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The history of Freemasonry as its future

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2004
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When we joined Freemasonry, we were told that the order started with operative mason's guilds in England some time around the twelfth century, gradually evolving into speculative masonry, with some roots going back into ancient times. It is an order "veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Yet our rituals tell us that masonry is more honourable than the Order of the Garter (1303 CE) And older than the Roman Eagle and the Golden Fleece. Furthermore, in the tracing board of the first degree it states that "the usages and customs of freemasons have ever corresponded with those of the ancient Egyptians, to which they bear a near affinity." It goes on to say that Freemasonry is not only the most ancient but the most perfect order that has ever existed and came from the east. Are freemasons lying? Or is this poetic licence? Or is there more to this than meets the eye?

After the first two degrees, one is given the third or Hiramic degree, which is quite different from the others. This third degree belonged to "the Lodge of Masters," now known as the Royal Arch, and was incorporated into the Craft degrees when the Grand Lodge of England was formed in 1717. What was this Lodge of Masters, and what was the "word" that was lost with Hiram Abif's death?

Since England in the twelfth century and subsequently, was Catholic and Christian, why was a Jewish architect chosen as our Grand Master rather than say Christ, or Peter, or some other more notable figure? The Bible describes Hiram the widow's son as the architect of the first temple in Jerusalem or Solomon's temple. There is no mention of the name "Abif" nor any mention of his death. Antisemitism was present in England at that time, so why choose Hiram as our Grand Master? How have such words as Tubal Cain, el Shadai, Shekinah, Boaz, and Jachin, and so forth, found their way into our rituals? And if Freemasonry started in England, who in ancient England could have thought up the elaborate tracing boards?

Most masonic histories are written with the assumption that Freemasonry started in England. Thus they explain that the Royal Arch and Scottish Rite, which seem to have come from France, must have originally been exported there to be re-imported to England at a later date. The Royal Order of Scotland claims to have been started by Robert the Bruce, the king of Scotland, in 1303, as a reward for the Knights Templar who helped him defeat the English at the battle of Bannockburn. Historians say this masonic order could not have started at that time because operative masonry did not transform into speculative masonry until a much later date. The same reasoning is used to explain ancient documents that state that St. Amphibolus brought the "mason's craft" to England in the third century CE.

There is a record of a masonic lodge in Poland in 1100 CE. How likely was Freemasonry to spread there from England in the face of slow travel, walled cities, bandits, wars and disease?

As you can see there are serious questions about Freemasonry starting in England with the transition of an operative to a speculative order. If, on the other hand, one were to accept our rituals as accurate and take the view that Freemasonry started long before the order got to

England, many of these questions can be resolved.

A former master of the Quator Coronati masonic research lodge has stated there is no proof of either the transition theory, or any other theory of masonic origins. Proof is always difficult, but looking for the proof can be very rewarding. As with any information, mine has come from a variety of sources. I have to assume those sources are accurate. Many years ago the dean at Harvard Medical School told the graduating class, "we know that half of what we have taught you is wrong. The trouble is we don't know which half." Sir Isaac Newton, towards the end of his life, said, "I do not know what I appear to others, but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." I will present a few pebbles, but as the fourth degree lecture in the Scottish Rite states, "if you would understand the beautiful and harmonious proportions of Masonry, you must read, study, reflect and discriminate. If you will do this, you will learn that Freemasonry is a universal benefactor of mankind, born in the very cradle of the race."

Ancient cultures have the common thread that God created man and imbued him with certain attributes of the Almighty, and that at creation God gave special knowledge and powers to a select group of people. Hindus called them Brahmins. In the Bible individuals such as Enoch "walked with God." The same applied to Tubal Cain, the first artificer in metals, to Noah and to others. This knowledge was passed down through the ages to select individuals. Hindu legend has it that the universe was created when vibrations of the word "OM" (God) precipitated out into the worlds. Curiously, physicists are now postulating that all matter in the universe is made up of sub-atomic strands of vibrating energy (string theory). The Bible states that in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. Hindu legend says there is but one God, Brahma, who has many attributes. Ancient philosophies depicted what man knew about God, by an equilateral triangle. One side being what we gain through experience; one side what we learn from incarnations of the the Deity; and the third side being that part of the Deity which is ineffable and unknowable. Man too has three sides; the physical; the intellectual; and the spiritual. In the perfected man these two triangles overlap to give us what we now call the star of David. The triangles and this star remain masonic emblems.

There is another legend that goes back to ancient times. A young woman was told by a heavenly messenger that she would conceive and bear a son, born of no earthly father, but of God. He would rise to rule the world, according to prophesy. The king, getting word of this, ordered that all male infants be slain, however the family escaped and went to live among shepherds. Even as a child he performed miracles and demonstrated great knowledge, becoming a great teacher. Having completed his earthly mission he allowed the authorities to seize him and put him to death by piercing him with an arrow and nailing him to a tree. It was clearly stated that only through his death could mankind be saved. This is not the story of Christ but of the Hindu deity Krishna,

taken from the Vedas from before 5000 BCE. Both names mean “the anointed.”

One of the most interesting aspects of all ancient religions and philosophies is that when stripped of their accumulations and trappings, be they Semitic, Hindu, Persian, Chinese or Egyptian, they are similar in all essentials; scholars claim they must therefore have a common root.

Scientists now say that *Neanderthal* man disappeared about 25,000 years ago, about the time of the receding ice age and the appearance of *Homo Sapiens*. Geneticists are saying that there is mitochondrial DNA that can be passed only from mother to daughter, that is present in every woman in the world. Calculations would indicate that all women are descended from a single ancestor, or Eve, about 20,000 years ago. If nothing else, this proves that all men are brothers.

Let us leave pre-history and move to about 3500 BCE. This was just before written language appeared. Concepts were depicted by symbols, as were names. In an ancient Egyptian temple one of the symbols of the Deity was the square and compass; just as we use it today. It was also thought that if you could arrange all the symbols of the Deity in the proper order you would know his name which in turn would give you access to the power of God. The Pharaoh, Ahknaton who combined all the Egyptian gods into one called Aton, apparently had special powers of a divine nature and could perform miracles. Pharaohs were subsequently considered intermediaries for God. Abraham lived at about this time in the Euphrates valley and his God was el Shadai. It wasn't until he moved to Judea that he called his God Yaweh. According to the Kabbalah, he and his sons studied for years but were eventually, because of their faith, able to access the power of God, known as the Shekinah. These patriarchs among their other powers were reputedly able to create a man out of clay known as a Golem.

Let me digress for a moment to explain the Kabbalah. It is an extensive literature about the mystic aspects of Hebrew history. It is very highly respected. All the notable teachers or rabbis right up to the seventeenth century CE were all kabbalists, and the concept of being able to create Golem persisted until at least the fourteenth century. Their secret knowledge was handed down in small private groups, and hence the origin of the word *cabal*.

According to the Kabbalah, Abraham and his sons Isaac and Jacob transmitted their secret knowledge and ability to perform miracles to three others, and so on down the ages. Here are some of the names: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob Moses, Aholiab, and Bezolial, Boaz, Samuel, and David Solomon, Hiram king of Tyre, and Hiram Abif Elijah, Elisha Zerubabel, Haggiai, and Joshua *etc*.

Any of you who are Royal Arch Masons will immediately recognize these names and the groupings. These men were known as *Benaim*, meaning masters, or rulers or teachers and builders. It is a comprehensive name of respect for their abilities and they were a very select group.

According to the Kabbalah, when Moses brought the ten commandments from God, they were placed in the ark along with all the other mystic knowledge that the Benaim had learned. This was known as the Volume of the Sacred Law. It was not quite the same as the *Torah*, nor the *Talmud* which is interpretations of the *Torah*. Incidentally some scientists recently constructed an ark out of materials and specifications given in the Bible. This turned out to be a very effective leyden jar or capacitor, which if charged up, say by lightning, would carry enough charge to stun or kill anyone who touched it improperly.

It is interesting to note that most of the Benaim were not just priests or magi. Most of them, like the Pharaohs, were rulers. Maybe this is how the concept of the divine right of kings originated, and maybe

this is why kings have been willing to exchange the scepter for the trowel.

According to the Kabbalah, Hiram was named Abif. He was a widow's son and as an artificer of metals did the adornment of the Temple. He died a violent death and was secretly buried by King Solomon, the location being known only by the Chassidim, who were also known as the Knights of the Temple. They later came to be known as Essenes; the group that Jesus belonged to and who gained fame at Massada. They are also thought to have written the Dead Sea scrolls. Allegedly, when the Israelites returned from the Babylonian captivity, a crypt was found directly under the original sanctum sanctorum containing several relics including a plinth with symbols and possibly the remains of Hiram. This account has marked similarities to rituals in the Royal Arch and the Scottish Rite.

The Temple of Solomon was completed in 953 BCE, having taken thirty-three years to build. It was not strictly Jewish, but Semitic, in that it incorporated aspects from Egypt and other areas. Hiram King of Tyre was not Jewish and there is some question if Hiram Abif was also Phoenician. The only other widow's son mentioned in the Bible was the one raised from the dead by Elijah, who prostrated himself three times over the body while calling on the Lord. Elijah lived sometime between 1000 and 800 BCE. Most authorities say he lived in the mid 800s BCE. So there is probably no connection to Hiram, but it makes you wonder, especially as the Bible refers to Hiram as the widow's son.

Let me now switch to the Rosicrucians. They place their origins with the first Pharaoh, Ahmose I, in Egypt, who had miraculous powers and was therefore considered a God. His special knowledge was transmitted to his successors and to select priests and individuals. They claim Moses as one of theirs. They also claim that in 1000 BCE Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif came to study with them and that the temple in Jerusalem is a copy of one in Egypt. The Egyptian temple was in the shape of a cross, with a rose as an emblem, hence the name Rosicrucians. They also claim the Essenes as members of their order. In later centuries their adherents included prominent freemasons in Europe and later in the USA. Because of the two world wars their prominence in Europe declined and their headquarters was moved to San Jose, where they maintain a college and a research centre. As far as I can determine, their teachings may be similar to ours, but I know nothing of the rituals, except that at one time they believed in alchemy. They also accept women into their order.

It would appear that there was a considerable overlap and intertwining of all the ancient philosophies at least up to the time of Hiram, at which point the Kabbalists split off and the Rosicrucians were already a separate branch. These schools of esoteric knowledge and the methods of teaching attracted people from all over, including Pythagoras who transported the methods to Greece. There seems little doubt that masonic philosophies were then spread across Europe by scholars, merchants, the Roman armies, the crusaders etc. In the early days these Benaim or masters were, as preceptors, the only source of education. When universities began they were important there. The Italian Renaissance (1400-1500 approx) stimulated an intense interest in these ancient philosophies, which then spread faster with the advent of early printing methods.

You are undoubtedly familiar with the rise of the Knights Templar into a very powerful group, causing political difficulties for the Pope and for Philip IV, king of France. Clement V excommunicated the Templars and between he and Philip they confiscated much that the Templars owned in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Inquisition also suppressed them and burned the then Grand Master, Jacques DeMolay

at the stake. Suppression occurred in Britain as well, which was probably why the Templars assisted Robert the Bruce. Incidentally, the secret word is identical in the Lodge of Masters or the Royal Arch, and that of the Templars and the Royal Order of Scotland.

Freemasonry came into full flower from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. This includes the Age of Enlightenment, which was led by freemasons. All the important names of the enlightenment were those of freemasons, in music, arts, science, and even in politics. This continued well into the twentieth century. Freemasonry was a very elite club. If you read *The Knowledge Web* by James Burke and are familiar with the names of freemasons of that era, you will recognize the importance of Freemasonry in promoting developments and discoveries. The Royal Society was formed by freemasons. All the male Nobel prize winners before World War II were freemasons. The founding fathers of the USA and its *Constitution* were mostly freemasons, as was the League of Nations and later the United Nations, *etc.*

Freemasonry of course also spread around the world with the spread of empires. Those in the British Empire were under the Grand Lodge of England, Ireland, or Scotland. (I am told that the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts is a few years older than the Grand Lodge of England.)

So, having thrown a few pebbles your way, what conclusions have I come to?

1. Freemasonry started in the mists of prehistory, and not in England or operative mason's guilds. Also, the Lodge of Masters pre-dated the Craft Degrees and not the other way around.
2. Much of what we have considered allegorical or legendary history is actual history and explains many of our rituals and passwords *etc.*
3. The assumption has to be made that some changes have been made to Freemasonry over the centuries within and especially outside the rituals. For example the various titles in Grand Lodge such as Right Worshipful, Very Worshipful and Most Worshipful are copied from the Anglican church. There are undoubtedly many others. Numerous rules and regulations have also crept into how lodges are run. Some were necessary as times changed, but many are archaic.
4. What is the lost "word"? All the major religions and philosophies define God as "love", and preach doing unto others as you would have done unto you. How each person interprets the word will depend on their experience of life and religion, so the answer has to be very individualistic. My definition cannot be the same as yours, but I would assume, on the basis of our history and rituals, that the search for it will indeed put us in contact with the Shekinah or power of God. Historically the search itself benefits one not only spiritually but in economic terms as well. Abraham, for example, became a very wealthy man.

Let me approach this concept from another angle. It is well known in medicine that placebos work in roughly 40- 50% of patients. It is also well known that a positive attitude gives a better outcome for therapy. In other words, mind affects matter, probably through chemical mediators such as endorphins, hormones, or altering of the immune system. In a fascinating study of head injuries and in cases of surgery for brain tumors, it was noticed that in areas near the corpus collosum—similar to a central telephone exchange—the injury seemed to "unblock" parts of neurological functioning such that these patients became geniuses in either enhanced memories, or the ability to perform complex mathematics, or such things as playing the piano *etc.* though they may have suffered other concurrent neurological deficits. As you are aware,

drugs are being sought that will achieve enhancement of brain function. They all have side-effects however. Theoretically we only use about 10-20% of our brain capacity. Interestingly, the most effective non-drug way of un-blocking thought pathways is not only having a positive outlook but also by having a loving outlook.

5. Knowing the history of Freemasonry makes it much easier to appreciate the degrees and the signs and symbols.

On the basis of these conclusions, what recommendations come to mind:

1. We must remain a moral order catering to the physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of our make-up. This is what differentiates us from service clubs.
2. The degrees should be done well, since they are the heart of the order.
3. Freemasonry reached its zenith when it was at its most intellectual. It seems essential therefore that we invite freemasons, non-masons, men or women, to come to lodge to teach us about any and all subjects. This should be done before lodge is opened or any business done. Lodge business can be done later. Non-masons as well as spouses should be invited to attend this part of the meeting. It will expose them to one aspect of Freemasonry.
4. Time should not be wasted. There is nothing worse than spending an evening on minutes, accounts and other mundane matters that the officers could do ahead of time. Better to have a very short meeting and more time for companionship than the other way around.
5. A certain amount of pomp is probably necessary, but meaningless titles such as Right Worshipful, Very Worshipful, *etc* should be abolished. In this day and age they give the wrong impression. The title "Grand" should apply equally to all Grand Lodge officers.
6. The plethora of rules and regulations should be trimmed, such as which degree the business of the lodge should be conducted in. There are many others that should be up to the discretion of each lodge or master. Over the years these barnacles have accumulated on the ship of Freemasonry and should be scraped off. Masonic life should not be one of rules and regulations.
7. There is a similarity in the tenor and legendary histories of all the concordant masonic bodies. Consideration should be given to amalgamating all these concordant bodies. With study and selection, these can be combined into one body of masonic lessons and masonic history that should be available for the continuing education of all freemasons. As it now stands, in many jurisdictions the same people are called upon to do all the degree work. I believe this is one reason some of the orders are declining.

Realizing that much of what I have said can be considered controversial and debatable, hopefully it will stimulate your interest in our roots and therefore our future. We cannot build for the future unless we know what was built in the past.

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The Emulation Ritual; Some issues and problems

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2004
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Introduction

This paper introduces and discusses some of the issues that have arisen as a result of a decision by Prince of Wales No. 100 to adopt and follow the Emulation ritual as demonstrated by the Emulation Lodge of Improvement. The issues raised are of considerable importance to this jurisdiction, and are involved in the very fabric of the Craft in British Columbia and Yukon. To put the issues in perspective, the history of both ritual in this jurisdiction and the Emulation ritual will be reviewed. Finally, the experiences of the lodge in this endeavor will be introduced. The paper will not provide any answers but will, hopefully, pose some of the questions that arise. The paper does not advocate any particular ritual, nor does it seek to provide advice to Grand Lodge, but it will—hopefully—identify some of the practical issues that are often overlooked when questions of ritual arise. Finally, many of the problems identified with respect to the Emulation ritual apply equally to other forms of ritual practiced in this jurisdiction.

History of ritual in this jurisdiction

It is not intended to review this subject in any detail. Anyone interested is referred to the several publications that treat the development in considerable detail.¹ It is however desirable to recognize the background that has resulted in the relatively unique situation that is found in British Columbia. Although variation in ritual form is found in other jurisdictions, generally those variations are on a basic theme, rather than distinct forms of the ritual. For example, the ritual practiced in England is generally a form of the emulation ritual—with, perhaps the notable exception of the “Bristol” working. However, within that general ritual there are many variations. I have been informed that there are nine variations practiced in the Grand Lodge building in London.²

In the jurisdiction of British Columbia and Yukon, four forms of the ritual are in use: the Ancient (formerly known as the York, “Scotch” or American) work, the Canadian, the Emulation and the Australian. Of the 154 lodges currently in the jurisdiction, 66 practice the Ancient work, 75 the Canadian work, 11 the Emulation work and 2 the Australian work. Of interest is the geographical distribution of the Emulation lodges—eight are on Vancouver Island and only three are on the mainland. Prince of Wales No. 100 is the only Emulation lodge in the lower mainland area. The dominance of the Ancient and Canadian forms of the ritual is also interesting—particularly given the origins of our Grand Lodge.

Historical trends would appear to favour the Canadian ritual in terms of popularity if lodge number can be used to indicate approximately date of warrant. (Note: It is recognized that this measure is imperfect because it does not account for consolidation. For example, the most recent lodge—Pythagoras No. 194, an Ancient lodge, was formed in 2003 from the consolidation of other lodges. Another example is Dunbar No. 118, formed from Dunbar No. 145 (Canadian), Adoniram No. 118 (Emulation) and Evergreen No. 148 (Canadian)). However, using the imperfect lodge number, of the last 72 lodges formed, 42 have

chosen the Canadian ritual, 24 the Ancient, 5 the Emulation and one the Australian.

Although there appears to be great diversity in the ritual practiced in British Columbia, that apparent diversity is markedly reduced if the ritual forms are grouped into “families.” The Emulation, Canadian and Australian all belong to the post 1813 English ritual and those familiar with these rituals can attest to their similarities. The Ancient ritual is derived directly from the American form—a ritual that predates the 1813 union in England. It should be unnecessary to emphasize that the Ancient ritual has no origins in any ritual practiced in Scotland. The identification of the Ancient ritual with Scotland came about as a result of the way the Craft was established in what was to become British Columbia. It is most likely that the Ancient ritual more closely resembles that practiced by the so-called Ancients (or Antients) Lodge that operated in England from about 1750 until the union with the so-called Moderns Lodge in 1813. Much can be gleaned from the publication of *The Freemason’s Monitor* by Thomas Smith Webb in the early 1800s. This work was largely based on Preston’s *Illustrations of Freemasonry*, first published in England in 1772.

The early dominance of the Ancient working in British Columbia can readily be understood in the context of the way our Grand Lodge was formed. The stimulus for the formation of an independent Grand Lodge in this jurisdiction came almost exclusively from the lodges practicing the Ancient ritual under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Those practicing the Emulation form of ritual under the United Grand Lodge of England were much less enthusiastic about the idea and many would have preferred to continue as a District Grand Lodge under that jurisdiction. Only intense work by the District Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, Robert Burnaby, working closely with the Provincial Grand Master under the Scottish Grand Lodge, Israel Wood Powell resolved what could have become a very messy jurisdictional dispute.

When giving his speech at his Installation as the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia (as it then was), MW Bro. Powell explicitly recognized the ritual problem with words that are worth repeating here.

“ THE RITUAL. This is one of the most significant questions with which we shall have to deal, and demands the most temperate and careful consideration. The adoption of uniformity in ritual, all will concede to be most desirable—especially in view of the erection of new Lodges in the Jurisdiction. On the other hand all must recollect that our Grand Lodge is formed by the union of the English and Scottish Crafts of the Province, each of whom are wedded and are partial to, their own particular work. Hence, under any and all circumstances, Lodges taking part in the formation of this Grand Lodge, should have the full permission to continue the work they now practice so

1. *History of Grand Lodge of British Columbia, 1871 – 1970* ©1971 Grand Lodge of British Columbia AF & AM. *Historical Notes and Biographical Sketches – 1848 – 1935*. Robie L. Reid, K.C., LL.D., PGM Grand Historian 1030 - 1945.
2. *Personal communication*; the Marquess of Northampton, Pro Grand Master, United Grand Lodge of England.

long as they desire so to do. But I would go even further, and for the present at least pay another tribute to the moderation and desire for harmony, which have characterized our proceedings, and allow any Lodge which may hereafter be formed to choose and adopt, either Ritual at present practiced in the Province.”

This would appear to settle the matter as far as the Ancient and Emulation Rituals are concerned, but how about the Canadian working? Why did this working “steal the thunder” from the Emulation working? The answer to this question would appear to be in the way in which the population of British Columbia grew after joining Confederation. Although there were no lodges practicing the Canadian ritual in the province at the time of the formation of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia, the potential of Ontario to “take over” was recognized before the formation of the Grand Lodge. At a convention in Victoria held on 18 and 19 March, 1871 of the five Scottish lodges in the colony, the preamble to the resolution to form an independent Grand Lodge read as follows:

“Whereas there is a Provincial Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. under the Grand Lodge of Scotland and a District Grand lodge of F. & A.M. under the Grand Lodge of England (the former having 5 and the latter 4 chartered Lodges) now established in British Columbia, with the early prospect of Confederation by which political change our Masonic status will be altered and this Province would then no longer be unoccupied Masonic authority. The Grand Lodge of Canada would have the right to extend her jurisdiction over this Province and should she issue charters for a new Lodge, which she would have the right to do according to the ruling of the World’s Congress held in Paris in 1856, we should present the anomaly of 10 subordinate Lodges contributing to 5 Grand Bodies, a fact that would weaken the Craft in this Province, fritter away the funds and tend to create a diversity of interests and allegiance, an absence of Harmony in working and unity of action, perpetuating local and national prejudices, thus estranging the affection of the Brethren, whose order knows no country and is confined to no race.”

One has to wonder if there was not an unstated subtext to this resolution, and that was a fear that if the Grand Lodge of Canada were to claim jurisdiction, she would insist on the use of the recently adopted (about 1868) Canadian working for all lodges in British Columbia and the five Scottish lodges would lose the privilege for which they had fought so long and hard. That there may have been some justification for this concern (if it existed) may be found in the fact that of the seven lodges chartered in the period 1885 to 1891, only one chose the Ancient work—Hiram No. 14. Kamloops No. 10 used “Oxford”—a form of Emulation, Mountain No. 11 used Canadian, as did Cascade No. 12, Kootenay No. 15 and Pacific No. 16. Spallumcheen No. 13 initially choose Emulation but later switched to Canadian.

Even given the demographics of the late 19th century, it is still surprising that there were not more new lodges electing to use the work of the English Grand Lodge (Emulation). Perhaps the answer to that is the closeness of the Canadian ritual to the Emulation working. It was after all, directly derived from the Emulation working by a very good English ritualist—Simon McGillvray.¹ Those familiar with both these workings can attest to their similarities and differences—many of which

derive from the order in which material is presented and the floor work associated with each degree. (I am for the moment ignoring the more significant differences in the Installation and Investiture ritual.)

In summary, the ritual as practiced in British Columbia can be conveniently grouped into two main families—those based on the post 1813 English working and that based on the pre 1813 English working as used and interpreted by brethren in the United States after the War of Independence. In that regard it can be argued that the original concern and intention of our first Grand Master has been maintained—at least in spirit, and we are still practicing one of the two original workings of our founding lodges.

History of the Emulation Ritual

The history of this ritual is closely bound up with that of the United Grand Lodge of England. Again, by way of background, a brief review of this history will be given, and the interested reader is directed to the many books that provide more detail on this interesting topic.²

In the second half of the 18th century two rival Grand Lodges fought for control over freemasons in England. The primary difference between these two Grand Lodges was in the ritual they practiced. After much debate and discussion the Grand Lodges were reconciled and came together in an Act of Union in 1813. A major concern in this reconciliation was what ritual would be practiced by the constituent lodges in the new United Grand Lodge of England. In the lead up to the final reconciliation, the Moderns Grand Lodge warranted a special Lodge of Promulgation. The terms of reference for this lodge were to examine the rituals used by the three “mother” lodges (England, Ireland and Scotland) and, by implication the Ancients Grand Lodge in England, and see how they differed. As a result of the work of this lodge, several important changes were made, including in particular the recognition that an esoteric ceremony for the Installation of the Master was needed. Deacons were made mandatory lodge officers and generally the ritual was brought more in line with that of the Ancients Grand Lodge.

After the Union, it was recognized that more changes were needed, and a Lodge of Reconciliation was formed. The primary effect of the work of this lodge appears to have been to lengthen the ritual, rather than to develop a ritual that married that of the two Grand Lodges. The new ritual was much more dignified and extensive than the relatively simple ceremonies in use in the 18th century.

That at least is the party line. However, I believe the evidence does not support that interpretation. It has already been stated that the Ancient working used by the American lodges and adopted by several early lodges in British Columbia was likely derived directly from the practices of the Ancients Grand Lodge and as anyone who has attended an American degree (or even one of our own Ancient lodges) can attest, the work is by no means “simple.” Given that one of the stimuli for the creation of the Ancients Grand Lodge in England in the 1750s was the allegation that the Moderns Grand Lodge had departed from the original ritual, it would appear more likely that the “simple” ritual was that of the Moderns Grand Lodge, and the “new” ritual developed by the Lodge of Reconciliation for use in the new United Grand Lodge was based extensively on the workings of the Ancients Grand Lodge, perhaps modified somewhat to comply with the practices of the Moderns.

Another significant change was the separation of the dining activities from the meeting itself, forming a separate “festive board.” The activities of the Lodge of Reconciliation—which met from 1813 to

1. For a more detailed look at this interesting and very important figure in Canadian Freemasonry, see *The Grand Design—Selected Masonic Addresses and Papers of Wallace McLeod*. McLeod, Wallace ©1991 Anchor Communications.

2. *The History of English Freemasonry*. Hamill, John ©1994. Lewis Masonic. Also see: *Grand Lodge 1717—1967*. United Grand Lodge of England ©1967. University Press, Oxford.

1816—were not without controversy, and it is somewhat unfortunate that the members of the lodge took their masonic duties very seriously and did not record either their discussions or their ritual. It must be remembered that printed rituals—so common today—were very much frowned on and did not come into common use until the later part of the 19th century.

Lest it be thought that this matter of ritual is rather trivial, it should be remembered that the Union was not by any means universally accepted. Resistance came from a group of Antient lodges and there was some talk of reviving the Antients Grand Lodge. There was even the formation of a new Grand Lodge, centred in Wigan, which revived the practices of the Antients. Although not particularly effective, this Grand Lodge remained in existence until the last lodge joined the United Grand Lodge in 1913.

Although the *Book of Constitutions* of the United Grand Lodge stated in unequivocal terms (in 1815 and 1819) that there should be uniformity in the working, this has never been realized. Part of this failure can be attributed to the lack of any means of enforcement, but part must also be carried by the insistence of the Lodge of Reconciliation (and the Grand Lodge) in not allowing any printed ritual. It is entirely unreasonable to expect that a lodge could remember and practice a new ritual accurately after a single demonstration—or even several—no matter how good that demonstration might be. Major variations in the ritual would be inevitable. The consequences are that there are many variations on the basic ritual as practiced in England.

In part to correct the situation as it existed in the 1820s a new lodge was formed to practice and demonstrate what was thought to be the “correct” ritual. This lodge first met on 2 October, 1823, and its full title is *The Emulation Lodge of Improvement for Master Masons*. Note that it is a Master Masons lodge and the significance of this will become evident later in the paper. The founders of this lodge largely came from two lodges of instruction—the Perseverance and Burlington lodges. This Lodge of Improvement has met continuously and still meets at 6.15 pm on Fridays in the building that houses the United Grand Lodge of England. The Lodge considers itself a custodian of the Emulation ritual and that “as a matter of trust, it should maintain without alteration the complete ritual forms handed down to it by its predecessors, and that it is outside its authority to make any alterations unless officially sanctioned by resolution or acceptance of Grand Lodge itself. Grand Lodge, obviously, can alter and adjust a form of ritual which derives its authority from having been originally approved by Grand Lodge.”¹

The ban by the United Grand Lodge of England on printed ritual that lasted well into the 19th century caused the Lodge of Improvement not to publish a ritual until 1969—the date of its first publication.

The Emulation Ritual of Prince of Wales Lodge

We can now turn to a consideration of the practices of Prince of Wales Lodge No. 100. In the bylaws dated 30 January, 1978, Sec. 1.(b) states: “The ritual practiced by this Lodge shall be the Emulation Workings as published in 1974 by the Emulation Lodge of Improvement—London, England.”

I do not know for sure that this was the first time in the lodge bylaws that the Emulation Lodge of Improvement workings were specified, but it could not have been much earlier, given that the Lodge of Improvement did not start publishing a ritual working until 1969.

Sec. 1. (b) was modified in 2002 to read: “The ritual practiced by this Lodge shall be the ‘Emulation’ working as demonstrated by the

Emulation Lodge of Improvement, London, England.” Both the original and the amended bylaw were accepted by the Grand Master of the time.

This raises the first problem experienced by the lodge. The lodge is obliged under its bylaws to practice a working that is not under the control of its own Grand Lodge. Perhaps usually this would not pose any problems, but in this case it has. Starting in 1964, the United Grand Lodge of England made or allowed significant variations in the ritual workings particularly as applied to the penalties in the various degrees. Today the working demonstrated by the Lodge of Improvement complies with the ruling of June 1986: “that all reference to the physical penalties be removed from the obligations taken by the candidates in the three degrees, and by a Master-elect at his installation, but retained elsewhere in the respective ceremonies.”²

That a sovereign Grand Lodge has the right and authority to conduct itself in any way it sees fit is unquestioned. The difficulty is that any action of one Grand Lodge is not enforceable on any other Grand Lodge. The British Columbia jurisdiction has not—at least as yet—taken any steps to remove reference to the physical penalties from the various obligations. As a consequence, the bylaws of Prince of Wales Lodge are in conflict with the actions of the British Columbia Grand Lodge. The Regulations of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia are unequivocal on the precedence of authority. Regulation R71 states: “provided that they are not contrary to nor inconsistent with the Constitution and Regulations of Grand Lodge.” And “All clauses in the By-laws of Constituent Lodges conflicting with the *Book of Constitutions* and Regulations of Grand Lodge shall be and are hereby repealed.”

However, the amended bylaw was approved by the Grand Master of the time in 2002, under the authority of Sec. 44 of the *Constitutions*: “The Grand Master shall have the power to decide any question of usage, order and Masonic law, not defined in this *Constitution*, and to approve, or refuse approval of the By-laws of Warranted Lodges.” Since this approval of the amended bylaw 1.(b) of Prince of Wales Lodge was granted long after the actions of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1986, does that acceptance of the bylaw by the Grand Master constitute acceptance of a ritual that had removed the physical penalties from the obligations—and is that acceptance binding on Grand Lodge?

It would seem to me that it does not, since it is directly contrary to the actions to date of the Grand Lodge—and the Grand Master (as we are so frequently reminded) is subject to and under the authority of the *Book of Constitutions* and Regulations.

Parenthetically, it seems to me that the current practice of allowing rulings and edicts of a Grand Master to continue past his term of office is likely wrong. The better and less controversial action would be to have these rulings expire at the end of the Grand Master’s term unless Grand Lodge confirms a specific ruling or edict by way of a resolution.

This illustrated the difficulties that can arise when a lodge is allowed to adopt a working that is not under the direct control of Grand Lodge. It was my interpretation that Sec. 1.(b) of the Prince of Wales bylaws was likely in conflict with the current wishes of Grand Lodge. As a consequence, a dispensation was sought and obtained from the Grand Master, M.W. Bro. C. W. Ferguson, to allow the lodge to use the published workings of the Lodge of Improvement that had eliminated the physical penalties from the obligations. This has solved the problem for this year, but it must remain an issue in subsequent years until Grand Lodge takes up the matter.

1. *Emulation Ritual*. ©1980. Published by Lewis Masonic.

2. *A Reference Book For Freemasons*. Smyth, Frederick©1998 QC Correspondence Circle Ltd.

One approach—assuming that Grand Lodge does not move to remove the physical penalties from the obligations—would be to have the Ritual Committee recommend to Grand Lodge—and have Grand Lodge approve—that if a lodge wishes to practice the Emulation ritual as demonstrated by the Lodge of Improvement in England then it should use a form that predates the actions of the United Grand Lodge of England.

It would also be possible to have Grand Lodge approve the current ritual of the Lodge of Reconciliation by passing a “permissive” regulation similar to that originally adopted by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1965. Note however that it is my opinion that action by the Grand Lodge would be required and that acceptance of the ritual could not be inferred by the acceptance of the bylaws by the Grand Master of the time. I am aware that this issue is controversial, and I offer these thoughts to stimulate debate so that the matter does not fester only to appear in a more virulent form at a later date.

Other difficulties that arise are perhaps not as difficult to deal with and may be considered more of a practical nature than fundamental to the issue. The first point I wish to make with respect to the practical issues that arise concerns the fact that the Lodge of Improvement is a Lodge of Instruction and not a practicing lodge. It therefore never confers any degree or installation ceremony. One might not think that particularly significant, but I would suggest that one would be wrong. The printed ritual book specifically recognizes this:

“In presenting this book, it has been a primary concern of the Committee that it should provide as much assistance as possible to Officers of Lodges whose procedure is based on Emulation, but neither this book nor any other can ever be a substitute for organized rehearsal and attendance at Lodge of Instruction, as it is there that what is set out in this book is brought to life.”

In effect the ritual book is saying that here is a guide but because we don’t deal with the minutiae that govern a practicing lodge we cannot provide direction for every detail of lodge layout, furniture and practices. Lodges are expected to adapt their practices so that the fundamental principals of the ritual are maintained. Recently this issue was raised with respect to what VoSL should be open in an Emulation Lodge, it being pointed out that only the Christian *Bible* is used at the demonstration on Friday afternoons in London. Emphasizing that the Lodge of Improvement does not and never has conferred any degrees, what VoSL is on the pedestal is irrelevant to the demonstrations of the Emulation workings. However, a sovereign lodge would have to obey the ancient landmarks that go back to the first set of *Constitutions* of the English Grand Lodge. In the *Constitutions* of 1723 the following appears under the heading “Concerning God and Religion.”

“A Mason is obliged, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But although in ancient Times Masons were charged in every country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet it is now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be good Men and true, or men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever denomination or Persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the center of Union and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remained at a perpetual Distance.”¹

It has long been a practice in this jurisdiction to allow (indeed require) a candidate to take his obligation on the particular text that is paramount to him, and to have that text open in lodge whenever the

lodge is at labour. I have already pointed out that in my opinion, the practices common under the *Constitutions* and Regulations of our Grand Lodge must take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard therefore—regardless of the practices of the Lodge of Improvement—any freemason member of the lodge is entitled to have his particular text open together with the standard VoSL.

Another practical problem that arises is that few if any of our lodge halls have been laid out and designed for Emulation working where the candidate is required to touch the shoulder of the Wardens. Nor is there a convenient way to place the pedestal as required by the Emulation working directly in front of the Master’s place. These are practical problems that can generally be accommodated.

Yet another practice of Emulation working that causes raised eyebrows is that the words in the 3rd (Master Mason) degree are required to be spoken out loud. This is contrary not only to the practice in the Ancient and Canadian work, but contrary to the direct instruction given to the candidate in those rituals:

“It is in this position only that the Ws. can be given; that is, on the F.Ps. of F., and in a W.”

This is certainly a significant difference in practice applicable to a minority of lodges in this jurisdiction. It is questionable whether this is in the same category as the penalties. On balance, I would opine that it is not, and would not require specific authority from Grand Lodge or the Grand Master.

Another difficulty that has come up is that there are marked differences between the structure of English Freemasonry and our jurisdiction. As a consequence, practices such as the reception of the District Deputy Grand Master are entirely unknown and it is necessary to apply the *Forms and Ceremonies* and modify the practices of the lodge. This used to be a problem with respect to the carrying out of business in the first degree. That particular difficulty has been removed but other anomalies remain—in particular in giving Grand Honours and having to receive Grand Lodge officers in the third degree.

Finally, there is the matter of the “risings.” In the English practice, there are three risings. At the first the Worshipful Master inquires for the good of Freemasonry. At this rising in the English practice, Grand Lodge matters are dealt with. In the second rising, Provincial (or District) matters are dealt with. At the final rising, lodge matters are dealt with. Obviously, if a DDGM is present, he will likely wish to speak on the first rising. But it is the practice in British Columbia for the Grand Master or his official representative to speak last—clearly impossible if the risings procedure is to be followed. As DDGM of District 26—the District in which Prince of Wales currently resides, I have taken the attitude to allow the risings procedure to take precedence and I speak as the Grand Master’s representative on the first rising. I may also speak on District matters at the second rising.

There are likely other problems and issues that are associated with the use of the Emulation ritual as demonstrated by the Lodge of Improvement in England, but I think I have touched on the most significant. I would be happy to hear the views of others and of any other problems that may occur.

There is I understand currently a move to get those lodges that practice some form of Emulation ritual together to discuss this and other issues. This action is to be lauded, and it is to be hoped that it will result in a joint submission to Grand Lodge that will help overcome some of the difficulties that have been discussed, and allow this very important form of the ritual to be available in this jurisdiction as was envisioned by our founding brethren.

1. *Anderson’s Constitutions* 1723 and 1738. Facsimile Edition 1976.

Our Grand Master's Initiatives

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2004
BY W. BRO. JOHN SHANDALLA, GRAND MASTER'S FACILITATOR

Today, I am going to talk about our Grand Master, MW Bro. C. William Ferguson's Initiatives: Some are self-explanatory and others require explanation as to why they have been proposed and what they could mean to you.

To enable the mandate established in 2001 at V ictoria concerning elected members of the Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes

This initiative is the fulfillment of a motion passed at Grand Lodge in Victoria. For reasons only known to the Grand Line of 2001-2002, this was not acted upon earlier. An elected board of General Purposes should have a direct say in what happens in Grand Lodge governance. They should assist the Grand Line in developing a long-range strategic plan and give this Grand Jurisdiction some stability year after year and eliminate, or at least mitigate, the arbitrary way in which a Grand Master can wield his authority.

Examine and suggest guidelines concerning District Deputy Grand Masters

If Grand Lodge is to be more responsive to the wishes of the brethren, a DDGM should be chosen for his ability to lead and represent his district, and not just because he is the senior member in the lodge whose 'turn' it is. In keeping with this, the committee of Initiative Three has spent a great deal of effort and time studying this process. Our jurisdiction is very entrenched in the notion of the DDGM being a patronage appointment, and the committee has encountered vehement opposition from senior members in some districts to their ideas and suggestions. It is going to take a great deal of political will to change this. District 3 has shown the most leadership in choosing a DDGM based on ability to lead.

To study fund raising by Grand Lodge and constituent lodges

It is no secret that our membership is decreasing at a much greater rate than our expenses. Fund raising is one quick way to alleviate this problem.

Overhaul our system of Grand Representatives to other jurisdictions

The appointment of Grand Representatives to other jurisdictions is a tradition that we have shared with other Grand Lodges for many years. However, many brethren are unaware of what the responsibilities of the appointment are, never communicate with the Grand Lodge they are appointed to or can even speak the language of the country. Some Grand Lodges, as well, seem to no longer wish to participate in this tradition. This overhaul is long overdue.

Strengthen our leadership seminars

Strong lodges require strong leaders. This is not rocket science. We have four leadership teams in our province and this initiative is intended to give the teams the momentum required to continue on for the foreseeable future.

To proceed with the recommendations made in the 2001 Masonic Survey and the Masonic Commission of 2000-2001

This is probably the most difficult of the initiatives. It will require our Grand Line, perhaps with the Board of General purposes, to sit down and develop a long range strategic plan and vision for Grand Lodge. It will require the Grand Line to commit to the wishes of the brethren, as published in the report of the survey of the Masonic Commission, and demonstrate that they are interested in the long-term viability of our jurisdiction, and not just in their own personal agendas. What this will do is provide for a transparent process of governance for our jurisdiction and allow the general membership to easily access Grand Lodge and reference its progress, goals and vision. Jurisdictions such as New Zealand have shown tremendous courage in going through this very public process. The results have been positive for all. Perhaps our own Grand Line will find the same courage.

Establish long term goals (this is the intended result of Initiative 4)

To study the desirability of having the Grand Master elected for a two-year term. Many Grand Jurisdictions elect their Grand Master for two, three and sometimes many more years. There are pros and cons to having a multiple year Grand Master and the committee on Initiative Eight has been researching what other jurisdictions do and will be presenting a report at Grand Lodge.

To strengthen the leadership of the Communities Charities fund

The Cancer Car project and the We Can Help Program are the two major philanthropies of the Grand lodge of BC and Yukon. The brethren have already voted, at a previous Grand Lodge communication, to continue with the Cancer Car project, So it is incumbent upon Grand Lodge to continue with these programs and empower them with all the resources necessary to succeed.

Publish a user friendly and grammatically correct Book of Constitutions and Regulations

An overdue and self-explanatory task.

To correct the penalties so they reflect the truth of Freemasonry

This is an initiative based purely upon opinion. The brethren will be given a chance to vote on whether or not we remove the penalties from our obligations.

To permit by a constitutional amendment, Past Grand Masters to wear dress regalia when visiting other Grand Lodge Jurisdictions

Most past Grand Masters of other jurisdictions wear dress regalia at official functions that they are attending. Past Grand Masters of B.C. do not. A motion will be presented to the next Grand Lodge communication to amend our *Constitutions* to allow Past Grand Masters

to wear dress regalia. The success of this motion will be an interesting barometer of the brethren at Grand Lodge. It should be a clear demonstration of whether the brethren feel that Grand Lodge is actually listening to them or not.

Improve the procedure for electing the Junior Grand Warden and to publish a pamphlet for the guidance of Candidates

How many times have you attended a Grand Lodge communication and had absolutely no clue whom the brethren are who are running for Junior Grand Warden? This initiative, in part, is intended to remedy this. If the candidates reveal themselves much earlier, and we have a protocol for conduct of the candidates, it gives the general membership a much greater chance of electing the right man for the job.

Extend voting privileges in Grand Lodge communications to Master Masons

This is fairly straightforward. We tell our new members that there is no rank higher than that of Master Mason, yet in practice, this is not true. We do not let that Master Mason have a vote at Grand Lodge until

he is installed as the Junior Warden of his lodge. If Grand Lodge is to be seen as responsive to the needs of its membership, this archaic rule needs to go.

To produce a manual for guidance to Grand Lodge and local committees for conducting Grand communications

When a lodge wishes to bid on hosting a future Grand Lodge communication, they have no real resource material to draw upon other than the experience of members who have put one on before. If a hosting committee were given a manual from Grand Lodge as to what is required to host a communication, from the logistics involved, cost, etc. it may allow the brethren to learn from the mistakes of the previous communications and consequently run a more successful Grand Lodge communication themselves.

As you can see, MW Bro. C. William Ferguson has embarked upon an ambitious year and has tackled some issues that are contentious, long overdue and desperately needed in our jurisdiction. I for one, take my hat off to him and offer him my deepest respect for having the courage to take on these initiatives.



*The following papers, not received by press time, can be found on our Grand Lodge website
<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/Writings/vgm_day22.html>*

L'Order des Elus Coens

BY BRO. MARC DESJARDINS, LYNN VALLEY LODGE No. 122

The British Columbia "Canadian Work"

DEMONSTRATED BY CENTENNIAL-KING GEORGE LODGE No. 171

WITH COMMENTARY BY BRO. MARK S. DWOR





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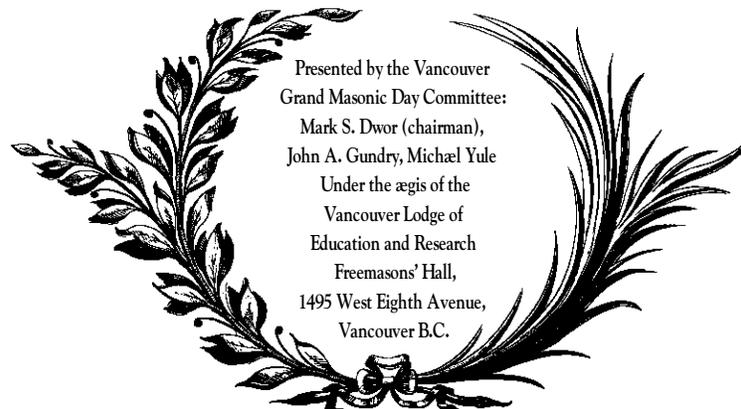
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Bro. Marc Desjardins ~ *L'Ordre des Elus Coens*
Bro. John Chacko ~ *The history of Freemasonry as its future*
W. Bro. John Shandalla ~ *Our Grand Master's Initiatives*
R.W. Bro. Keith V. Godfrey ~ *The Emulation Ritual: Some issues and problems*
Centennial-King George Lodge No. 171 ~ *Plenary Session*
The British Columbia "Canadian Work"
Entered Apprentice Degree explained



Presented by the Vancouver
Grand Masonic Day Committee:
Mark S. Dwor (chairman),
John A. Gundry, Michael Yule
Under the aegis of the
Vancouver Lodge of
Education and Research
Freemasons' Hall,
1495 West Eighth Avenue,
Vancouver B.C.