded in 1750. He has served the Grand Lodge of Connecticut as District Deputy, Grand Lecturer, and Grand Chaplain. He has presided at the state level of all three York Rite bodies and is a Knight of the York Grand Cross of Honor. Brother Bellmore is a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite member, among many other Masonic accomplishments. He and his wife, Patricia, met while she was a Rainbow Girl and he a DeMolay. They have been married 35 years. Brother Bellmore is an ordained priest in the Anglican Catholic Church and currently serves as Archdeacon (Senior Priest) in the Diocese of the Resurrection, which serves New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New England. He wrote this article for the Connecticut Freemasons publication, while serving as Grand Chaplain in 2011.

-STB Editor

When I was in elementary school, one of my best friends was Joel Friedlander. In our class of 30, only Joel, myself, and Calvin White did not attend Wednesday Catechism taught by the nuns from St. Paul's Church. I was an Episcopalian, Calvin an African Methodist Episcopalian, and Joel was Jewish.

It caused a lot of pain for the three of us, as the nuns would tell the other children to avoid us and would repeatedly bless themselves and cross to the other side of the hall when we approached. (I wonder what the nuns would think to learn I had become an Anglican Catholic Priest!) While it caused us pain dealing with the nuns and the other children, it helped the three of us bond together and to acquire an appreciation of each other's culture and faith.

During this time period, we always celebrated Christmas in our school but we paid very little attention to Chanukah. Among the dozens of decorations depicting Santa Claus, the manger scene, and angels, we had only one small picture of a menorah. We didn't even discuss it and the only thing my first grade teacher, Miss Boyle, told us was that it was a Jewish religious "thing."

My friend Joel's parents had decided by the time we reached 3rd grade that he should attend a Hebrew School in the city and he and I lost touch. I was sorry that he moved but happy that he could go to a school where he would be appreciated for who he was and not be bullied and rejected for his faith.

Chanukah is a minor Jewish celebration of rededication, also known as the festival of lights, and is an eight-day festival beginning on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev. Its occurrence coincides during the same period as the Christian observance of Christmas, which unfortunately causes many non-Jews to think of it as a sort of "Jewish Christmas."

It is ironic that this celebration, which in our country has been commercialized with many of the trappings of Christmas including elaborate gift-giving and even Chanukah stockings, was originally a celebration of a Jewish revolution against assimilation and the repression of the Jewish religion. We read on the website, <http://www.jewfaq.org>:

The story of Chanukah begins in the reign of Alexander the Great. Alexander

conquered Syria, Egypt and Palestine, but allowed the lands under his control to continue observing their own religions and retain a certain degree of autonomy. Under this relatively benevolent rule, many Jews assimilated much of Hellenistic culture, adopting the language, the customs and the dress of the Greeks, in much the same way that Jews in America today blend into the secular American society.

More than a century later, a successor of Alexander, Antiochus IV was in control of the region. He began to oppress the Jews severely, placing a Hellenistic priest in the Temple, massacring Jews, prohibiting the practice of the Jewish religion, and desecrating the Temple by requiring the sacrifice of pigs on the altar.

Two groups opposed Antiochus: a basically nationalistic group led by Mattathias the Hasmonean and his son Judah Maccabee, and a religious traditionalist group known as the Chasidim, the forerunners of the Pharisees (no direct connection to the modern movement known as Chasidism).

They joined forces in a revolt against both the assimilation of the Hellenistic Jews and oppression by the Seleucid Greek government. The revolution succeeded and the Temple was rededicated.

According to tradition as recorded in the Talmud, at the time of the rededication, there was very little oil left that had not been defiled by the Greeks. Oil was needed for the menorah (candelabrum) in the Temple, which was supposed to burn throughout the night every night. There was only enough oil to burn for one day, yet miraculously, it burned for eight days, the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of oil for the menorah. An eight-day festival was declared to commemorate this miracle. Note that the holiday commemorates the miracle of the oil, not the military victory: Jews do not glorify war.

Christians celebrate the coming of the Messiah or Savior on Christmas. While the actual birth date of Jesus is unknown (most historians place it sometime between 7 BC and 2 BC) this observance in December is believed to have been chosen to coincide with the Roman Winter Solstice or other pagan winter festivals.

While the holiday has been secularized to the point of overwhelming greed and avarice, the holiday was set aside by the early Church to commemorate the miracle of the birth of the Messiah foretold by the Jewish prophets— a birth of one who would bring peace and goodwill to all the earth.

Most of the problems we face in the world and in our communities are based on ignorance and intolerance. We fear and reject that which we don't understand and attack people and ideas that are foreign to us.

I think that one of the reasons I appreciate our Masonic teachings so much is the early education I received first hand regarding hate and suspicion. Freemasonry teaches the "Universal Brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God." Yes, we have different faiths and beliefs but we can meet together in spite of our differences and work together for our mutual benefit and for the betterment of our world. Freemasonry teaches us to focus upon those things we can agree on and to set aside our differences.

May you be blessed during this holiday season, and may we all be rededicated to the love and service of God and our fellowman. May the "oil" in our lamps be kept burning that our "light may so shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven." God Bless!

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. What examples of ignorance and intolerance do you see in your workplace, neighborhood, or community? What lessons of Freemasonry could be helpful in bringing Masonic Light to these examples?
2. How has your Lodge or Masonic Brothers been part of being examples of our “Universal Brotherhood of Man?”
3. How can each of us continue to reflect this Masonic Light in our daily lives at home, work, and in our community?

(Thanks to Don Hrinko, Past Master of Arts & Science Lodge in Ohio, for this month’s “Questions.”)

ELECTED FELLOWS OF THE TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>
Howard Ketron "Jack" Akard	Dec. 13, 1997	Paul Frederick Richards	Dec. 11, 1999
*John Burton Arp, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994	Robert Harold Richards	Dec. 10, 1994
Donald Barrow	Dec. 10, 1994	John Nicholas Sharp	Mar. 9, 1996
Thomas Ernest Brooks	Dec. 10, 1994	Donald Martin Smith	Dec. 10, 1994
*Billie Reginald Brown	Dec. 10, 1994	David Edward Stafford, Ed.D.	Dec. 11, 2010
Ronald Jasper Coates	Dec. 8, 2001	*Louis Steinberg	Dec. 10, 1994
*Harold Cristil	Dec. 10, 1994	Charles McBerry Thames	Dec. 10, 2005
*Bobby Joe DeMott	Dec. 10, 1994	Vincent Lamar Troglen	Dec. 10, 2011
*Jacob Roach Denny	Dec. 10, 1994	*Deceased	
Thomas James Driber, Ph.D.	Dec. 13, 2008		
*Charles Jahew Eads, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994		
Robert Elmer Gooch	Dec. 10, 1994		
*Gary William Hall	Dec. 13, 1997		
*Virgil Marion Hileman	Mar. 9, 1996		
Dickie Wayland Johnson	Dec. 9, 2000		
Matthew Glenn Johnson	Dec. 13, 2014		
*Thomas Charles Kenner	Dec. 13, 2003		
Joseph Clayton Pryor Kindoll	Dec. 11, 2010		
*Billy Wilton King	Dec. 12, 1998		
George Caleb Ladd, III	Dec. 11, 2004		
Sanford Dale Lancaster	Dec. 13, 2008		
Michael Carroll Lett	Dec. 14, 2002		
*Moses Defriese Manning, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994		
*James Allen Marshall	Dec. 10, 1994		
*James Clifton McCarley	Dec. 10, 1994		
John Russell Meldorf	Dec. 10, 1994		
Philip Edward Phillips, Ph.D.	Dec. 12, 2009		
*Richard Travis Milton Prine	Dec. 10, 1994		
Warren Lee Moore	Dec. 10, 1994		