

27th Grand Masonic Day

SATURDAY OCTOBER 4, 2008

The two pillars

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
BY W. BRO. A. DAVID SERRY, TSAWNASSEN LODGE No. 185

In the lecture to the candidate in the Fellowcraft degree, allusion is drawn to the two pillars in this manner "These pillars were placed at the porch or entrance of the temple as a memorial to the children of Israel of the miraculous pillars of fire and cloud which had two wonderful effects—the fire gave light to the Israelites during their escape from their Egyptian bondage; while the cloud proved darkness to Pharaoh and his followers when they attempted to overtake the Israelites." Seems that this is not the only time the great architect has used a smokescreen. "King Solomon ordered the pillars to be placed at the entrance of the temple as the most conspicuous situation for the children of Israel to have a happy deliverance of their forefathers always before their eyes while going to and returning from Divine worship."

The purpose of this lecture is to ask a pertinent question. What relevance does all this have to do with modern Freemasonry and what can we take from it that would have significance today? How can we relate to this as laid out in the *British Columbia Canadian Work*? Does this snippet of information have any meaning to you or me today. We cannot help but be detached from this part of the description as it does little to invigorate us, so what are we missing? My belief is quite simply that if it had no significance, then our forefathers in the Craft would not have made reference to the pillars and the allusion to fire and cloud.

It is as plain as the nose on your face that one must dig much deeper than a cursory examination to see the significance, and from the great light itself a far greater meaning comes to light. Let us examine some of the obstacles to a greater understanding of what this has to do with modern freemasons practicing their rituals in our day and age. Have we lost the significance of the story with the passage of time? Was there anything to lose to begin with, as we are not the children of Israel?

It is further as plain as the nose on our face to ask ourselves, where do we begin to search for references that might throw some light on the subject under discussion, and what could we use to assist us in our search? Since the term under discussion appears in the Great Light, would not this be the logical place to start? It is an important exercise to get a background for these significant events. When the children of Israel were told to flee Egypt, they were instructed to take nothing with them. However the women brought their polished gold mirrors with them. Indeed these mirrors indicate that along with these mirrors they brought their vanity. When Moses was up the mountain receiving God's Law, the grumbling started and ended with this vanity, besetting those in the camp. The gold mirrors became the golden calf, an abomination to God. If the story ended there, that would have been the last of it, however Moses came down from the mountain, the calf was among the canaries, the jig was up, however this same gold that was an abomination to God was fashioned into the ark of the covenant, a symbol of adoration. We as profane stand at the door of the lodge in darkness, and of darkness. We may think we are God's Gift to Freemasonry when in fact Freemasonry is God's gift to us. We become new people with a new centre of focus in our lives.

To understand the subject one has to establish the purpose of why King Solomon's Temple was built in the first place, before attempting to

understand why the pillars were so placed. The sole purpose of why the Temple existed was to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was built by Moses during the Children of Israel's forty years in the wilderness. Although much confusion exists as to actual dates, of these two events, the ancient *Tanak*—from which much of the Old Testament is derived having first been translated by the Catholic Church, or the Greek *Biblia*, which means book—is quite vague as to the actual dates, but quite specific about the facts that the Ark was built, and that the Temple of Solomon was also built.

Both were built. The Ark was designed on a vision revealed to Moses from God, and the temple of Solomon was built by King Solomon, according to a vision from God to King David, father of King Solomon. Many scholars and critics of today have speculated on the question of how a tribe of nomadic Beduins, and wanderers—whom we are led to believe the Children of Israel were—could design, let alone construct such a magnificent structure. School is still out on that, so let the critics and scholars postulate about dates, we will not digress into that realm.

Two things we can be certain of are that there was an Ark of the Covenant built at the command of Moses; and there was a Temple built according to the design of King David, by King Solomon, with the assistance of Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abif. We commenced with the two pillars at the porch or entrance to the temple built by King Solomon, and what relevance they may or may not have to freemasons today and what significance, can we extract from them that is beneficial to us today.

Could we look at the aspect of the pillars being a Memorial to the Fire of the Great Architect for that surely is their stated purpose in our ritual. The law of God was seared into their minds. It must be noted however there were a great many more than the ten we are familiar with. In fact the book of Leviticus is all about these laws as they were codified by the Levite priests.

It was also these same gold mirrors which we described earlier were then utilized to make the Ark of the Covenant. The Great Architect uses our vanity to form a more sacred vessel, with more utility for His purpose, just as he takes flawed and imperfect men and turns them into men more serviceable to their fellow men and His great design for us as freemasons. We know that this is all related, and the roots of the temple pillars were, and the building of the temple was, to house the Ark, which was built, and has its roots in the city of Taberah, and with Moses.

In Numbers 11-13, "And he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burnt amongst them. This fire was a fire of judgement of God upon Israel, which leads to the:

1. Nature of the judgement : It is called the fire of the Lord, because it fell from Heaven: It came immediately from God. Here it consumed the people to signify that their iniquity was such as should not or could not be purged with sacrifices or offerings forever, as another time it consumed the sacrificers when they offered strange fires.
2. The People of the Judgement: The Fire of the Lord burned among the very people whom God favoured, when by disobedience they displeased Him and His anger was kindled against them. Although the Pillar of Cloud and fire was over them to protect them while they kept

themselves in the love of God, this was no security to them when they rebelled against Him. Being a freemason in name only is no insurance that the Great Architect will coddle us and defer to us, and definitely no guarantee that we will be free of trouble.

3. The Cause of the Judgement: The People (complained); It was this which provoked The Great Architect to kindle his fire among them. Those who are always complaining about trifles surely must expect that God will give them something big to complain about. Nothing is more displeasing to God than our being displeased at His favours to us. Our whining and complaining may be unsaid prayers, which surely God will answer and really give us something to complain about. The benefits of Freemasonry will not be fully bestowed upon those who continually complain, do not show up, as this apathy and lack of response must displease God and the excuses and complaining can easily be replaced by a real problem to worry about, so I would ask that we be very cautious, as to what we complain about. Instead perhaps we should be counting our blessings for the things we have, that come without money and without price, a willing healthy heart, a happy and contented family, a good name and reputation, the energy and good fortune to have work, and a good income to be comfortable.

The purpose of the memorial in relation to us

By recording all these things in The Great Light, the Great Architect of the Universe has effectually preserved the memorial of them and transmitted them to us here today.

Personal rebukes:

We must often call to our minds the personal and private rebukes of

Providence which we and our families have been under. We should always remember that God speaks not only through His word, and blessing, but also speaks to us through His Rod. We should ever remember them both in order to renew our repentance or blessing from the things we did do that brought blessing, or repentance, for the things we omitted to do that caused us pain, or curse or were blessed because we did not give in to the easy way out..

Public Judgements:

Have you ever noticed that the decline in faith and attendance at lodge or the church of one's creed has led to an increasing fear among men of all nations, and an increase in global warming, melting icecaps at the poles, crop failures from a lack of rain, increased flooding from too much rain, increased intemperance and terrorism, as the faithless resort to violent terror, committing unspeakable acts of suffering upon the innocents. Is God judging our communities, of which we all are members? Upon lands and nations, we see this spiral into the degenerate which is affecting us just where we live. If our minds and actions are centered on love and peace, or trouble we will always find more than enough to go round, and I would be mistaken if I did not say we feel this collectively.

In conclusion we should be mindful that man is dependent on God, not the other way around. When we see the pillars in our lodge, they bring to mind a great memorial that applies to us as it did for the Children of Israel. Always remember these sacred pillars are there in our lodges for a specific purpose. I hope I have shed some light on them that will be useful to you my brethren, as we strive together towards the perfection of the perfect ashlar.



Weather you like it or not: Weather Services in Canada explained.

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
BY R.W. BRO. ALAN WEBSTER, DDGM DISTRICT 16

Background:

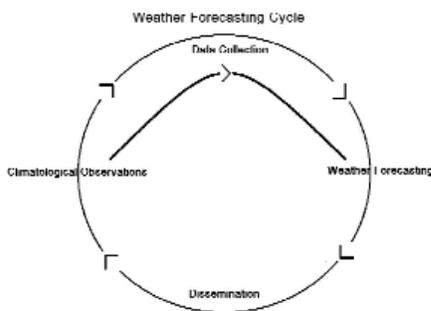
In the next half hour I am going to describe to you what it takes to make a weather forecast, how we deliver those forecasts to Canadians, how we verify that we are improving the accuracy of those forecasts and explain what future forecasting may look like.

I can assure you that I have heard every joke, every taunt and ever insult that have ever been made against my profession. I understand what is like to be a lawyer, except we don't get paid as well. The dangers in the job were made evident last year when a South American forecaster was killed by a mob of farmers after he had predicted 3 inches of rain and the area got 20 inches causing widespread flooding and crop damage.

Weather Forecasting Cycle:

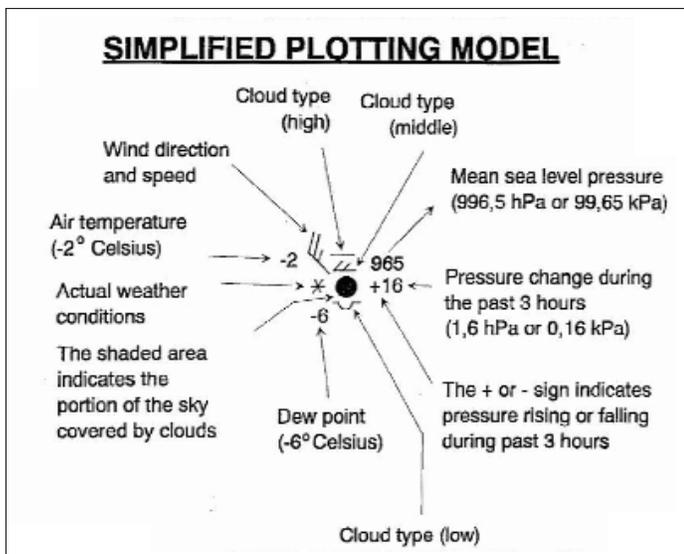
The process of producing a weather forecast can be described as a cycle using weather data both as a beginning and as a tool to verify the forecast with the aim to improve the next forecast.

The cycle would look like this:

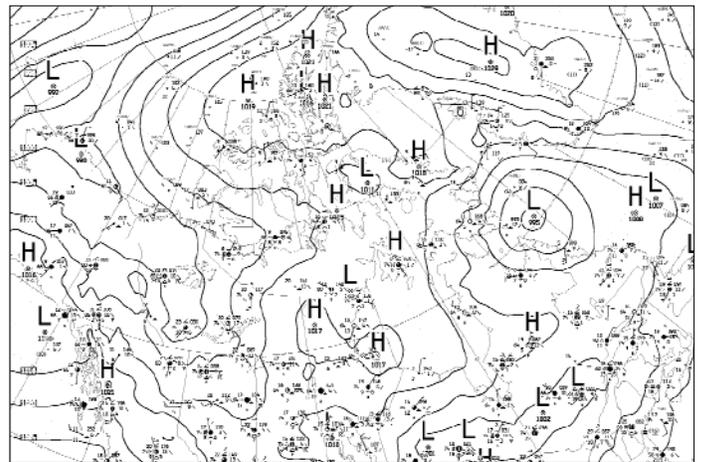


Data Collection:

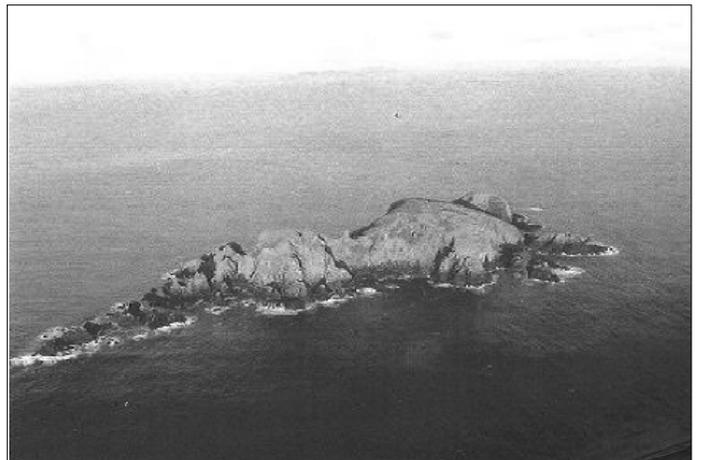
The whole cycle begins with data collection. Data used to be observations taken by humans on the ground using instruments invented in the 1500s and 1600s, and measuring and observing parameters such as air



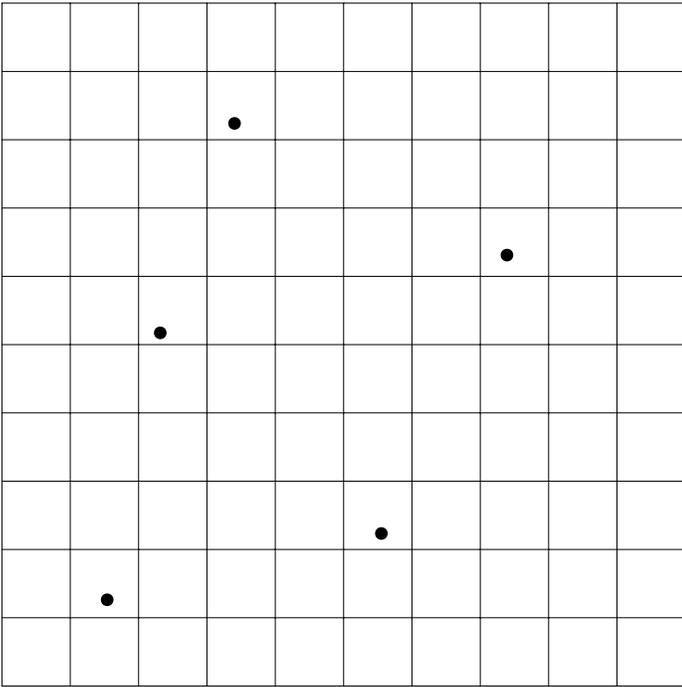
temperature, dew point temperature, atmospheric pressure, visibility, precipitation, wind speed and direction, and cloud types, heights and amounts. These parameters were carefully plotted on a weather map by human plotters for use by forecasters in making weather charts. To put this into a time perspective, I was on the first observing course that did not teach plotting in 1977. Printers had just taken over this function from human plotters.



Now that we have taken care of the bottom 5,000 to 10,000 feet of the atmosphere we need to sample the rest of the atmosphere up to about 100,000 feet. We have done this by releasing helium or hydrogen filled balloons with instrument packages from about 45 stations in Canada and about 2,000 worldwide to measure temperature, humidity, pressure and wind velocity. The famous weatherships, the Vancouver and the Quadra went to one spot on the Pacific Ocean and stayed there as weather observers released upper air balloons twice daily as part of this network.



Today technology has taken over in almost every aspect of weather observing. Instead of mercury in glass thermometers we have thermistors that measure temperature based on electrical conductivity 10 times more accurately than humans could. Digital barometers measure to the 1,000th of a millibar, again 10 times more accurately. And instead of typing in the



observation and sending it via teletype circuit these automatic stations are polled via cellular or satellite modem as frequently as every minute to download a new observation. These autostations can be put on remote and desolate sites where no one could possibly live.

We also have satellites looking down into the atmosphere and weather radar sampling across the atmosphere. All these data can be used to produce weather forecasts.

Just like observing, weather forecasting has been taken out of the hands of humans. With the explosion of data available it would not be possible for a human to collate, analyze and deduce atmospheric situations in a timeframe useable as a forecast. For example all the data collected at 5:00 am this morning needs to be processed into a forecast by 7:30 am.

Computers, indeed supercomputers, need to be employed to do all this number crunching. Equations related to the thermodynamic principles of the atmosphere need to be processed on a global scale but with enough detail to have meaning to small geographic regions and their weather influencing patterns. Even with some of the fastest computers available the level of resolution is still a grid 10 km by 10 km.

At each intersection the computer model will run all the equations based on interpolated data from each observing point, represented above by the black dots in the grid. As you can see a 10 by 10 km grid allows for a lot of gaps between forecasting and data points. Let's not forget to put in a vertical dimension with data collected at 10 specific heights using the same surface grid but the upper air data is much sparser. Elevation changes are not accounted for in the model, being simply too complex to handle. The Greater Vancouver forecast region could be divided into 16 separate forecast zones depending on conditions.

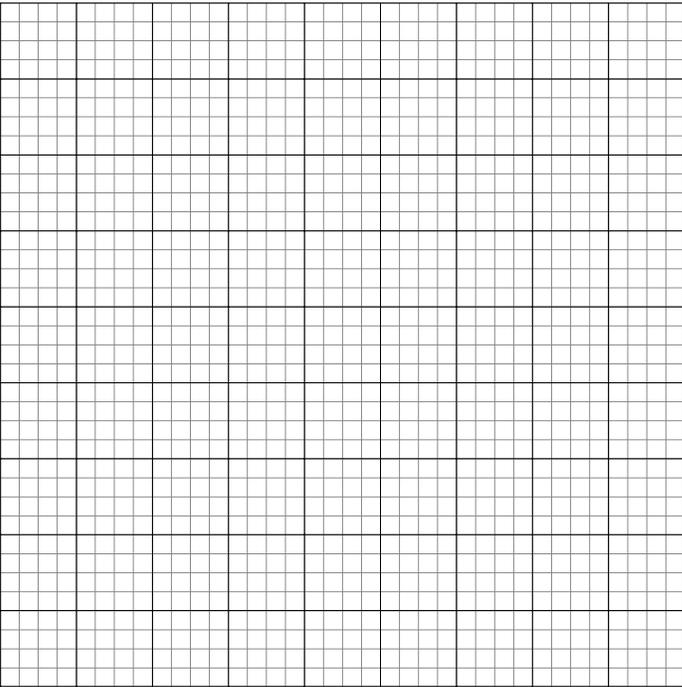
Good news and Bad news:

Good News: UBC has developed a model that is much more refined using a grid of 2.5 km by 2.5 km and its accuracy in predicting Day Two (tomorrow) conditions for the Pacific Northwest and SW BC is outstanding.

Bad News: The forecast for Day Two (in our case Sunday) will not be ready until Tuesday morning because the computing power to produce the forecast is not sufficiently fast (*yet*).

Dissemination:

Getting the actual worded forecast to the public has only three things that get in the way: Weather presenters, wording and location,



location, location.

Nothing messes up a perfectly good weather forecast than some talking head (read here: non-professional) trying to put their own spin on the wording of the forecast. A chance of a shower does not mean the same as "It's going to rain all day" and "It says periods of snow in the forecast but we aren't going to worry about more than a trace overnight" Ottawa received about 30 cm. (1 foot) that night.

The climate of your area will also dictate the importance of the weather forecast to you. In the mid 1990s the top TV rated weather segment in the United States was from WGN, the Chicago superstation which employed 8 professional meteorologists and had a better weather radar than the National Weather Service. The second highest rated weather segment was from a station in San Diego where they had a different Weather Girl of the Week in the smallest bikini allowable on television telling everyone how Sunny and Hot it was going to be for the next five days. Over 80 % of San Diego television viewers were watching this station every weeknight between 6:30 and 6:35.

We have tweaked the wording of the public forecast at least three times in the past 30 years to make it more understandable to the public, to absolutely no avail. As an example when I started with Environment Canada we used the terms Mostly Cloudy and Mostly Sunny, but we stopped using them when it was realized they could be used





Squamish Wind Profiler LAP-3000

interchangeably more than 50 percent of the time. We do not use some terms in the forecast because the different meaning the word would have for different people (e.g. sleet).

Speaking of percentages, please do not blame professional meteorologists for the Probability of Precipitation. This was a political decision handed to us about 25 years ago and we cannot get rid of it. We never use 50% because of the public perception of flipping a coin.

Humans being what they are, they are only interested in the weather around them. If I am in Richmond and it is sunny with a few clouds towards the North Shore and the forecast is sunny with a chance of a shower, I will believe the worst of my colleagues for being so pessimistic. If I am standing in North Vancouver and it is just pouring down on me with the same forecast I am going to believe my colleagues are likewise completely out to lunch. Yet the forecast is correct in both situations. We, as forecasters, need to adjust the forecast to the differences in location (we do that on occasion) and we, as the public, need to adjust our personal forecast to our changing location throughout the day.

Climatological Observations:

We have a network of approximately 250 small stations around the province that measure maximum and minimum temperatures and / or precipitation amounts twice a day and report them to Environment Canada. Most of these stations are in volunteers' backyards. Some of these stations have been passed down from generation to generation, with one station in Vavenby run for ninety years by four generations of the same

family. The other stations are in municipal or industrial workyards where the agency has found they can benefit from improved weather forecasting. One of our municipal stations has been observing for 110 years at the Sumas Canal.

These little stations provide the majority of the "ground-truthing" for the forecast by verifying temperature and rainfall / snowfall amounts. By measuring the depth of snow on the ground these stations also provide much needed data for both avalanche and flood forecasters.

The advancing age of our volunteers has had an effect that we as freemasons can relate to. The ranks of just the volunteer observers have dwindled from 400 to 150 in the past seven years.

The 2010 Olympics:

As the most weather sensitive event ever hosted in our province, the need to have accurate and timely site specific forecasts and observations has never been so great. Some venues (e.g. the sliding venue and the Alpine and Nordic skiing venues) need observations taken every ten minutes during events and hourly updates of the forecasts. To accommodate these requirements Environment Canada has installed or will install 12 automatic stations, 3 manned stations, a temporary upper air station, a weather radar and a new piece of technology called a wind profiler which samples the lower 10,000 feet of the atmosphere to measure wind direction and speed. As for human resources, we will have a team of 16 meteorologists, 10 technicians and some 40 volunteer weather observers to support both the Olympic and the Para Olympic Games as required.

The Future of Weather Forecasting:

As computers become faster and faster, refinements in computer modeling will allow more and more accurate forecasting for slightly longer periods of time. But do not expect useable ten day forecasts anytime in the near future. Something called Chaos Theory postulates that in order to forecast accurately 30 days in advance we would have to measure the effects of the air movement caused by the wings of every butterfly, hence the term *Butterfly Effect*.

Conclusion:

In the style of our Immediate Past Grand Master I will leave you with a quote from the American cartoonist, "Kin" Hubbard (1868 - 1930), who wrote:

"Don't knock the weather. If it didn't change once in a while, nine out of ten people couldn't start a conversation."

The Freethinkers, Postulates, definitions and exposure

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
BY BRO. CARLOS FRANCIS-ARDUH, VANCOUVER LODGE NO. 68

I must clarify before my lecture that I have no intention to bring concepts or ideas that will enter into either political or religious discussions, although because of the historical relation of the topic it may seem I may be doing so. Therefore, since this essay is directed to our new brothers, I would like to clarify these aspects: Regarding religion, a kindly reminder that we as freemasons do not provoke or insinuate or suggest any trend of faith—nor we encourage the discussion of the different aspects of different religions, we have no dogmas or theology, ergo, we are not a religion.

Politics

The academic definition of politics is: The process by which groups of people make decisions. Politics consists of "social relations involving authority or power" and also refers to the regulation of a political unit and to the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply or induce policy.

The 25 statues of our *Landmarks*, do not allow or contemplate this. Politics is mostly generalized as who gets what, when, why, and how. Thus, we as freemasons do not do politics when we constitute a lodge, nor should we entertain politics as a tool for any purpose.

If any brother is slightly attracted to entertaining this idea, I suggest the readings and study of Plato's *Republic* or Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*, in order to clearly realize the dangers of politics in an organization such ours. Politics involve manipulation and if a brother promotes or gets involved in this kind of low tactics, he is acting against the fundamentals of our brotherhood, ergo, he is acting against his brother, thus, he is *not* a true brother. Thank you for allowing me to make this clarification.

Second clarification: Being bold and defiant doesn't necessarily mean brazen or even antagonistic, although at times I am and like to be this way... but I do not present anything but a positive challenge.

Free thought allows you to do your own thinking, parting from reason and logic. Freethinkers see no pride in the blind maintenance of ancient superstitions or self-effacing prostration before divine tyrants known only through primitive "revelations." Freethought is respectable. Freethought is truly free. We are a plurality of individuals thinking, free from restraints of orthodoxy, allowing ideas to be tested, discarded or adopted. Freethinkers are convinced that religious claims have not withstood the tests of reason. Not only is there nothing to be gained by believing an untruth, but there is everything to lose when we sacrifice the indispensable tool of reason on the altar of superstition. Most freethinkers consider religion to be not only untrue, but harmful. It has been used to justify war, slavery, sexism, racism, homophobia, mutilations, intolerance, and oppression of minorities as well as control of majorities. The totalitarianism of religious absolutes chokes progress.

I have the incentive to pursue the development of this topic for very specific reasons:

First, to illustrate to our new brothers a very important landmark, a fundamental aspect of our fraternity, secondly, to provide a challenge to them, and why not...to the brethren at large.

Thirdly, to set my mind at ease.

What is a freethinker? The subject is inexhaustible.

The United Grand Lodge of England extends the doctrine to require that freemasons should be free thinkers, allow them to express their thoughts and be unrestricted in their actions! (I am doing exactly that) and continues... and involves the food for thought.

The giving of the tools is great, the meaning of these tools is sublime, but the way to learn how to use them... is paramount!

Free thought is a philosophical viewpoint that holds that belief should be formed on the basis of scientific process and logical reasoning and not be influenced by emotion, authority, tradition, or any dogma. The cognitive application of free thought is known as freethinking, and practitioners of free thought are known as freethinkers.

The term freethinker emerged toward the end of the seventeenth century in England to describe those who stood in opposition to the institution of the Church and of literal belief in the Bible. The beliefs of these individuals were centred on the concept that people could understand and appreciate the world through consideration of nature.

Such positions were formally documented for the first time in 1697 by William Molyneux in a widely publicized letter to John Locke. In France, the concept first appeared in publication in 1765 when Denis Diderot, Jean le Rond d'Alembert, and Voltaire included an article on Libre-Penseur in their *Encyclopedie*. The European free thought concepts spread so widely that by the nineteenth century even places as remote as the Jotunheimen in Norway had well-known freethinkers, such as Jo Gjeende.

The *Freethinker* magazine was first published in Britain in 1881.

The year 1600 is hailed by many as the beginning of the era of modern free thought, as it is marked by the execution in Italy of Giordano Bruno by the Holy Inquisition, an office of the Vatican that today and since 1908 continues to exist and work under the name and title of Congregation for Doctrine of Faith.

Giordano Bruno was born in 1548, he was an Italian philosopher, priest, and cosmologist. Bruno is known for his mnemonic system based upon organized knowledge and as an early proponent of the idea of an infinite and homogeneous universe. He was burnt at the stake in Rome, 17 February 1600, as an heretic by the Catholic Inquisition.

Bruno is seen by some as the first martyr for science.

The Enlightenment was less a set of ideas than it was a set of attitudes, at its core was a critical questioning of traditional institutions, customs, and morals. Some classifications of this period also include seventeenth-century philosophy, which is typically known as the Age of Reason.

The term "Age of Enlightenment" can more narrowly refer to the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment, which advocated reason as the primary basis of authority. Developing in France, Britain and Germany, the Enlightenment influenced most of Europe, including Russia and Scandinavia. The era is marked by such political changes as governmental consolidation, nation-creation, greater rights for common people, and a decline in the influence of authoritarian institutions such as the nobility and church and their respective concordats. It was an age of optimism, tempered by the realistic recognition of the sad state of the human condition which was promoted and brought to life as a consequence from

Church control. The need of major reform was very necessary.

seventeenth century philosophy in the Western World is generally regarded as being the start of modern philosophy, and a departure from the medieval approach, especially Scholasticism.

It is often called the Age of Reason and is considered to succeed the Renaissance philosophy era (Copernicus, Luther, Bruno, Francis Bacon, to name just a few of the most illustrious exponents) and of course Rene Descartes the French philosopher, mathematician, scientist and writer, whose works were in 1663 placed on the *Index of Prohibited Books* by the Pope. This index remained in force until until 1966.

The Age of Reason precedes the Age of Enlightenment, by deduction and as a natural correlation; reason had to come before enlightenment.

The Age of Reason it is of paramount importance for us, for it is the era of humanity where the reality and essence of humanity finally raised against oppression and its dogmas.

We must read study and remember this era and its players and their works if we do not want to succumb to the "intellectuality of the dark ages" again, as it is happening in other countries today.

I would like to revisit the importance of such a freethinker as Descartes. Descartes' theory provided the basis for the calculus of Newton and Leibniz, by applying infinitesimal calculus to the tangent line problem, thus permitting the evolution of that branch of modern mathematics. This appears even more astounding considering that the work was just intended as an example to his *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* (Discourse on the Method to Rightly Conduct the Reason and Search for the Truth in Sciences, better known under the shortened title *Discours de la méthode*).

Descartes' rule of signs is also a commonly used method to determine the number of positive and negative zeros of a polynomial.

Descartes created analytic geometry, and discovered an early form of the law of conservation of momentum. He outlined his views on the universe in his *Principles of Philosophy*.

Descartes also made contributions to the field of optics. He showed by using geometric construction and the law of refraction (also known as Descartes' law) that the angular radius of a rainbow is 42 degrees (i.e. the angle subtended at the eye by the edge of the rainbow and the ray passing from the sun through the rainbow's centre is 42°). He also independently discovered the law of reflection, and his essay on optics was the first published mention of this law.

One of Descartes most enduring legacies was his development of Cartesian geometry which uses algebra to describe geometry. He also invented the notation which uses superscripts to indicate powers or exponents, for example the 2 used in x^2 to indicate squaring.

Cartesian Dualism set the agenda for philosophical discussion of the mind-body problem for many years after Descartes' death. The question of how a nonmaterial mind can influence a material body, without invoking supernatural explanations, remains an enigma to this day.

All this immense body of thought, such a tremendous contribution to the betterment of humankind was totally suppressed.

The anti-freethinkers will undoubtedly rush to some conclusion and justification in an effort to always be proven right: Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

This clearly defines the danger of the anti-freethinker, of the enemy forces obtuse fallacies and clearly expose why the whole world had been set back in progress and balanced wealth, something inexistent from times immemorial. It is up to us to allow the change to happen.

The argument from ignorance, also known as *argumentum ad ignorantiam* ("appeal to ignorance") or argument by lack of imagination is

a logical fallacy in which it is claimed that a premise, an idea, is only true because it has not been proven false.

In deism: (Paine, Jefferson and others) Deistic thinking has existed since ancient times (e.g., in philosophers such as Heraclitus and most especially Plato, who envisaged God as the Demiurge or 'craftsman') in many cultures. The word deism is generally used to refer to the movement toward natural theology or freethinking that occurred in seventeenth-century Europe, and specifically in Britain. (Note: Natural theology, thus, is that part of the philosophy of religion dealing with describing the nature of the gods, or, in monotheism, arguing for or against attributes or non-attributes of God, and especially the existence of God, purely philosophically, that is, without recourse to any special or supposedly supernatural revelation.

Natural theology is theology based on reason and ordinary experience, explaining the gods rationally, as part of the physical world. Thus it is distinguished from revealed theology (or revealed religion) which is based on scripture and religious experiences of various kinds; and also from transcendental theology, theology from *a priori* reasoning (Immanuel Kant and others)

The new awareness of the explanatory power of universal natural law also produced a growing scepticism about religious staples as the violations of natural law, miracles, and the books that reported them. Whereas the Age of Faith found its truths in religious imposition, the Age of Reason found its truths in facts, observable natural phenomena and individual human reasoning.

How freethinkers are being attacked

It is no secret that we freemasons were, and are, under pressure from different religious groups, and as a consequence, from sectors of society. This indirect and cowardly pressure arrives to the public in general, worldwide, in an extreme form of lies, defamation and libel. If we look at history, we will not be surprised at the deceitful tools used by these organizations in their ardour to eliminate us.

The forces behind these extremist groups employ banal excuses and empty concepts of conspiracy in order to attain its purpose—our destruction—and the simple minds echo this campaign, falling in what I define as "mental crassness".

I have used the term "extremist" since the definition of such follows into the purported characteristics of an extremist group that comprise the following: parody, myth makers... etc.

The term extremist is as a general rule exonymic (i.e. applied by others to a group rather than by a group labelling itself).

"Extremism" is not a stand-alone characteristic. The attitude or behaviour of an "extremist" may be represented as being in a spectrum which ranges from mild interest through "obsession" to "fanaticism" and eventually "extremism"

Extremism is defined as:

1. A tendency to character assassination (Character assassination is an intentional attempt to influence the portrayal or reputation of a particular person or group whether living or historical, in such a way as to cause others to develop an extremely negative, unethical or unappealing perception of the object.)
2. Name calling and labelling.
3. The making of irresponsible, sweeping generalizations.
4. The failure to give adequate proof of assertions made.
5. Advocacy of double standards (When judicial processes are applied more strictly to some people more than others, such double standards are seen as unjust because they violate a basic maxim of modern legal jurisprudence: that all parties should stand equal before the law.)

6. A tendency to view opponents and critics as essentially evil.
7. A Manichean (bipolar) world view and position.
8. Advocating some degree of censorship and/or repression of their opponents and critics.
9. Identifying them selves by reference to who their enemies are.
10. A tendency to substitute intimidation for argument.
11. Widely use slogans, buzzwords and "thought-terminating clichés".
12. Claim some kind of moral or other superiority over others.
13. Doomsday thinking.
14. A tendency to believe that it is justified to do bad things in the service of a supposedly "good" cause.
15. An emphasis on emotional response, as opposed to reasoning and logical analysis.
16. Hypersensitivity and "vigilance".
17. "May claim" some kind of supernatural, mystical or divinely-inspired rationale for their beliefs and actions.
18. An inability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty.
19. "Groupthink" Stereotyping those who are opposed to the group as weak, evil, disfigured, impotent, or stupid.
20. The personalization of hostility.
21. A tendency to assume that the system is defective if one is defeated.

Be aware brethren! The enemy uses historical tactics, it will infiltrate us to try to corrode us from inside, it will try to corrupt our thoughts and provoke us to the extreme; for us to use politics in our works and for our works make us weak from within. How much we have to thank for our immovable Landmarks and the origins of our brethren once again.

Having identified and defined the forces against us, it is now the moment to identify and define the strategy that will shield us from this negative affluence against our beloved organization, a strategy older as time.

This challenge comprises two phases, both under the definition of "Free thinking":

Phase I:

This requires Will and Awareness, both for the great obligation of preparing yourselves, mentally and intellectually to be better men, to be better armed and prepared. Intellectually armed that is!

In following the premises of a great thinker, writer and philosopher that said: In order to maintain, enhance and solidify the aspects of our integrity we must enlighten ourselves.

Ipsa Scientia Potestas Est "Knowledge is Power", said Sir Francis Bacon. I challenge you all to be powerful!

To give a simple speech that repeats condensed historical and academic facts is to fall into the realm where only the wisdom of a fool will apply, but fools are not allowed here. Freethinkers are. Free thought is a natural condition of man and a natural right of man, we as freemasons, are born with the gift and the obligation to develop free thought, if not, just remember what you were asked before crossing through the lodge door for the first time.

In order to start from scratch as a freethinker, we have to contemplate the definition of a postulate, not the other way around. In order to have a postulate we must have first a definition. In order to have a thorough definition we must scrap all useless elements that might blur the transparency of this definition as well as the elements that may embellish the definition in question.

To begin with, we must clear the way of all the nonsense that it is been ascribed to Freemasonry by the extremists which translate the term freethinkers into the wrongly synonymous of an atheist, and the political inept, that have stamped us as a group of subversive conspirators.

The gentlest description that I have read lately defined freemasons is... "the partisans of evil"!

I will reiterate and emphasize to our brethren and mostly to our new brothers, again, that in order to become a true freethinker, politics and Religion *must* be set aside, keeping *always* fresh in our minds that these two tools of dissention are *not* allowed in our lodges. I personally believe that this is one of the most important fundamentals of Freemasonry and I repeat: The two topics that historically separate man are not allowed in our lodges and I deeply believe that this is one of the main reasons why we have lasted so long and survived so far.

PHASE II: Identification:

The anti-freethinker abhors reasoning. It limits human progress, it restrains freedom of choice, it uses fear as a tool for control, which after all, it is what everything it has been all about, and still today.

The anti-freethinker spreads lies about us because we cannot be beaten because we are united, because we are so inextricably interwoven in our principles, our Landmarks.

Because we are united by virtue and our zenith is brotherly love, relief and truth, and that extends to humanity as a whole,... but always "more so to a brother freemason".

As a reminder to our new brothers, the four cardinal virtues are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice. Our main motto is Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Our precepts are also part of the foundations of our brotherhood and of our strength for which we are misinterpreted and misjudged.

Because we believe what Albert Pike said, "What we do for our selves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world, remains and is immortal."

Because we are wanted 'out' by the enemy because we are "doers." We put together a plan, make it a charity and we make it happen for the good of humanity, not because we are the good guys, but because we care, we can, we reason, we believe it is right and we deliver.

Because, like Pythagoras, we are seekers of knowledge, not its possessor.

Furthermore, We... are tolerant.

- Freethinkers respect all religions. We do not gather a bunch of man from different religions to constitute a "religion salad", if you do not have a religion, yet believe in a higher power, you are also welcome.
- Freethinkers give respect to all the illuminated humans that had been in this planet and that are and will be including Jesus, Budha, Mohammed, Ghandi and others.
- Freethinkers respect all the sacred books that exist, not because it is *the* truth...but because we respect and allow for free thought.
- Freethinkers respect the way of thinking of others and even when critical by nature, the understanding is their essence to survive in this life with peace and harmony.
- Freethinkers give freedom to others to think and rule their life to the best of their ability.
- Freethinkers respect the social structure that they create by exercising their freedom.
- Freethinkers follow the basic principles in what all religions are build.
- Freethinkers respect the laws that are to preserve freedom and harmony between humans and share it with all creatures.

The "enemy" is towing us into a "dirty war". They are driving brothers against brothers, and against us. Parting from their millenary fairy tale, they are falsely accusing Freemasonry of taking sides with historical totalitarian states, which as we well know, we, among other, where the victims of these regimes, and, we freemasons, fought great wars and revolutions against exactly these kinds of oppressions. But the non-

freethinker listener, does not know this, they take the word at face value from the “assertive fallacies” and become the flag bearers of a lost cause, which reminds me of a quote I wrote for the preface of my book *TAOS (The Architecture of Singing)*:

“Mediocrity is the mother of crassness, we thank that it is such a heavy burden for the bearers that eventually they fall by its own weight. The only consequence and detriment to others is that in the mean time they occupy some time and space.”

The non freethinkers, the ones that occupy time and space, are passive sponsors of a none contributively negative flow against progress. I believe that it should be part of our obligation, to help shed some light in their blind path. If they are able to see it, the better, if not, the light will illuminate a path for those that are blessed with the gift of discerning and eventually will come to agree that the new path of enlightenment will provide for a new course for those who can learn to better work and best agree and then, only then, the world will have hope of being a better place.

The enemy is so blind in their dirty war against freethinkers that out of their ignorance and blindness they continue to use their obsolete credos and dogmas as a tool to discredit our organization. Reason will always prevail in the face of mysticism. We freethinkers do not have or base our grounds on false foundations, lies or false documents, we use historical legends and occurrences to portray a moral value or assert on a humanistic lesson, but at the end, it always part from reason. The enemy uses a myriad of fallacies as tools to combat freethinkers. The ones that are the most significant are based in their historical moral tales and the distortion of the truth. We are defied by the enemy for only one reason; we cannot and will not be controlled.

The tools against us are used as a paragon to mend their own demons, to shadow their own historical fiascos, frustrations and failures.

The enemy parts from a unique controversial authority contested and doubted more and more as times go by. But most importantly, they base their belief and attack us parting from unreasonable concepts that are basically what logic defines as: A Bare Assertion Fallacy.

The bare assertion fallacy is a fallacy in formal logic where a premise in an argument is assumed to be true merely because it says that it is true.

One form of the fallacy may be summarized as follows:

- Fact 1: X claims statement A.
- Fact 2: X claims that X is not lying.
- Conclusion: Therefore, A is true.

Put into practice, this fallacy would read:

- Fact 1: This book says that goats can fly.
- Fact 2: This book says that it is true.
- Conclusion: Therefore, goats can fly.

The Freethinker may apply the rules of logic to *any* book he may want to.

- To emphasize the importance of this postulates and the importance and seriousness of my message, I cannot give better example than the following:
- It was said:

“Secular schools can never be tolerated because such schools have no religious instruction, and a general moral instruction without a religious foundation is built on air; consequently, all character training and religion must be derived from faith.”

Many people may agree with this statement entirely. The only problem is that is part of a speech made during the negotiations of 26 April 1933 by Adolf Hitler leading to the Nazi-Vatican Concordant.

Do we freethinkers have a basis for morality without religion?
I believe so.

There is no great mystery to morality. Most freethinkers employ the simple yardsticks of reason and kindness. As author Barbara Walker notes: “What is moral is simply what does not hurt others. Kindness . . . sums up everything.”

Most freethinkers are humanists, basing morality on human needs, not imagined “cosmic absolutes.” This also embraces a respect for our planet, including the other animals extending to feminist principles of equality. The British psychologist Margaret Knight : “Morality must be a human construct and not a religious one: Why? Because moral values are a fundamental part of human life, every bit as real as the law of gravity. And people are generally intuitively cognizant of their moral obligations. But what guarantees the validity, source and foundations? Reason! Not dogma, emotion or much less authority, because these are already historically proven to be tyrannically dominant and power thirst. (I will personally ad...controlling!)... Therefore, moral cannot be dictated in the name of any supernatural organization but from the basic principles of equality.” And I couldn’t agree more.

Moral dilemmas involve a conflict of values, requiring a careful use of reason to weigh the outcomes. Freethinkers argue that religion promotes a dangerous and inadequate “morality” based on blind obedience, unexamined ultimatums, and “pie-in-the-sky” rewards of heaven or gruesome threats of hell, among which conversion by torture, extortion and even death were all not uncommon until very recently. Freethinkers try to base actions on their consequences to real, living human beings. A good example is the Law of the Land, most based on reason, parting from the premise of precedents on respect for our human fellows.

Freethinkers are naturalistic. Truth is the degree to which a statement corresponds with reality. Reality is limited to that which is directly perceivable through our natural senses or indirectly ascertained through the proper use of reason.

Reason is a tool of critical thought that limits the truth of a statement according to the strict tests of the scientific method. For a statement to be considered true it must be testable (what evidence or repeatable experiments confirm it), falsifiable (what, in theory, would disconfirm it, and have all attempts to disprove it failed), parsimonious (is it the simplest explanation, requiring the fewest assumptions), and logical (is it free of contradictions, non sequiturs, or irrelevant ad hominem character attacks).

Free thought is an intellectual doctrine built on the proposition that humankind can understand the world and govern itself through reason, critical thinking, logical analysis, and scientific inquiry, without ancient and irrelevant traditions, divine intervention, or consideration of the supernatural. On this basis it is inherently a humanistic and naturalistic worldview.

Freethinkers are mental iconoclasts who will not hesitate to point out the inconsistencies or outright falsehoods of ideas. In free thought there are very few taboos, if any at all. Any proposition is open to investigation, as long as the idea is capable of being scrutinized and is not intentionally shrouded in “mystery” or hidden away to protect it from careful examination.

Free thought is free from prejudices, preconceived notions, superstition, dogma, and coercion and although it began (as a term) in seventeenth century Europe, most notably England and France, as opposition to oppressive religious institutions and as the rejection of established authority. Today the term encompasses opposition to any prejudices, superstitions, or forms of coercion, and in this way encourages scepticism and inquiry.

The freethinker has to base his evaluations and convictions on facts, not in ephemeral theories that not only retract from the essence but distort

the truth.

In any right triangle, the area of the square whose side is the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right angle) is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares whose sides are the two legs (the two sides that meet at a right angle).

The Pythagorean Theorem

Pythagorus' thoughts, propositions and postulates are empirically passed from generation through generation, thus, how can anyone say that this immense body of scientific work was not the work of Euclid's but of someone else?

What is the important fact in all this for the freethinker? Only one point, fact and reason: "a line can be drawn between two points" Pythagoras' teachings were based on respect, tolerance, and the union of religions and peoples. So we can safely say that he was freethinker!

And if you think that this example is just the show-off of a pretentious scholastic reference, just take a closer look at the sublime carpet design on our lodge (Vancouver Lodge No. 68), analyze and reason, and you will stop wondering and become a true freethinker.

Freethinkers postulate:

Human progress is our cause, liberty of thought our supreme wish, freedom of conscience our mission, and the guarantee of equal rights to all people everywhere our ultimate goal!

Scottish Rite

Man once surrendering his reason, has no remaining guard against absurdities the most monstrous, and like a ship without rudder, is the sport of every wind.

Thomas Jefferson to James Smith, 1822.

From Albert Pike we learn:

"A few rudimentary lessons in architecture, a few universally admitted maxims of morality, a few unimportant traditions, whose real meaning is unknown or misunderstood, will no longer satisfy the earnest inquirer after masonic truth. Let who so is content with these, seek to climb no higher. He who desires to understand the harmonious and beautiful proportions of Freemasonry must read, study, reflect, digest, and discriminate. The true freemason is an ardent seeker after knowledge; and he knows that both books and the antique symbols of masonry are vessels which come down to us full-freighted with the intellectual riches of the Past; and that in the lading of these argosies (rich supply) is much that sheds light on the history of Freemasonry, and proves its claim to be acknowledged the benefactor of mankind, born in the very cradle of the race.

The secrets of our brother, when communicated to us, must be sacred, if they be such as the law of our country warrants us to keep. We are required to keep none other, when the law that we are called on to obey is indeed a law, by having emanated from the only source of power, the People. Edicts which emanate from the mere arbitrary will of a despotic power, contrary to the law of God or the Great Law of Nature, destructive of the inherent rights of man, violative of the right of free thought, free speech, free conscience, it is lawful to rebel against and strive to abrogate."

We freemasons *will* survive, we will overcome any storm as we have been doing for centuries. It is now up to us, to the individuals, this band of mavericks, freethinkers, to cement ourselves deeper in the grounds of reason to clear out any of our own incongruence, to re-evaluate our

concepts and miss concepts, parting from logical and analytical analysis. I present to you a question which will contribute to initiate this new approach. I ask:

Which premise is the most important for the freethinker?

Which is the element of conscience that will allow us to discern better?

The perception of reality or reality itself?

Free thinkers. Those who, abandoning the religious truths and moral dictates of the Christian Revelation, and accepting no dogmatic teaching on the ground of authority, base their beliefs on the unfettered (emancipated) findings of reason alone"

Catholic Encyclopaedia

My reply, from Lucidus Annaeus Seneca: Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false and by the rulers as useful! In 1713, when Anthony Collins wrote his *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, which gained substantial popularity in spite of his unorthodoxy, he was not an atheist or even an agnostic. In his own words, "Ignorance is the foundation of atheism, and freethinking the cure of it.

My paper should have been entitled "Je accuse" and find a closer paragon to that of the famous work of Emile Sola...because in our defence, the accuser becomes the accused by exposing its own historical fallacy.

Over in Europe, there are some grand jurisdictions that require freemasons to tackle research assignments in order to progress through the three degrees and further. Furthermore, they are less inclined to dash through the three degrees as it is done elsewhere. I can't help but believe these brothers have a better appreciation and insight for the foundations of Freemasonry, thus, better prepared as freethinkers.

My ideal, my dream, is to see that our lodges filled with true and enlightened freethinkers, man with an abundance of knowledge who will transcend the limits of Canada and reach the world, I dream of my lodge, the brotherhood, giving the example of a new Illumination. My ideal as a freemason is to share my thoughts with men with new constructive ideas, actions and acts, but most of all, with the building of new exponents. Men who will portray the clear and ultimate ideals of Freemasonry and, with a library of wisdom, propose the good of humanity and equality for all, starting from the fundamental and irrefutable postulates of reason.

If now, here, today, one of you, my brothers entertain, even remotely the same thought as our masonic brother Voltaire, who once said: " I don't agree with a single word you say, but I'll defend to the death your right for you to say it!

Even this humble thought will make all my efforts worthwhile.

For my closing, I have chosen from centuries of great thinkers, out of a myriad of visionaries, intelligent and great men and freethinkers, a simple First Nations fable.

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "my son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One, the black one, is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

"The other, the white one, is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, tolerance, compassionate and faithful."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "which wolf wins?"

Wisdom literature

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
BY W. BRO. DANIEL J. ZRYMIAK, ST. JAMES LODGE NO. 80

Introduction

This presentation is an extension of some research I had done while I was the Worshipful Master of my lodge. As Master, I had committed to memory many parts of the ritual. I recognized the phrase "Where the name of God is invoked, we trust no danger will ensue" as it resembled a common phrase, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord". I researched this, and found that it was part of Psalm 118.

There were other passages from that Psalm 118 that were closely aligned with the Entered Apprentice ceremony.

6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.

Compare to the question of "In Whom do you place your trust?" where the candidate responds, "In God".

What can man do to me?

7 The LORD is with me; he is my helper.

I will look in triumph on my enemies.

14 The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

19 Open for me the gates of righteousness;

Compare to the entry past the Inner Guard protecting the West Gate

I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

20 This is the gate of the LORD

through which the righteous may enter.

22 The stone the builders rejected

Compare to the charge at the Rough Ashlar at the North East angle has become the capstone;

24 This is the day the LORD has made;

Follow up to the affirmative response of trusting in God, and the invocation where no harm will ensue.

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.

27 The LORD is God,

Compare to the removal of the blindfold after the EA Obligation is delivered.

and he has made his light shine upon us.

This was more than a coincidence, and it made me very curious about other passages from the Volume of the Sacred Law, and their relevance and direct application into masonic ritual and practice

Psalm 23 "Valley of the Shadow of Death"

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Ecclesiastes 12 – "Remember now thy Creator"

1 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;

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

4 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 musick shall be brought low;

5 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:

6 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.

7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

I investigated the Volume of Sacred Law and researched what was common about these particular items. Both the Psalms and Ecclesiastes were referenced as "Wisdom Literature", and this opened up an area of interest for me.

Objectives

There are four objectives for this particular study

Consider masonic pursuit of wisdom. Freemasonry implores us to seek Wisdom as it is one of the pillars of Freemasonry, along with Strength and Beauty. King Solomon, who was a prominent figure in Masonic history is seen as the epitome of Wisdom, which we should emulate in many respects.

Investigate Wisdom Literature as a source of applicable Wisdom for Freemasons. Wisdom Literature needs to be defined and clarified, and through this awareness, an interest can be cultivated.

Examine the books and passages of Wisdom Literature. Review what the books are, indicate the background or historical theories of those credited with authorship.

Trace back to Freemasonry. Given that Freemasonry has drawn specifically from the assets and artifacts of the Volume of the Sacred Law, it would be interesting to identify particular areas that reflect the teachings and tenets of Wisdom Literature.

Wisdom in Freemasonry

As mentioned, Wisdom is one of the three Great Pillars along with Strength and Beauty. Wisdom is personified by King Solomon, symbol is Sun. As an attribute, Wisdom is gradually acquired over time through a combination of teaching and experience. Benjamin Franklin expressed that experience is a dear teacher, but fools will learn from no other.

The Volume of Sacred Law is touted as being the resource that the

Almighty deigned to have His Divine Will in that Holy Book, than by any other means. It makes sense that freemasons who are interested should consult the Volume of the Sacred Law to explore their cultural, philosophical, and religious virtues.

Wisdom Literature actually extends beyond the Bible. Wisdom Literature also refers to a genre of writings from Ancient Near East. Due to its relevance, this Wisdom Literature is actually canonical in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. This transcends dogma, and creates common ground between religions and beliefs, much like Freemasonry in general. There are also equivalent forms of Wisdom Literature found in Indian, Persian, Egyptian religions. Wisdom Literature is an inclusive and convergent element of different religions.

Books of Wisdom Literature as noted in the Bible include the following.

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Wisdom of Solomon
- Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

Job

Job was prosperous and devout, confronted with losses and suffering. In spite of this, Job continued his faith without cursing God. Job was rewarded for his patience with restored health, riches, holy life, and happy death. The Wisdom comes from the Lessons of Virtue, Honor, and Mercy which are prominent themes in Freemasonry.

Psalms

There are seven classifications of Psalms

- Hymns
- Individual Laments
- Community Laments
- Songs of Trust
- Individual Thanksgiving
- Royal Psalms
- Wisdom Psalms

Psalms are used in worship and alternated based on day or event.

They are believed to have been written by and for King David and King Solomon, which coincides with the timing that the Temple of Solomon was built. Notable examples of Psalms that have transcended into popular culture include 23rd (The Lord is my Shepherd – profiled earlier) and 137th Psalm.

Psalm 137

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
- 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
- 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
- 4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?
- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
- 6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Proverbs

Proverbs have historically been considered the work of King Solomon, but in fact this section was written by multiple authors. The format and style is similar to Egyptian Proverb literature as teachings are

demonstrated through examples of right and wrong actions. Proverbs are popular as they are applicable to real-life situations and can be pragmatically applied.

Proverbs 12

- 23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.
- 24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.
- 25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.
- 26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.
- 27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.
- 28 In the way of righteousness is life: and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

In the examples, a quick review proclaims the benefits of being discreet, diligent, and righteous in order to gain authority, prosperity, and a positive life.

Ecclesiastes

The author "Qohelet" or Teacher implies he is Solomon. This passage is written as a narrative to provide reflections on meaning and best way of life. The overall theme is the promotion of wisdom and enjoyment of life

Notable passages include Chapter 12 (Remember now thy Creator) which was referenced above, and Chapter 3 (To everything there is a season) which became part of our popular culture thanks to a popular folk-rock song.

Ecclesiastes 3

- 1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
- 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
- 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Song of Solomon (Song of Songs)

This refers to poems of love between groom and bride, and is also an allegorical interpretation of love between God and mankind. The appeal of this section comes from the stimulating descriptions of visual imagery, which provoke the reader.

Song of Solomon 7

- 6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!
- 7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
- 8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;
- 9 And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

- 10 I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.
 11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.
 12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

Wisdom of Solomon

This chapter is not in the King James Bible—but Catholic and Orthodox. The author claims to be Solomon, but is of Greek origin from Alexandria. Along with the wisdom provided, this portion is significant because it introduces concept of "Son of God" referenced in Gospel of Matthew. The description of Wisdom as an essential component of life is detailed.

- 7:21 And all such things as are hid and not foreseen, I have learned: for wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me.
 7:22 For in her is the spirit of understanding: holy, one, manifold, subtle, eloquent, active, undefiled, sure, sweet, loving that which is good, quick, which nothing hindereth, beneficent,
 7:23 Gentle, kind, steadfast, assured, secure, having all power, overseeing all things, and containing all spirits, intelligible, pure, subtle.
 7:24 For wisdom is more active than all active things: and reacheth everywhere by reason of her purity.
 7:25 For she is a vapour of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her.
 7:26 For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness.
 7:27 And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself the same, she reneweth all things, and through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls, she maketh the friends of God and prophets.
 7:28 For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.
 7:29 For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it.
 7:30 For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom.

Ecclesiasticus

This was written and compiled by Ben Sirach. Like the Book of Wisdom, this is also canon in Catholic and Orthodox, but not in King James version. Sirach uses a narrative form which is similar to Psalms in use of allegorical storytelling, and similar to Proverbs as having teachings applicable to all conditions of life. The passage shown below comes very close to the theme of the "Remember Now Thy Creator" portion of Ecclesiastes.

- 18:25 Remember poverty is the time of abundance, and the necessities of poverty in the day of riches.
 18:26 From the morning until the evening the time shall be changed, and all these are swift in the eyes of God.
 18:27 A wise man will fear in every thing, and in the days of sine will beware of sloth.
 18:28 Every man of understanding knoweth wisdom, and will give praise to him that findeth her.
 18:29 They that were of good understanding in words, have also done wisely themselves: and have understood truth and justice, and have poured forth pro- verbs and judgments.

- 18:30 Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will.
 18:31 If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies.
 18:32 Take no pleasure in riotous assemblies, be they ever so small: for their concertation is continual.
 18:33 Make not thyself poor by borrowing to contribute to feasts when thou hast nothing in thy purse : for thou shalt be an enemy to thy own life.

Traceability to Freemasonry

Like Freemasonry, Wisdom is synonymous with fear of God and faithful devotion. Wisdom Literature is directly referenced in Lodge Ritual as shown by the particular examples. Coincidentally, it also provides practical understanding and advice for living. Some references describe this as Wisdom Literature and Poetry, as it is provocative writing targeted to stimulate emotional reactions, and also to instill a memorable impression.

Contemporary Wisdom in Freemasonry

Masonic "God" (Great Architect, Grand Geometrician) is involved in all human life as an active participant and a helpful guide and protector. Like Wisdom Literature, Masonic writings are "for purpose" rather than "for exhibition". The focus is not on the elegance of the language, but on the practicality of the message.

Freemasonry is based on fundamental principles and virtues, which remain constant while evolving to be relevant with the modern times. In this way, though the context may change, the core message remains the same.

Consider the "Address To The Brethren" as shown by this extract.

A lodge of freemasons is the temple of peace, harmony and brotherly love; nothing is allowed to enter which has the remotest tendency to disturb the quietude of its pursuit.

A calm enquiry into the beauty of wisdom and virtue, and the study of moral geometry, constitute the chief employments in the tyled recesses of the lodge.

The lessons of virtue which proceed from the East, like rays of brilliant light from the rising sun, illuminate the West and South, and as the work proceeds, are carefully imbibed by the workmen.

Thus, while wisdom contrives the plan, strength lends its able support to the moral fabric, and beauty adorns it with curious and cunning workmanship.

The writing is poetic and provocative, but also blends figurative imagery with items for practical application in a modern day society. In this sense, the characteristics of Wisdom Literature have been inherited and adopted into contemporary masonic ritual.

Conclusion

Acceptance of Wisdom does not exclude beliefs or forms of worship. Wisdom is pragmatic not dogmatic, as an individual can practice Wisdom regardless of race, creed, or personal orientation. It is common across multiple religions and cultures.

Wisdom is accessible at any level, from novice to advanced. Brethren can always learn, and the benefit of Wisdom is that it is collective and cumulative so that Wisdom can be shared and multiplied. Wisdom Literature and the works of King Solomon are the foundation of Freemasonry.

The Life Membership Fund

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
BY M.W. BRO. EDWARD A. CLARKE, GRAND MASTER 1980-1981

- R37.**
- (1) There shall be established a Life Membership Fund commencing the 1st day of January, 1992.
 - (2) A member who is and has been in good standing as a dues paying member for five consecutive years of this Grand Jurisdiction or of any other jurisdiction recognized by this Grand Lodge, shall be eligible to be enrolled as a Life Member on payment of the fee as hereinafter set forth. (annual dues of the Lodge of which the Brother is a member multiplied as follows:

(A) For a Brother aged 26 to 35 years	20 times
(B) For a Brother aged 36 to 45 years	18 times
(C) For a Brother aged 46 to 55 years	15 times
(D) For a Brother aged 56 to 65 years	12 times
(E) For a Brother aged 66 years /over	10 times

)
 - (4) The prescribed fee shall be paid to the lodge of which the brother is a member which fee shall be forwarded to Grand Lodge to be held, in trust, and invested for the credit of the lodge in a fund known as the Life Membership Fund. Upon remitting the fee Grand Lodge shall be informed of the full name of the brother becoming a Life Member.
 - (5) There shall be no administration fees payable to Grand Lodge in connection with the Life Membership Fund.
 - (6) The Fund shall be kept separate from the ordinary funds of Grand Lodge and shall be in the custody of the Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary and the Finance Committee, and such portion of the fund as shall be available for investment or re-investment shall be invested by them in such securities of high quality and low risk as they consider prudent and appropriate without being limited to those investments authorized by law for Trustees, save and except that no investments shall be made in mortgage of real estate.
 - (7) The Committee on Finance shall advise and direct the Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary as to the safe- keeping of the securities of the Fund and as to the purchase, sale, transfer or exchange of such securities.
 - (8) No purchase, sale, transfer or exchange shall be made except on the written order of the Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary and a member of the Committee on Finance or two of them, one of whom shall be a member of the Committee on Finance.
 - (9) The income accruing from the Fund shall be remitted to each lodge according to their *pro rata* share of the income each year ending December 31st in the following month of March together with a statement showing the net return, the total value of the Fund and the amount held in the Fund to the credit of the lodge.
 - (10) Life Memberships shall be transferable as follows:
 - (A) In the event of a Lodge surrendering or forfeiting its Charter, a member holding a Life Membership in this fund shall be entitled at any time to direct that his Life Membership and its value in the Life Membership Fund be transferred to such Lodge with which he wishes to affiliate in this Grand Lodge; the value of the Life Membership of those members who do not affiliate along with the value of the Life Membership of those Brethren of that Lodge who have died shall be held in the Life Membership Fund for the benefit of all participating lodges in the Life Membership Fund on a pro rata basis, or
 - (B) In the event of two or more lodges amalgamating, all funds of the Lodges concerned shall be credited to the account of the newly-formed Lodge, or
 - (C) In the event of a brother who has a life membership in the fund affiliating with another lodge in this grand jurisdiction and demitting from the lodge in which he holds a life membership he shall be entitled to have the value of his interest in the Life Membership Fund transferred to the credit of the lodge into which he has affiliated providing however:
 - (i) Should the cost of his Life Membership be less than the amount which would be required in the Lodge into which he has affiliated at the time he became a Life Member the Brother shall pay the additional amount to the Lodge into which he has affiliated;
 - (ii) Should such cost be more than the amount which would be required in the Lodge into which he has affiliated at the time he became a life member then the whole of such cost shall be transferred to the credit of the Lodge into which he has affiliated.
 - (D) A brother presently receiving a benefit from his lodge as being a non-resident member, and purchasing a life membership under such benefit but who subsequently becomes disentitled to such benefit shall be required to pay the difference between the amount he has paid and the amount he would have paid not being a nonresident if he wishes to continue his life membership but should he not wish to continue his life membership he shall be entitled to a return of the amount he paid for such life membership and pay such dues as may be required.
 - (E) Nothing in this section should limit the number of times a Life Member may demit and affiliate.
 - (11) Those Lodges presently administering their own Life Membership Plan may remit such funds in their Life Membership Plan together with the names of those brethren holding such Life Memberships to Grand Lodge to become part of their participation in the Life Membership Plan.
 - (12) In the event of two or more lodges amalgamating after the 31st day of December, 1991, of which one or more had provisions in its By-laws providing for a Life Membership Plan it shall be permissible for such amalgamated lodge to make provision in its By-laws to extend to the members of such amalgamated lodge a Life Membership Plan incorporating the benefits which previously existed in the By-laws of such former lodge or lodges.
 - (13) The Lodge shall be responsible for issuing dues cards to Life Members annually which shall expire on the 31st December in each year.

Our Grand Masters' Themes, Past and Present

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
BY R.W. BRO. WILLIAM R. CAVE, JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN

“Be A Good Mason”

When I was first informed that the newly elected Junior Grand Warden was honoured to be the lunchtime speaker at the Grand Masonic Day in Chilliwack I began to mentally sift through the possible topics that I could choose to speak on. It was a long list! One suggestion was that I talk about my theme but, because I'm still talking to myself about what that might be, I had to set that idea aside for now. This suggestion did however lead me to another related thought as a good first step and that was to research and understand the themes of our Past Grand Masters. The research part was easy thanks to the efforts of our Immediate Past Grand Master MW Bro. Stephen Godfrey, who had already conducted the research and provided a summary of those themes.

Interestingly, what I found was a direct relationship between those themes and the speech I made at this year's Annual Communication of our Grand Lodge in which, in part, I talked about why I chose to become a freemason and presented some observations about the characteristics of good freemasons.

In reviewing the recorded themes for our Past Grand Masters I note that there is a similar thought transmitted through each of them. In one way or another they are all exhorting us to “Be a Good Mason”; virtually every theme can find a root in, or derivation from, our masonic ritual or espoused beliefs.

Not intending to review each theme individually I will highlight some examples of what I mean:

If we go back to the first recorded “theme” in 1972 we have the words from MW Bro. Coffin's speech in which he urged the brethren, “To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield,” and stated that “Fidelity to our trust should be the paramount factor in our thoughts and actions.” Like the workmen in the temple, we are taught through our degrees to strive to find further light and seek truth (to study geometry and the liberal arts and sciences), never yielding to forces contrary to our masonic beliefs. Like the infallible plumb-rule—turning neither to the right or nor left from the path of virtue. This is a philosophy reflected in the theme of MW Bro. Tomlins: “If it's wrong, don't do it.” Further, we extend our hand in fidelity; a word whose original meaning dealt with loyalty and attentiveness to one's duty or faithfulness—the grip of a freemason is understood to be his bond. We are also reminded at the closing of each meeting that we are (using the wording from our Ancient Work) “...locking up our secrets in the safe and sacred repository of faithful breasts and uniting in the sign and under the watchword of fidelity...”

I believe that to, “Look beyond the Trees,” as MW Bro Godfrey urged, is, in part, an extension of our efforts to seek further light and learning; but it is more if we consider that we each have our figurative “Tracing Board” upon which to “lay lines and draw designs upon,” planning for immediate action and that to be undertaken in the future. We can also see elements of this concept reflected in the themes of MW Bros. MacLaurin, Wakelyn, Marsh, Gibson, Manion, and, in part, MW Bro. Reid who collectively urged us in part to “Plan”, “...prepare for the future,” and undertake planning for “Action.” These themes are by logical extension directly tied to those of MW Bros. Walls and Ferguson suggesting that,

“Actions Speak Louder than Words” and “Let's Get to Work.” These statements also reminded me of what we learn in our Initiation in a discussion of the Working Tools, “...that skill without exertion is of no avail for the heart may conceive and the head devise in vain if the hand be not quick to execute the design.”

The themes of MW Bros. Harper and McSween urge that we “[Build] Through Participation” and achieve “Strength Through Unity” which reminds one of the pillars through which we enter Freemasonry which denote, in part, strength and when conjoined stability. While we are working thus together we are also reminded by WM Bro. Baldwin to be mindful that “The master is the servant of all.” This awakens us to consider the principles of servant leadership as defined by Robert Greenleaf and expanded on by numerous authors such as Stephen Covey and a concept which many of us heard MW Bro Godfrey speak of this past year. To expand and clarify this concept I refer to the writings of the Chinese sage Lao Tzu who in approximately 600 BCE wrote *The Tao Te Ching*, a strategic treatise on servant leadership.¹ He states:

The greatest leader forgets himself
And attends to the development of others.
Good leaders support excellent workers.
Great leaders support the bottom ten percent.
Great leaders know that
The diamond in the rough
Is always found “in the rough.”

... As a curious aside, could the “diamond in the rough” bear any resemblance to the rough ashlar?

Through our degrees we are taught the lessons of the working tools and during our Initiation in the Canadian Work we learn of the fundamental principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; the Christian graces of Faith, Hope and Charity; the four cardinal virtues, namely: Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude along with the distinguishing characteristics of every freemason, which are Virtue, Honour and Mercy. If we “Get Back to Basics” as suggested by MW Bros. Grant, Carter and our current Grand Master R. Glenn Allen, it is these principles that serve to provide the foundation for defining the spirit and intent of “Basic” proper masonic conduct. These are the philosophies we live by as good freemasons and they are reflected in most of the remaining themes of the Past Grand Masters I have yet to mention; being dedicated, positive and happy, communicating more effectively, improving our image, being aware, projecting the right attitude and ultimately, in my words, “walking the talk” or, as MW Bro. Hargrove suggests, “Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only.”

Ultimately we are urged by MW Bro. Kyle to “Serve well your Craft and be so ever proud to be called a brother” and to “...be the light of spiritual wisdom, reflected by our Freemasonry that shines for all the success and benefit of all mankind.” This is similar to the guidance provided by MW Bros. McCoid and Brower-Berkhoven through a biblical reference from Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men [that they may see your good works].” Thus, as good freemasons we set the example of good citizens and will be perceived as leaders amongst men

within our communities and society as a whole.

If elected, what will my theme be in 2011-2012? I don't yet know. However, you can be sure that it will suggest we each continue to apply the principals and teachings of our good and gentle craft and "Be a Good Mason."

Grand Master's Themes

compiled by MW Bro. Stephen Godfrey

1971	Harper P. Baikie	No theme	1985	George W. Baldwin	No theme * "The master is the servant of all." – from his paper in the <i>Masonic Bulletin</i> , September 1985
1972	Frederick W. Coffin	No theme * quote from Tennyson – "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield" and "Fidelity to our trust should be the paramount factor in our thoughts and actions."	1986	Donald W. Wakelyn	A Year of Action
1973	Wilfred H.H. Rogers	No theme * Aim – to improve the image and dignity of Freemasonry in our Jurisdiction.	1987	Dennis G.J. Marsh	Another Year of Action
1974	M. Lyle Barr	No Theme	1988	David L. Gibson	A Year of Continued Action
1975	Thomas Y. McLachlan	No copy of <i>Bulletin</i> for September 1975	1989	John J. Lobban	No theme
1976	Alexander S. Mitchell	Being Happy and Communicating that Happiness to Others	1990	Douglas R. Grant	Don't Forget the Basics
1977	Edein J. Lockhart	No theme - analogy care for a garden similar as care for a Masonic garden * "Cultivate your Masonic Garden by regular attendance in your lodges' activities so that you may enjoy its benefits to the full."	1991	Edward B. Hearn	Communicate better and do it enthusiastically
1978	William L. Stirling	Let's practice what we preach [The first GM to actually pen a theme since 1971.]	1992	J. Waldie Manion	Planning (Plan of Action)
1979	William J. McCoid	Let your light so shine before men.	1993	C. Grant Wardlaw	Communicating more effectively
1980	Edward A. Clarke	Awareness	1994	Douglas W. Hargrove	Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only
1981	Donald J. MacLaurin	Planning for the future	1995	Clarke M. Gilmour	Stand up for what you believe: Recognize and support the Masonic family
1982	Douglas Philps	No theme * Let your actions shine out your Freemasonry	1996	Alexander A. Reid	Preserve the past, serve and protect the present, prepare for the future
1983	Robert A. Kitchen	No theme * Each of us is the window through which the world views Freemasonry	1997	Alan R. Tomlins	Attitude and Dedication: If it's wrong, don't do it.
1984	V. Burnie Kyle	No theme * "Serve well your Craft and be so ever proud to be called a Brother." "...be the light of spiritual wisdom, reflected by our Freemasonry that shines for the success and benefit of all mankind."	1998	Harold C. Nordan	Think Positive(ly) – Yes I can – Yes we can.
			1999	William. H. Carter	Back to Basics
			2000	Jack T. Harper	Building through Participation.
			2001	Jim C. Gordon	Positive thinking Freemasonry: If you cannot say anything positive about Freemasonry or a Freemason, best leave it unsaid.
			2002	William O. Walls	Actions speak louder than words.
			2003	C. William Ferguson	Let's get to work.
			2004	William Unrau	The journey from the Rough Ashlar to the Perfect Ashlar
			2005	Robert D. McSween	Strength Through Unity- Working as a Team
			2006	Isaac Brower-Berkhoven	Let your Light so Shine.
			2007	Stephen Godfrey	Look Beyond the Trees
			2008	R. Glenn Allen	Focus on the Basics: F=Fellowship and Fun, O=Obligation, C=Commitment, U=Unity, S=Support

1. *The Way of Leading People: Unlocking Your Integral Leadership with the Tao Te Ching*, Patrick Warneka and Timothy Warneka.

* No theme, but words from speech may have been used as a theme.

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