

30th Grand Masonic Day

SATURDAY, 21 JANUARY 2012

Putting masonic charity to work: Social enterprise and the social economy

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2012
BY W. BRO. WESLEY S. REGAN, MOUNT HERMON LODGE NO. 7

I work in one of this province's most historic neighbourhoods, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, home to the City of Vancouver's first library, its first city hall, and its first legalized safe injection site for heroin addicts.

Yes, just like countless other inner-city communities throughout North America the Downtown Eastside was not spared when automation, offshoring, or downsizing of jobs and entire industries created a generation of unemployed and suddenly underskilled men and women. Men and women who once spent their hard earned dollars at the restaurants, cafés, and cabarets lining what was once a vibrant, if not always somewhat edgy, Hastings Street. Men and women whose symbiotic relationship with the machinery they risked life and limb on day in and day out was replaced with a symbiotic relationship to welfare cheques and too often alcohol or drugs, once the blue collared world around them, which had seemed so tangible and solid, had evaporated.

Masonic charity was there to help many of them back then.

The Downtown Eastside is also home to a disproportionately large population, *per capita* and in absolute numbers of off reserve aboriginals, who trade the cold poverty and hardships of the reservation for the cold poverty and hardships of the concrete jungle. For decades it has been a place where abused and troubled youth who have nowhere left to go end up. A place where the elderly who have nowhere else they can afford to go end up. A place where patients, released from mental hospitals which were downsized or closed, like so many lumber mills or factories, would helplessly wander into like a piece of driftwood in a maelstrom. Many of them becoming addicted to any number of substances, legal or not, to dull the pain brought by of a life of abuse, neglect and feelings of powerlessness; more than 10,000 of them in fact.

But this presentation isn't about how charity can lessen the pain and suffering of these people, in this place. It's about how the inherent human capacity for industriousness and creativity is enabling many of these same people to regain their self-sufficiency, their dignity and hope, on their own terms. The DTES, as dark and dirty as it may appear to many, is also where the brightest ideas in our city are taking shape, and washing slates clean every day.

How has charity manifested itself in this forgotten place? Well you may be surprised to hear that I believe it's as much about buying as it is about giving. I want to take a look at one area in particular and demonstrate a trend, that despite my rather gloomy introduction, will show you why I've never been more hopeful and encouraged by what I see taking place in the DTES.

It has to do with something called Social Enterprise, an entrepreneurial approach to creating social benefits that were long the realm of charitable organizations alone. In fact many of these charitable organizations now own these Social Enterprise entities as a way to lessen their need for fundraising and create a more stable, if not more controllable source for their core funding.

What is a Social Enterprise?

Though definitions of a social enterprise may vary based on country

or region the most common understanding of the term in British Columbia is that it is a for-profit business that is owned by a non-profit society, able to provide income to support the mission based aspects of that non-profit.

According to Enterprising Non-Profits, a collaborative multi-stakeholder program to support social enterprise, funded by several credit unions, trusts and the Province of British Columbia, the growth of social enterprises can be attested to three recent developments:

- Diminished government funding;
- The understanding that there are some needs the market will never meet on its own;
- The opportunity to advance mission goals.

The aggregate effect of these social enterprises is the creation of both financial and social capital, which contributes to the growth and development of the social economy and community at large in which these organizations and businesses operate. I will also add that being such a new entity in many respects there are those, myself included, who consider social entrepreneurs operating a business with a strong community focus who are not under the umbrella or at an arms length from a non-profit, to be running a social enterprise. The key determinant being the notion of blended return.

Terms- Social Capital and Social Economy

Social Capital- Interpreted in different ways, by relating at times to personal agency or relations between individuals (see Pierre Bourdieu) and at other times to community cohesions, trust and reciprocity leading to mutual gain (see Robert Putnam) the term is commonly used in Community Economic Development or Sociology when examining a community's resilience, sustainability, or general capacity or level of functioning. Communities with well developed social capital are ones where trust, reciprocity and stability (i.e. a legitimate regime or set of regimes) create opportunities for mutual gain and advancement. Communities without, display the opposite. Freemasonry as a community, displays a high level of social capital in my opinion, and I'm sure most in this room would agree.

The Social Economy

Amin *et al.* (2002) define the social economy in their book *Placing the Social Economy*, as consisting of "non-profit activities designed to combat social exclusion through socially useful goods sold in the market which are not provided for by the state or the private sector. The social economy generates jobs and entrepreneurship by meeting social needs and very often by deploying the socially excluded."

In my experience what we can term the Social Economy in Vancouver's inner-city consists of a strong blend of very high-functioning, well-educated and extremely capable social entrepreneurs, executive directors, or non-profit volunteers who work closely with members of the low income community who have battled through or are still battling through addiction, depression, chronic poverty and debt, and other personal or structural issues.

Structural Functionalism, Blended Return

Functionalism or Structural Functionalism- "A sociological framework that sees society as similar to an organism with a number of

interrelated and necessary elements” (Naiman, 2004, p. 343) In this respect the act or state of being poor is an inevitable cause of a competitive capitalist free market system. Because without someone to be poor how can someone else be rich? The two are relative to each other and in such a system are necessary. Therefore poverty can be seen as a personal problem or a structural problem often exacerbated by personal decisions.

Blended Return- a Return on Investment that includes placing value on environmental, social or cultural benefits created by the business operations of an enterprise. Similar to triple bottom line thinking, but with a focus on what good was done to an environmental or social cause more than how extra costs relating to socially and environmentally responsible actions decreased monetary profitability.

In Vancouver’s DTES this has begun to manifest more and more as employment, and more especially meaningful employment, for residents with barriers. We were introduced to these residents earlier in this talk. Their barriers may include a lack of training, mental health concerns, a history of abuse or neglect, chronic poverty or substance abuse. Often, they can experience these all at once. The businesses most apt to hire these individuals are social enterprises, often owned by non-profits. Other social enterprises or non-profit groups exist to pair up traditional businesses and such individuals who have become “work ready”. Building Opportunities with Business, a community economic development agency that I worked at for two years before taking my current contract being one of them.

Another area where the social economy has produced goods or services not adequately produced by the public sector or the market is around food- Healthy, fresh, nutritious food. The BIA of which I’m the Executive Director of has several food related non-profits or social enterprises. In fact within our Business Improvement Area there are dozens of social enterprises doing great work offering high quality, competitive products and services while supporting valuable social and environmental goals with their revenues.

Some examples from the DTES include: Mission Possible, Atira Property Management Inc., United We Can, SOLEfood Urban Farm, Blue Shell Laundry Services, Radio Station Café, and Potluck Café and Catering just to name a few

So let’s meet a couple of social enterprises recently awarded in Calgary for their fantastic work in our communities, and one international social entrepreneur making a huge impact in his community.

Potluck Café and Catering

Potluck Café is a nationally recognized award winning social enterprise that owns and operates a café and a catering company. The catering company provides service for private or public sector clients including the City of Vancouver, Simon Fraser University, BC Hydro, the Vancouver Economic Commission and others. Large professional organizations who could spend their money anywhere, but Potluck benefits from two aspects of its business model. It has delicious food equal to any caterer in the city, and it has provided over 300,000 free, fresh cooked, healthy meals to the homeless and low-income residents of the DTES in a span of ten years. Not only this, but it’s innovative human resources model has enabled its staff of over ten, several of whom were once chronically unemployed and even homeless at one point, to remain successfully employed with Potluck, develop professional skills, stabilize their life situation and advance in their life goals thanks to the income, flexibility and support that Potluck provides them. It remains a profit generating business despite these extra considerations.

Mission Possible (MP Enterprises)

Mission Possible employs dozens of Downtown Eastside residents as

a stepping stone to training and personal development leading to better employment opportunities and a path out of poverty. MP Enterprises as it is now known, offers building maintenance services including power washing, graffiti removal, awning washing and other services to hundreds of businesses and properties throughout the City and have become nationally recognized for their success.

Internationally there are some innovative examples of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs tackling big challenges:

PASECA- founded in 1989 by social entrepreneur Alou Keita, PASECA is a village banking system that provides a secure savings and loan framework for those living in rural areas of the African country of Mali and a system that better connects the Malian diaspora to their friends and family.

A drought and poverty stricken area, the Kayes region of Mali, where PASECA began, had little else to export aside from its own human capital. With few options before them, many young workers would head to France or other countries, leaving the area drained of many of its brightest and most industrious. This left villages without the labour and capital needed for economic growth.

Thanks to the social entrepreneurship of Alou Keita the banking system now has 6,000 employees who have been trained with year round transferable skills, an improvement from the four months out of the year they were normally engaged in laborious and weather dependent fieldwork. Thanks to the loans and access to capital and finance, farmers have been able to diversify their livestock and crops and upgrade their farming equipment. According to the Ashoka website, where much of this case study was gleaned from, “Shops, women’s coöperatives and small businesses have appeared in Kayes thanks to the commercial loans the banks give out.” in short it has created an impressive multiplier effect and dramatically increased community capacity.

Multiplier Effect, Community Capacity

Multiplier Effect- an economic term for the ability of businesses to foster spinoffs or create the need for new services and new goods, which in turn diversifies the economy as entrepreneurs or firms capitalize on the newly created demand or technologies.

Community Capacity- Closely related to the community focused concept of Social Capital. The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition defines Community Capacity as:

“...the infrastructure of individual skills and knowledge networks, organizations, businesses that a healthy community is built upon. Community capacity will allow you to get done what needs to get done.”

As we saw in Mali, when your best and brightest have few opportunities in their community they will go elsewhere. The same is true of Chinatown, Strathcona or other Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods and the same is true of Vancouver or our province and even our entire country. The “brain drain” of Canadian nurses and doctors in the 1990s being a prime example of this idea on a macroeconomic scale. The opportunities for pay and for work were less attractive in Canada than the USA, not just for doctors but for software engineers, creative services like graphic design, website development, artists and others during this period. Now we’ve begun to see a reverse in this trend if at least not a halt to it as Canada’s economy and standard of living remain robust, and our standard of education and our social safety net have remained relatively intact; all this despite the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

And when this type of thing begins to happen, it creates a vicious cycle of human capital, followed by financial capital fleeing the area—or the other way around. This capital flight can transform what was once a vibrant community into an economic vacuum quite quickly. Think of the old

company towns of BC's interior or coast, or think of the Downtown Eastside more exactly. As the area falls into disrepair, the void is filled by problems instead of opportunities. A geography of failure invites a culture of the failed. Those

A few social enterprises in Vancouver		
Bugs Be Gone Pest Control	Bed Bug treatment	604-720-4412 or bugsbegone.ca
Potluck Café and Catering	Catering	potluckcatering.com
Mission Possible MP Enterprises	Building maintenance and leaning	mission-possible.ca
Enterprising Non-Profits ENP program	Starting your own social enterprise	enterprisingnonprofits.ca
United We Can	Recycling and waste diversion	unitedwecan.ca
SOLEfood Urban Farm	Produce farm	1sole.wordpress.com
Recycling Alternative	Recycling and waste reduction	recyclingalternative.com
Saul Good Gift Company	Responsible corporate gifting	itsaulgood.com
Interurban Art Gallery	Community art space and gallery	604-633-2665

communities within our city that need our support more than most others. I speak specifically of the Downtown Eastside. And while I encourage all of us to give to charities that are not offering a service or good, those charities that are offering badly

needed reprieve and support for children, the poor, the battered and forgotten, I also encourage all of us to consider a way in which to give to our less fortunate communities by empowering them through the market. From graffiti removal to bed bugs, recycling, even security services and catering, social enterprises offer high quality competitive service and goods while ensuring opportunities for residents with barriers, creating multiplier effects in the local economy, and giving all of us an opportunity to make our dollars go further in supporting a healthy and vibrant city. It's not just how we give, but how we spend that builds this better tomorrow.

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Bibliography

Naiman, Joanne (2004) *How Societies Work: Class, Power, and Change in a Canadian Context*, Thompson-Nelson, Toronto

Endnotes and Online Sources

For a brief and clear breakdown of the different perspectives on social capital between various thinkers like Bordieu or Putnam see York University's micro site: istheory.yorku.ca/Socialcapitaltheory.htm

See Enterprising Non-Profits or Vancity for more information on Blended Return:

[enterprisingnonprofits.ca/what-social-enterprise/definition-social-enterprise-or VancCty](http://enterprisingnonprofits.ca/what-social-enterprise/definition-social-enterprise-or-VancCty)

<https://www.vancity.com/MyCommunity/Library/SocialEnterprise/>
More information about Mission Possible and MP Enterprises mpenterprises.wordpress.com/about-us/

For more information on Alou Keita and PASECA's work in Mali visit the Ashoka website <http://ashoka.org/fellow/alou-keita>
ohcc-ccso.ca/en/community-capacity-building-0

The Ancient Order of Free Gardeners:

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY W. BRO. CHRISTOPHER J. FOXON, BURNABY LODGE NO. 150

The Order of Free Gardeners was a fraternal society founded in the middle of the seventeenth century. The oldest evidence of the order was found in a record of minutes of Haddington Lodge, opened 16 August 1676.

Scotland at that time was subject to a much civil and social unrest. The severe famines of 1674 and 1675 may have prompted the initial decision to formalise the, then existing, association of gardeners. The formation of Free Gardeners would also appear to have coincided with a growth of interest in Renaissance landscape gardening. With the wealthy local gentry and rich landowners embracing an evolving European landscape design there arose an increased need for skilled gardeners of ability in construction, maintenance and design.

The majority of early rules of the Free Gardeners were concerned with the practical aspects of gardening such as disseminating information as well as the introduction and distribution of new plant varieties within its membership. It organized coöperation between members, provided practical training and ethical development and supported the poor, widows and orphans. The lodges of gardeners were the first to organize floral exhibitions from 1772.

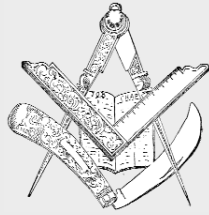
They modeled their organization on the freemasons who at the time had an organization that contained both operative and ever increasing numbers of speculative masons.

Operative Free Gardeners

In similar fashion to early masonic Lodges in Scotland, early Free Gardeners lodges were predominantly populated by operative gardeners who were employed by the local landowners to work on the large estates and country houses. With formal gardens becoming fashionable, new varieties of shrubs and plants were brought to Scotland from Europe and the new world to furnish them. In common with other professions, gardeners organized because they felt a pressure to regulate skills and training to protect their own reputations and livelihood, and to support themselves in time of need. As time passed the main aim became the members' mutual benefits.

Gardeners also pooled their money to buy flower and vegetable seeds which they grew and sold for profit with proceeds going back into lodge funds.

Some lodges put money raised into the purchase of land for cultivation and generation of an income thereby reducing, or indeed removing the need for subscriptions from the members.



"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Genesis chapter 2 verse 7



"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had just formed"

Genesis chapter 2 verse 8



"And out of the ground every tree made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil"

Genesis chapter 2 verse 9



"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

Genesis chapter 2 verse 15



"The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command."

Samwise Gamgee



Speculative Free Gardeners

The early Free Gardener's lodges seemed to have followed a parallel path with early masonic Lodges. Both Free Mason and Free Gardener lodges included clauses that allowed non-operative members to join (ie.: speculative members). In the case of the Free Gardeners this was at a higher rate of membership fee compared to operative gardeners. This was an essential difference between the two institutions. The status of the 'gentlemen' members or speculative free gardeners was of importance to the many lodges. Dunfermline Gardeners Lodge in its published history listed dukes, a marquis, six earls, seven lords, eight knights and hundreds of professionals (soldiers, ministers, advocates) and other landowners or lairds.

Another difference between the two organizations was the imposition of an upper age limit for entry which, according to an article of the Cambuslang Lodge, was 40 years of age. This was clearly applied to limit the exposure of expense due to the increasing drain on resources by the older members. At the time the average life span in Scotland was 40-45 years of age. Lodges made sure that members attended meetings by fining absentees. They also tried to regulate lodge behavior and keep the lodge

secrets from non-members.

Rituals and symbols

Lodges participated in all manner of public events and over time they acquired a wide variety of articles to signal their lodge distinctiveness in public—banners, aprons and sashes.

There were two main kinds of symbolism in the free gardening movement. From the masonic tradition came the all-seeing eye, compasses and squares (augmented by a clasp knife) and masonic styled aprons, usually made of leather-backed blue cloth and trimmed with braid. The Free Gardeners aprons are of two types: highly decorated long aprons, reaching the ankle, embroidered with numerous symbols relating to the legends of the order and shorter aprons, with a semi-circular bib, strongly resembling the aprons of the Freemasons of Scotland.

The second tradition of symbolism is based on horticulture and is characterized by plants and produce (pineapples, grapes, flowers and in particular roses and thistles) and the working tools (crossed spade and rake, watering cans, reel and measuring line. Painted aprons and certificates include scenes such as Adam (the first Free Gardener) and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, the main emblem just described, and

representations of gardeners' tools

Free Gardeners had a hierarchy of membership that was comparable to Freemasonry with the added influence of the Scotland craft traditions. Members must pass through three degrees or journeys: Apprentice (based on Adam in the Garden of Eden), Journeyman (based on Noah's Ark) and Master Gardener (based on King Solomon). Each ceremony included an obligation; passwords, signs and a catechism, or teaching of Christian doctrine.

In the initiation ceremony use is made of the compasses and the square, to which is added the knife, presented as 'the simplest tool of gardening', allowing 'pruning the vices and propagating virtues by cuttings'. At the end of this ceremony, the apprentice received the apron of his grade. The second degree made reference to Noah, the 'second Gardener' and made the Companion symbolically accomplish a voyage which led him towards the Garden of Eden then towards that of Gethsemane 'a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem most famous as the place where, according to biblical texts, Jesus and his disciples are said to have prayed the night before Jesus' crucifixion. The third degree made reference to Solomon, the 'third Gardener', and to the symbol of the olive tree.

The letters P.G.H. and E. also appear prominently displayed and refer to the four heads of the river running through the Garden of Eden—Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates—and the letters A.N.S. and O. which refer to the three Grand Master Gardeners (Adam, Noah and Solomon) and the Olive sign and grip of a Master Gardener.

Officers of the lodge

Lodge officers were the Master, two Wardens, Chaplain and Inside and Outside Tylers.

Rise and transition to friendly society status

At the time of the rise of Free Gardeners, the mediaeval trades such as masons, bakers, wrights and hammer men *etc.* formed contracts between themselves and the town or city council as representatives of the community. These were incorporations (guilds) and had a significant standing with the local community.

Since gardeners in particular lived outside burghs on nearby landed estates or market gardens they were not in a position to easily gain incorporation. In spite of this they did the best they could and organized themselves so that the industry was regulated. Each lodge stated the prerogatives of the craft, membership qualifications and how they were to organize. However it became clear that the biggest motivation for this order like many others was to form friendly societies for mutual member support.

Friendly Society Act

The Friendly Societies Act of 1793 attempted to licence (through registration and regulation) friendly societies (a good thing for members

benefit) at the same time as outlawing trades unions. It proved an unworkable piece of legislation. It did promote a surge of documents and paperwork as societies rushed to publish constitutions 'under the act' and demonstrate their loyalty. A small weekly contribution was paid into a common fund, and sickness and death benefits were paid out. Meetings, rituals and ceremonies were part of their practice and they were joined by an evergrowing number of coöperative societies and affiliated orders.

There was no overall governing body or Grand Lodge although some of the societies joined together in 'Orders' led by a 'Grand Lodge'. At

least six Grand Lodges in Scotland existed with several orders based in Edinburgh, Glasgow and England around this time, and many of the older lodges were independent.

The Order expanded outwards from Britain to South Africa, Australia and three lodges were formed in America: Ash Lodge in New Jersey, America's First Thistle Lodge in New York, and Lonaconing Thistle Lodge in Maryland.

By the late 1800s the lodges had lost much of their ties with the old operative system and had developed into friendly societies and had begun to attract members from among those who were not working gardeners. By the nineteen-hundreds the lodges were primarily benefit societies. Dunfermline went as far as forming a separate section for those interested in horticulture.

Free Gardeners

Free Gardeners are now a part of history. Many different collections hold surviving documents and pieces of regalia. The archives of the Dunfermline and Haddington bodies have been preserved.

At their height in the Lothian region there were over 10,000 free gardeners organised in upwards of fifty lodges. Juvenile and even women-only branches opened at the end of the nineteenth century.

Some of the Orders of Free Gardeners were the British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners (founded before 1817), the

Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (founded 1849), the St Andrew Order of Ancient Free Gardeners Friendly Society or Western Order (founded 1859; re-founded 1878-79)

Other, unrelated, friendly societies of the period include the Ancient Order of Foresters, Ancient order of Workman, Independent Order of Good Templars, Independent Order of Odd fellows and the Sons of Temperance.

Free Gardeners Reborn

In the first few years after 2000 a growing interest in the history of free gardening amongst freemasons prompted a move to revive the manner and philosophy of the movement in Scotland. In May 2002 Lodge Countess of Elgin at Kirkcaldy was inaugurated and three others followed quickly. There is a website for the Modern Order of Free Gardeners; the society is focused on two things, environmental issues and the history and philosophy of the original order. Their website is found at www.freegardeners.org.uk



Dedication of castle bridge, 1908.

“Houston, we have a problem.”

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN GRAND LODGE AND THE LODGES

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY RW BRO. DOUGLAS C. COLLINS, KAMLOOPS LODGE No. 10

This talk is a philosophical talk. That's basically a talk without any research, unlike some of the presentations being made today. But I think there are things that need to be said. I believe that a disconnect exists between Grand Lodge and the lodges, certainly in some areas. During this short presentation, I will talk a bit about why, and how, we might look at making a start to correcting that disconnect. Believe me, it exists, and it exists despite some of the great efforts being made to fix it. I will speak in generalizations, and so I apologize in advance if all this doesn't apply to you and your lodge. But it applies to enough of us that it is worthy of discussion.

This talk could be aptly renamed *A Tale of Two Kingdoms*.

Let me paint you two scenarios. There was a small kingdom in British Columbia. The land was rich, the food was plentiful. It was ruled by a benevolent king who listened to his people, who worked to earn their trust, and gave them the opportunity to provide input into the way the kingdom was run. Life was good. Not far away there was another kingdom. Life was not so good. The king was a tyrant, who ruled with an iron fist, and punished those who would disobey his commands.

Do you see where I'm going with this? The kingdoms are actually the same. It's all in the perception. Grand Lodge believes it is Kingdom A. The Grand Lodge listens, it reacts positively, it is open and inclusive. Some Lodges, however, think Grand Lodge is Kingdom B. It is ruled by tyranny, and the poor freemasons working on the temple are forced to abide by unfair laws and taxes handed down from above.

Why do they think that way? Grand Lodge has become more inclusive than it's ever been. That's a fact. More and more information has come out to lodges, there are opportunities to get on the phone to the Grand Secretary or the office staff and have questions answered almost immediately. I really believe there is an open door policy. Yet in my visits around the jurisdiction, many brethren suggest that Grand Lodge is dictating to them, and they aren't going to be dictated to by some guys in Vancouver. Perhaps it is the feeling of a group of brethren who may at one time have had a very legitimate complaint. Maybe that's the way Grand Lodge operated years ago, and those scars are still there. I don't think that's the case now. And when you try to talk to brethren specifically about their concerns, they can very seldom answer you with concrete examples. But in order for Grand Lodge to show the brethren their true stripes, they have to be credible. And they are not credible to some brethren. Just because it's true doesn't make it credible. You can tell someone the truth, but if they don't realize it as the truth, if it doesn't agree with their experiences and their observations, there's a disconnect. And that disconnect is what we have to work at solving. That's what Grand Lodge needs to address. There's a saying that when there's a disconnect "the message you're sending isn't the message they're getting."

So what are some of the issues? Well, first of all, there is a disconnect simply because of the size of the jurisdiction. That is a formidable problem to overcome. If the people in Kaslo, or Campbell River or Dawson Creek don't connect with the folks in Vancouver... Houston, we have a problem. If they don't take the time to understand what Grand Lodge is doing, or how they are trying to help them... same thing. If they

don't trust Grand Lodge, or feel they're being hard done by, well, there we go again. If they don't feel Grand Lodge is relevant to them, we are missing the boat somewhere along the line. How do we adjust our thinking to make things better?

On the lodge side, we need to try harder to understand what Grand Lodge is doing. I firmly believe we don't do that well enough. I go to lodge meetings and the Worshipful Master calls for the correspondence. The secretary reads a nice thank-you card from a member, an upcoming social perhaps, and then finishes by saying "and Worshipful Master, there's the usual correspondence from Grand Lodge." So I must ask, how Grand Lodge is to communicate with its members when the correspondence is never read, even though it's supposed to be... and no one but the secretary knows what the mailings say? How much information does the average brother really get about how Grand Lodge operates, and where the money goes? Grand Lodge is not some extravagant castle on Eighth Avenue in Vancouver. The money we pay goes to service our needs. But some brethren either don't take the time to find out the answers to their questions, or just don't care. But those are the brethren who are often first with the criticisms when the *per capita* rises, or they're asked for information to be submitted.

We are not islands unto ourselves. We have sworn ourselves to fealty to this body known as Grand Lodge, and we have to make an effort to understand it, and, yes, make it accountable. There is a procedure for doing that called the Annual Communication, but few take advantage of it. This year brethren changed the way the *per capita* was assessed. It was a major change, done democratically by the will of the majority, and it pointed out that things can be done if there's a will. But first, we have to understand the system and how it works. Part of Grand Lodge's responsibility is to enforce the *Constitutions and Regulations* of Grand Lodge. Often that puts them into an adversarial position, but one which they must accept because that is their job. And if we're not happy with a section of the *Constitutions*, the way to deal with it is to change the *Constitutions*, not complain about that big bad old Grand Lodge.

Lodges that have strategic and long range plans, and are active in discussing them, often seem to have a better perception of the operations of Grand Lodge than those who don't. If you have a strategic plan in your lodge, might I suggest that one of your goals should be to establish a better relationship with Grand Lodge if you feel that relationship is lacking. Not once have I had a serious problem with getting Grand Lodge to react to something. I often bother the Grand Secretary and the Clerk of the Office *ad infinitum*, but I believe there is a rapport there, and I think that's what we all need to do to diffuse the disconnect.

There is a programme called the Lodge Award programme developed by MW Bro. Robert D. McSween in his year as Grand Master. It is an excellent check list for the proper operation of a lodge. I would suggest that it should be a requirement to have a section added that you meet informally during the year with the District Deputy and Regional Representative to discuss the issues of Grand Lodge, and how they affect you. Once upon a time, the rôle of District Deputy Grand Master was more ceremonial than it is today. Now, we expect our DDGMs to work hard on

our behalf. And we expect the Regional Representatives to do the same. They help us hold Grand Lodge's feet to the fire, and we need to be prepared to do that. I'm sure Grand Lodge is prepared to justify their position to you. They're not shy about being accountable. But we have to communicate with them.

Lodges need to use social media, email, Facebook®, even Twitter® to get messages out to their brethren. It's the best way to get information out at a reasonable cost, and all lodges should be taking advantage of it. When correspondence comes from Grand Lodge, it is to be read in open lodge. If it is appropriate to do so, the first thing I do is pass it to the brethren by email. And it is no longer an excuse for a lodge not to use those resources. Age is not a barrier to using the internet. It is not costly, and it doesn't take much training.

We have a responsibility to take it upon ourselves to do our part to resolve the disconnect. It's not good enough to just do the "same old, same old". We need to reinvent the way we do things, not to forget about what we've done and the change the traditions we hold dear, but to add to them.

Whenever possible, the brethren, particularly lodge officers, need to attend other lodge meetings, Grand Lodge communications, and Officers Seminars. This is so they can better understand what's going on. I ask brethren if they're going to Grand Lodge, and they respond "I can't be bothered." And yet they are the first to question what Grand Lodge is doing—to say, "Grand Lodge is sticking it to us again." We can't be content doing things the way we've always done them. We need to build new bridges, not walls to keep us from peace and harmony. These bridges pave the way to establishing new frontiers, to growing our Craft as we need it to grow in order to flourish.

Our Grand Master's theme this year is "Be a Builder". And if we are to build, to take our responsibility as brethren seriously, to make things better in the world, we have to take on the responsibility to make things better in our lodges. We need to build upon those traditions of centuries gone by, but we can't resist that change that is necessary to operate in the modern world. I was a Regional Representative for a while, and when it was time for a Board of General Purposes meeting, I would communicate with the secretaries and Masters, and ask if there was anything they wanted me to bring forward. There was virtually never any response. So how can Grand Lodge respond if we're not bringing forth our concerns?

We must, as brethren, and as lodges, make a commitment to succeed. To work towards common goals. To plan, to communicate, and most of all, to get rid of those issues that divided us in the past and resolve to try and move forward so that we all think we live in the good kingdom and not the bad one.

Now that I've picked on the brethren, let me be so bold as to say, this is a two-way street. And there are things that Grand Lodge could be doing to better demonstrate that, indeed, they are managing the kingdom in the best possible way. As I said earlier, if the brethren aren't getting the message, Grand Lodge better find a better way to get the message out. A good king finds out what is working and what isn't. He must identify the keys to success and what his people need to know to get along in peace and harmony. He must send "emissaries" to the far reaches of the galaxy. He must see for himself with his own eye what is happening not only in the temple, but in the far flung lands under his control. How does he do that?

The most direct way to get feedback is through the District Deputies and Regional Representatives. But I don't believe we really reinforce that message to those people, nor do I think we do a very good job of training them. It's different in larger centres, but in rural areas, distance provides serious problems. And Grand Lodge needs to give those emissaries the ammunition they need to do their job. We have made the rôle of the

District Deputy less ceremonial and more work-intensive. That is a good thing. He must get out and talk to the brethren. And I mean *talk* to the brethren. Ceremonial things like Official Visits are great, but it's the other conversations that are really important. And during the training we give our District Deputies, we really have to reinforce that. And we need to somehow ensure we follow up with them. The office of Regional Representative is probably the one with the best potential, but the least utilized of just about any rôle in the jurisdiction. These are the people who have the ability to go out and spread the word to the lodges, who can make a real difference in solving the disconnect, because they are our representatives to the Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes, which advises the Grand Master. And most of the complaints I hear against Grand Lodge, justified or not, have to do with the business of Grand Lodge. Regional Representatives rarely get a good explanation of what the job is about. When we ask someone if they want to take on the rôle of a Regional Representative, they give us a blank stare and say "what do I have to do?" So we print off the material Grand Lodge gives us and they read it. But they still really don't know what their rôle is. And we don't really give them a good training session. Prior to each Grand Lodge session, we have a little session set aside for the Regional Representatives, which is almost an afterthought, and which largely doesn't enlighten them much. So we need to fix that. They have a great rôle to play, but we need to develop that position much more than it is now. When a Grand Master comes to visit, it's a great time, but it doesn't deal with the nitty gritty of what we're doing. That's what the District Deputies and Regional Representatives do. So let's use them.

We have an *ad hoc* Committee on Organizational Analysis and Evaluation. This committee has tremendous potential to connect with the brethren. It holds meetings throughout the jurisdiction to get the thoughts of the brethren on a variety of issues. This committee needs to continue to do that work on an even broader scale if possible.

We not only have to tell the lodges what we're doing, we need to go out and demonstrate it. When people ask questions, we need to continue to provide that positive response. The old ways and the old criticisms may take a while to go away, but they will. Many of our newer members seem to have a much more positive response to Grand Lodge than some of our senior brethren. Perhaps that dates back to past history. We need to move beyond that, and we will do that if we continue to be responsive to questions, no matter how tough they are, or how inaccurate or unfair we may judge them to be. If there are real issues, we had better be prepared to address them. Perhaps there are times when Grand Lodge has failed to understand the issues, or the importance of them, and that has helped lead to the disconnect.

Grand Lodge needs to continue to encourage lodges to be involved. They do that by the continued open door policy and the fast response to questions from the brethren. They need to better help Regional Representatives and District Deputies, and most of all, they need to continue their positive leadership rôle.

Follow through is important, and we're seeing more of that all the time. The Five Pillar Plan gives responsibilities to various members of the Craft to carry out certain tasks. This plan has been a marvellous document for continued growth. We need to work with lodges to ensure they have their own plans in place to grow. I find some lodges see planning as unnecessary, and another form of harassment from Grand Lodge. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is in the planning that the seeds of success are planted.

I don't think any of us is naïve enough to think there will always be total peace and harmony. But there certainly can be peace and understanding, and I believe that is the goal we all should be working

towards. We have this responsibility to be better men; that's what we subscribe to as freemasons. As individual brethren, we get the reaction we give. It's important to remember that. Respect for each other is one of the necessities to the success of any fraternal organization. When the astronauts aboard Apollo 13 tried to deal with a serious problem that could have meant the death of all aboard, they had to work with those on the ground to find a solution. Two groups, working toward a common goal. It's not much different than what we're going through. If there's a disconnect, let's work together to find out what it is and how to deal with it. Let's understand the differences that we all face and work to find a solution. As freemasons, let's make an effort to learn what Grand Lodge does and how it helps us. As a Grand Lodge, let's understand those problems that affect those lodges in the far flung reaches of our jurisdiction so that we can better help them with their problems. Those problems are far different in many respects than those faced in Vancouver. And yet in other respects they are the same.

I will say that modern communication has helped provide greater opportunities than ever before to work together. I believe that we are all striving to the same end—to make Freemasonry relevant to all of us. I also believe that more and more, individual members are seeking knowledge, about themselves, about their Craft and about their world. It is my belief that Grand Lodge is working tremendously hard to maintain an open door

policy and be responsive to the needs of its members. If there is a disconnect, I do not believe there is anything that can prevent that disconnect from being repaired. In marriage, many couples operate as "married singles", going the same direction but in parallel, and not the same path, because they live their own lives and don't communicate with each other. Perhaps a parallel can be drawn here. Perhaps all that is needed is to continue to work to break down the barriers to communication that often hamper us from doing what's needed to solve problems.

It's interesting to note, that the real quote from the Apollo 13 flight is not "Houston, we have a problem." It is actually "Houston, we've *had* a problem." This indicates that perhaps our problem has passed, and we are on the road to fixing it for the betterment of our lodges and our jurisdiction. If I can go back to my original *Tale of Two Kingdoms*, sometimes it only takes a small demonstration by the king to show the people the king isn't as bad as he seems. And it may only take a small move by the people to try and understand what the king is trying to accomplish and why he does what he does. And while that is a very simplistic approach, it certainly gives me hope that with a little push from both sides, the good kingdom is reachable, and that we will all be the better for living in it.



Freemasonry: answering why

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY W. BRO. DALBIR S. DHALIWAL, ACACIA LODGE NO. 22

Today my presentation will be of a philosophical nature. It will provide you with some tools and processes. Its true value will be realized in its application.

The majority of this material has come from *Start with Why*, a leadership book by Simon Sinek. While reading this book I realized it really applied to Freemasonry. The book covered a lot of ground, but my goal is to emphasize the importance of answering why and provide you with some tools from the book.



How many of you recognize this image? Looks good and sounds good doesn't it? 2B1 sounds cool, ASK 1 is simple.

Ask what though? Ask why are you a freemason? How many can give a clear concise answer?

How many of you have ever asked yourself, "why am I a freemason? Why am I part of this lodge? Why do I put up with that angry and overbearing officer? It's Monday and I could be at home relaxing, why do I even bother?"

Does this sound familiar?

I'm sure most of you already know why you are freemasons. But we have such a hard time communicating it. This presentation is not about communicating; it's about answering why.

Lets start with, why does your lodge exist?

Does your lodge exist only because your members can meet on Monday or because it is the only lodge in your area?

Maybe your lodge exists because it just does? Is that a good enough answer? Is it a good enough answer to keep you there? Is it a good answer for your wife to let you out? Is it a good answer to attract and retain membership?

Why does your lodge need more members? Is it to fill the chairs, to relieve Past Masters, to carry the torch, or is there a deeper meaning to your lodge's existence?

Is it because you want big meetings so that we have 50 or 100 people in attendance. If that's the only reason then why not amalgamate four or six lodges in each district to reach that goal. It would definitely cut down the number of visits.

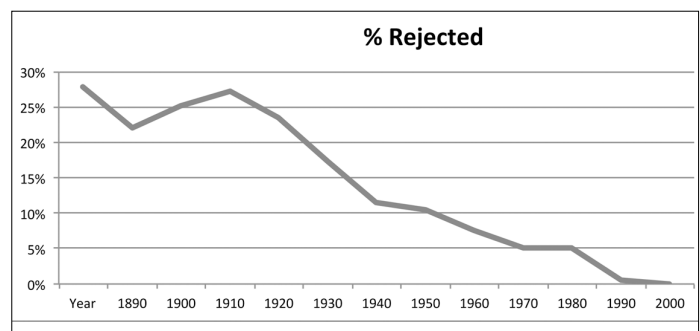
Now, before anyone gets upset, the point I am making is that all

lodges were founded on a solid why.

The members did not start your lodge because Mondays was a great day to meet. Nor did they start as a factory for churning out freemasons and increasing membership.

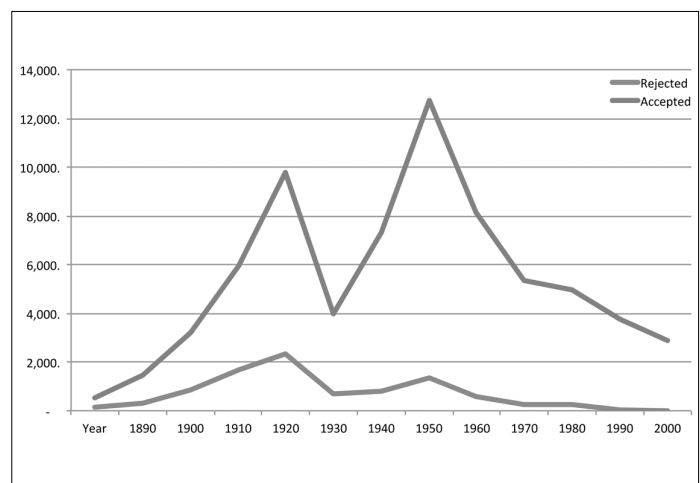
Unfortunately most lodges have lost that why and this presentation is about encouraging everyone to go out and help your lodge rediscover its why.

How do I know that we have lost our why? Well, take a look at this chart



This chart displays the average percentage of rejected candidates per decade. These statistics are available on the Grand Lodge website.

When I first came across these numbers I asked myself why have we gone from rejecting an average of 26% of candidates to 0%? At first glance the easy answer is that we had more petitions in the past and therefore the percentage of rejections was higher.



This is true but only to a certain extent. This graph compares total petitions to total rejections, grouped by decade. From the beginning of 1870 to 1929 we maintained an average 25% rejection rate. From 1930 to the 1969 we had fallen to a 12% rejection rate. From 1970 to 2009 the average has fallen to 3%.

The previous answer of having more rejections with more petitions does not make sense. Take a look at the period between 1930 – 1950. Why did we not maintain the same average? What about the last decade?

Has everyone who petitioned been a perfect fit for your lodge?

My theory is that in the decades that had a 25% rejection rate most lodges rejected candidates because they were not a good fit for that lodge or they were not ready to join, or to put it another way, they did not fit in with the why of the lodge.

The lodges existed for a reason and those who did not fit would not be admitted.

So why start with *why*?

The simple answer is because of planning and processes. *Why* should be the starting point of every plan and process. The problem of declining membership is being addressed through planning with the Five Pillar Plan, mentorship programme, and Worshipful Master plans, and the processes of the Six Steps to Initiation, Lodge Award Programme and Leadership Conferences

Everyone is familiar with these plans and processes and they are an excellent solution but before you can use these solution you must ask your self *why*. Too many people decide to adopt a process or plan before determining if it is a right fit for them. Putting *why* into one category is difficult. Simply because you can keep asking why.

Just to draw a line in the sand let us define a few terms:

Goals are where you are going. They are results such as "Increase active membership to a minimum of 50 brothers at each lodge meeting"

Objectives are the steps you need to take to get there. "Provide more entertainment" or "Play hockey games in meetings"

Vision Statements are what your lodge wants to be and concentrate on the future or the *when*.

The Mission statement is the framework that guides your actions, decisions, and goals. (Who is involved, with what actions decisions and goals)

Why belongs with all. Usually we can find a *why* in mission statements and vision statements.

But the problem is if you stick your *why* into a mission statement or a vision statement, it runs the risk of being lost in other noise such as the who, what, and when.

The most dangerous of which is what, which is the easiest one to fall on.

Let's take a look at the Five Pillar plan and see if we can spot the *why*:

Mission Statement

"The Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, as a parent organization of freemasons, promotes and advances the masonic fraternity in this jurisdiction as a support system to individual lodges by building a modern, dynamic organization with universal appeal and by creating a favorable climate for meaningful organizational change."

Can anyone spot a *why* in the mission statement? I see a few whos: Grand Lodge and freemasons in this jurisdiction

I see a lot of *whats* such as support system and creating a climate.

I see the glimmer of a *why* in universal appeal but that's not strong enough.

You cannot test the goals and objectives with universal appeal. If someone asks why focus on education, you cannot answer back because it has universal appeal. That's not compelling.

Lets look at the vision statement.

Vision Statement

"To be recognized as a relevant and respected fraternity, committed to attracting and retaining all men of high

quality who strive for self improvement and the opportunity to make a positive difference in their community "

We can see the who clearly. We can see the whats: self improvement and opportunity. The when is implied as this is a vision of the future. The why is "To be recognized as a relevant and respected fraternity"

Now I am sure that the brothers who created this document had this why in mind. Because we can test it.

If we look at the plan we can see it in all the goals and objectives.

Why make education a goal? Well, because through education we will be more relevant and respected. Why create leaders? Because more leaders will make us more relevant. The power of clearly defining why is that it provides a clarity of purpose.

So when you are creating your plans or process write a why statement first.

The Grand Lodge why statement: "Everything we do is to be recognized as a relevant and respected fraternity"

Imagine if the plan included a goal to automatically amalgamate lodges who fell bellow a certain number of active members. Ideas like this are dismissed because it violates that respected fraternity bit.

Grand lodge was a good place to start but lets look at some whys for individual lodges.

We know that planning starts with picking a destination. These destinations are really results missing the why. The why statement goes something like this

1. We want to increase our membership because we want to meet different people with different experiences.
2. We want to sustain our lodge independence and future because we want to be an example of the ideal freemasons.
3. We want to increase education because we want to be a forum for intellectuals.
4. We want to be recognized in the community because we want Freemasonry to have a firm foothold in downtown, or Kitsilano, or Kamloops, etc.
5. We want to give the conspiracy theorists something to talk about because we want to preserve the mystique of freemasonry.

Now most of you must think that this is very basic and common knowledge, but I assure you that most people start with hows or whats with a small glimmer of a why in the back of their minds

The point is that you need to clearly articulate a why before you start so that everyone focuses.

Lets take a look at some organizations that clearly articulate their *why*. We can find some creative examples of organizations that know why they do what they do

Apple – To challenge the status quo

Apple is a great example of a company which challenges the status quo. They are a computer company who changed the music industry, the software industry, the phone industry, the tablet industry. They did this by entering different markets and clearly explaining their why. The best example is that most tech companies hammer you with features, whereas Apple takes them away and just tells you why. They did not invent the mp3 player but before the iPod® every company told you that you needed 1 to 5 GB of space. Apple's response was not in terms of GB but rather the promise of a 1,000 songs in your pocket

Google – To organize the world's information

Google's *why* is organizing information. This comes before profits to the point where they get sued no matter what they do. The goal of Google

books was to organize orphaned books, which led to lawsuits. The goal of Google maps was to organize road and city information, which led to lawsuits. The goal of Android® was to organize mobile information through feeds, maps, search *etc.*, which led to indirect lawsuits from hardware developers. The goal of Google Plus® is to organize the social graph. It is only a matter of time until someone sues them.

South West Airlines - To provide affordable air travel for all

They cut costs by flying only one type of aircraft to reduce inventory and maintenance costs, and promised eight minute turnarounds in airports

Vancouver Board of Trade – to empower members to succeed, grow and prosper

They accomplish this through networking events, skill building seminars and speaking engagements.

How we can get to *why*.

We get to *why* using the golden circle created by Simon Senek. It is a visual example of the thought process and can work two ways. But before we get into that let’s define the terms:

What – everyone knows what we do as freemasons, these are easy to memorize. We make good men better, we work with charities, we provide networking opportunities, we support the community, we are a self-improvement organization.

How – and we all know how we do it. These are not as obvious as *what* but the *hows* make us all a little different. We work with children’s soccer, we raise money for local schools, we provide education for members, we throw fantastic parties.

Most of us have come to rely on the *hows* as a way to make our lodge stand out. But the problem is you run into *so what* statements.

We are the lodge that allows you to meet new people (So what, I met thirty new people on Facebook® today.)

We are the lodge that raises money for the cancer car project (So what, I grew a mustache for Movember.)

We are the lodge that provides esoteric education (So what, I read Deepak Chopra.)

We can apply the golden circle to the answer we give. Most of us start from the outside and work inwards and our answers are something like this:

“We make good men better. Lodge 2012 has been around for 100 years, we volunteer with the Childrens Hospital, and we meet in Vancouver. You should ask to join.”

We present our *what*, then our *how*, and finally a call to action. We are relying on the words, 100 years, Childrens Hospital and Vancouver to inspire people to join, or stay or for our wives to care. And all they can say is “So what?”

When we work from the inside out, this is what happens:

“Everything we do, we do to improve our community and ourselves. Lodge 2012 creates an environment that allows good men to become better. With over a 100 years of experience in Vancouver we know that members want to learn from each other and make an impact in the community by volunteering at the children’s hospital. You should ask to join.”

We give them our *why* up front, then our *how*, and finish with the *what*. We no longer rely on how or what instead we appeal to the basic ideas of self improvement and community involvement.

Now imagine lodge 2012 applies the golden circle to everything it is planning.

Lodge 2012 sets up a Facebook® group, a public page and a private forum, instead of a website, because it believes everything should be a community. (This stays true because it improves our internal community.)

Lodge 2012 has members present education surrounding their personal interests, hobbies or work, instead of esoteric subjects, because everyone should be a teacher and a student. (This stays true because being a teacher and a student improves us.)

Lodge 2012 creates public events that highlight the importance of helping the Childrens Hospital because it brings the community together. (This stays true because it improves our external community.)

We can even find a version of the golden circle in our memory work. Much of it makes mention of beauty, establishment and strength.

We must be talking about:

- The beauty of perfection as Freemasonry’s *why*.
- The establishment of our environment as Freemasonry’s *how*.
- The strengthening our skills as Freemasonry’s *what*.

Defining a *why* will in no way limit your lodge. Let’s take a quick look at two quick examples. In each we can apply the *why* to justify our actions. If your lodge believes in creating a sense of community then all its goals must match that line of thinking. If your lodge believes in creating teachers and students then all its goals must match.

Lets take a look at how we can test our actions to make sure they are inline with our *whys*

You can test your *whys* by using the celery test and it goes something like this:

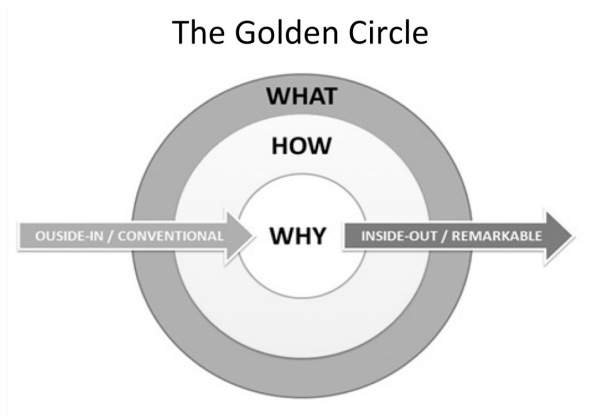
You are hanging out at the festive board and a brother tells you, “You know what you need in your lodge? Oreo cookies. If you’re not implementing Oreo cookies in your lodge, I’m telling you, you’re missing out on attracting new young members.”

Another brother tells you: “Rice milk. You have to be using rice milk in today’s world.”

Somebody else says to you: “M&Ms. We used M&Ms in our lodge, and all our old Past Masters started coming back out! Lodge 2012 uses M&Ms. You’ve gotta do it.”

Somebody else says to you, “Celery. It’s all about celery.”

So what do you do? Which one do you follow? Which item do you buy? It’s all perfectly good advice from perfectly good people with perfectly



Most of us miss the *why*;

Why

Very few people can articulate why they do what they do. Increasing membership is not a *why*, it is a result When I ask you why, I want to know: what’s your purpose, what’s your cause, what’s your belief, why does your lodge exist, why did you go to last night’s meeting, why should anyone care?

The golden circle has only two routes. Either you start from the outside in or from the inside out. A simple example is when we are asked, “Why are you a freemason?” by a potential candidate.

good evidence. Which products do you buy? All this great advice from all these smart people. All of it works for them so surely it will work for us. So we go to the supermarket and we buy them all. We buy celery and rice milk and Oreos and M&Ms.

You spend a lot of time at the supermarket, you spend a lot of money at the supermarket, and worse, when you're standing in line in the supermarket with all of your products in your arms, your celery, your rice milk, your Oreos, your M&Ms, nobody can see what you believe. Because what you bought didn't necessarily correspond to anything you believe.

If people can not see what your lodge believes they leave, or don't join, or stop showing up

Now imagine your in the same line up but only with celery and rice milk. Hey, that lodge believes in being healthy. Now that's something I can agree with.

This test is about testing your *whats* with your *whys*. Apply it to your lodges education, charitable work, communication, social events, etc.

Start planning

Your first step is meditation. You don't need a yogi. All you need is quiet, uninterrupted time to think.

Think about why you joined, what you want to get out of Freemasonry and out of your lodge. Think about what your lodge means to you and what you want it to mean to your future brothers

This can take five minutes or a few days. But what you need to do is discover why you are here. It does not have to be complex or profound. It should be simple and most importantly you should be able to articulate it clearly

Your next step is to start the conversation about discovering *why* with the brothers of your lodge. You can do this formally or informally. It could be with a few brothers or the whole lodge. Include everyone. And get everyone to start thinking about the lodge's *why*.

Use the golden circle. Talk to your Past Masters. Ask them what things they did in the past, ask them how they did it, work it backwards to find out why they did it. Start talking about the old *why* and see if it matches with everyone.

Write out your *why* statement. Make it short simple and universal. Make sure that its compelling.

Test everything you currently do with your *why*

Now. Start your long term plan and your short term plan.



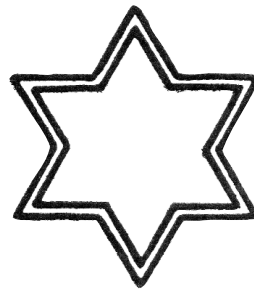
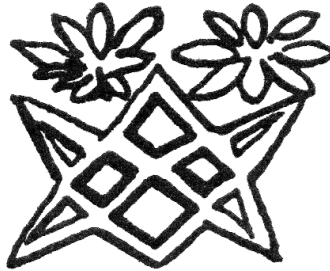
King Solomon's Temple and the platform upon which it is built

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY V.W. BRO. PETER J. SMITH, KING EDWARD LODGE No. 28

Jerusalem, *Ur-Shulim*, the "City of Shulim" was given to Shamash to command. Its name, *SHU-LIM*, meant "The Supreme Place of the Four Regions" and the Sumerian emblem of the "Four Regions" (fig. a) applied to it, possibly the forerunner of the Jewish emblem called the Star of David (fig. b) Hallowed to Jew, Christian and Muslim alike, its very atmosphere charged with some inexplicable unearthly mystery, Jerusalem had been a sacred city even before King David established her as his capital and Solomon built there the Lord's abode. When the Patriarch Abraham reached its gates, it was already an established centre to "El the Supreme, the Righteous One of Heaven and Earth." Its earliest known name was Ur-Shalem—"City of the Completed Cycle"—a name which suggests an association with orbital matters, or with the God of Orbits.

From its beginnings, Jerusalem encompassed three mountain peaks; from north to south, they were Mount Zophim, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion. Their names bespoke their functions: The northernmost was the "Mount of Observers" (it is now called in English, Mount Scopus); the middle one was the "Mount of Directing"; the southernmost was "The Mount of the Signal." They are still so called in spite of the passage of millennia.

The large horizontal platform atop Mount Moriah—reminiscent in layout of the one at Baalbek, though much smaller—has been called "The Temple Mount" for it had served as the site of the Jewish Temple of Jerusalem. It is now occupied by several Muslim shrines, the most renowned of which is the Dome of the Rock. The dome was carried off by Caliph Abd al-Malik (seventh century CE) from Baalbek, where it adorned a Byzantine shrine; it was erected by the caliph as a roofing over an eight-sided structure he had built to encompass the Sacred Rock: a huge rock to which divine and magical faculties have been attributed from time immemorial. From the visible portion, it is evident that the Sacred Rock had been cut out in various ways on its face and sides, bored through to provide two tube-like funnels, and hollowed out to create a subterranean tunnel and secret chambers. No one knows the purpose of these works. No one knows who had masterminded them and carried them out. We do know, however, that the First Temple was built by King Solomon upon Mount Moriah at an exact spot and following precise instructions provided by the Lord. The Holy-of-Holies was built upon the Sacred Rock. Its innermost chamber, completely gilded, was taken up by two large Cherubim (winged Sphinx-like beings) also made of gold, their wings touching the walls and each other's. Between them was placed the Ark of the Testament, from within which the Lord addressed Moses in the desert. Completely insulated from the outside, the gold covered Holy-of-Holies was called in the Old Testament the *DYR*—literally, "The Speaker." Jerusalem was held by Jewish traditions to have been the "Navel of the Earth." The prophet Ezekial referred to the people of Israel as residing upon the "navel of the Earth"; the Book of Judges related an incident when people were coming down the mountains from the direction of the "Navel of the Earth." The term, as we have seen, meant that Jerusalem was a focal communications centre, from



which the "cords" were drawn to other points.

It is interesting to note that Jerusalem lies on a central line which bisects a line from Mount Ararat to the Giza pyramids and a line from Mount Ararat to Mount Umm Shumar. Looking a little closer at this "Divine Grid" we find that Jerusalem lies exactly on the line between Baalbek and Mount Umm Shumar. Also, Giza is precisely equidistant from Jerusalem as is Mount Umm Shumar. Sumerian texts state that when "Kingship was lowered from Heaven" after the Deluge, "kingship was in Eridu." Eridu was situated astride the Thirtieth Parallel as close to it as the marshy waters of the Persian Gulf had permitted. While the administrative secular centre of Sumer shifted from time to time, Eridu remained a sacred city for all time.

In the Second Region (the Nile Civilization) the secular capital also shifted from time to time. But Heliopolis forever remained the sacred city. Heliopolis was located astride the Thirtieth Parallel, as close to it as the Nile's delta permitted. When the Third Region, the Indus Valley Civilization, followed, its secular centre was on the shores of the Indian Ocean; but its sacred city, Harappa, was hundreds of miles away to the north—right on the Thirtieth Parallel.

The imperative of the northern Thirtieth Parallel appears to have continued in the millennium that followed. *circa* 600 BCE, the Persian kings augmented the royal capital with a city "Sacred unto all Nations." The place selected for its construction was a remote and uninhabited site. There, literally in the middle of nowhere, a great horizontal platform was laid out. Upon it, palaces with magnificent staircases and many auxiliary shrines and structures were erected—all honouring the God of the Winged Globe. The Greeks called the place Persepolis ("City of the Persians"). No people lived there: It was only to celebrate the New Year on the day of the spring equinox that the king and his retinue came there. Its remains still stagger the viewer. And it was located astride the Thirtieth Parallel.

No one knows for sure when Lhasa in Tibet—the sacred city of Buddhism—was founded. But it is a fact that Lhasa too—as Eridu, Heliopolis, Harappa and Persepolis were—was situated on the same Thirtieth Parallel. The sanctity of the Thirtieth Parallel must be traced back to the origins of the Sacred Grid, when the divine measurers determined the location of the pyramids of Giza also on the Thirtieth Parallel.

There is, then, the remaining enigma of Giza, its Great Sphinx. When and by whom was it erected? And to what purpose? Whose image does it bear? And why is it where it is, alone, and nowhere else? The questions have been many, the answers very few. But one thing is certain: it gazes precisely eastward, along the Thirtieth Parallel. Its full colossal size is 240 feet long and 65 feet high. Mount St. Katherine and Mount Umm Shumar 'sit' side by side. The distance from Baalbek to Mount St. Katherine and to Heliopolis is exactly the same. The pyramids of Giza, being the oldest, are the most intriguing.

Much grander, more solid, more accurate, more perfect than those that followed them. Also they are the most mysterious, for they contain not a

clue to reveal the secret of their construction. Who built them, how were they built, why, even when... no one can really say. There are only theories and educated guesses.

Prior to its construction the ground had been artificially leveled into a platform 22 inches thick. The corners were marked by sockets of no ascertained function. The Great Pyramid is 480 feet high and 758 feet wide. Its total mass is 93,000,000 cu. feet, and weighing 7,000,000 tons.

Sumerian, then Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian, kings recorded with great pride how they repaired, embellished, or rebuilt the sacred temples and their precincts. In Nippur, archaeologists in the 1880s found evidence of repair and maintenance work in the sacred precinct. It was also noted that five temples were "built one above the other on exactly the same plan", between 2200 BCE and ~00 BCE. This strict adherence to the original plans was reconfirmed at other ancient sites in Mesopotamia. Indeed the obligatory adherence to the earlier site, no matter how long the interval or how extensive the repairs or rebuilding had to be, is exemplified by the successive temples in Jerusalem.

The First Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE. After Babylon fell, Cyrus permitted the return of Jews—exiles to Jerusalem and to rebuild their temple. It began with the erection of an altar where the first one used to be.

The Second Temple built under difficult conditions was a poor imitation of the First Temple. That the Temple indeed followed the original layout and orientation became clearer some five centuries later, when King Herod decided to build a new, splendid edifice that would even surpass the grandeur of the First Temple. Built on an enlarged great platform (still known as Temple Mount), and its massive walls—of which the Western Wall, still largely intact—is revered by Jews, as the extant remnants of the Holy Temple.

The Holy of Holies, moreover remained identical in size to that of the First Temple, and was located precisely over its spot.

Scholars have recognized an abrupt change in human culture about 11,000 BCE. This was a time when all traces of civilization were wiped out by the Deluge. (Baalbek in the Lebanon could be the exception). This era of domestication has been named Mesolithic Middle Stone Age. *Circa* 7400 BCE—exactly 3,600 years later—another abrupt advancement has been recognized. Scholars have named it Neolithic ("New Stone Age") but its principal feature was the switch from stone to clay and the appearance of pottery. And then, "suddenly and inexplicably"—but exactly 3,600 years later—there blossomed out (*circa* 3800 BCE), in the plain between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, the high civilization of Sumer. It was followed, *circa* 3100 BCE by the civilization of the Nile River, and *circa* 2800 BCE, the third civilization of antiquity, that of the Indus River, made its appearance.

The age of Jericho has been an enigma that has continuously baffled the scholars. As previously stated we saw the introduction of agriculture and animal domestication *circa* 11,000 BCE, and then *circa* 7400 BCE, bringing with it villages and pottery, and finally *circa* 3800 BCE, Sumer's urban civilization. Yet here was Jericho, an urban site occupied and built by unknowns sometime *circa* 8500 BCE, when man had not yet learned to lead even a village life. In Jericho, archaeologists have found houses built on stone foundations, doors equipped with wooden jambs, walls carefully plastered and painted red, pink and other colours—sometimes even covered with murals. Neat hearths and basins were sunk in whitewashed plaster floors; floors that were often decorated with patterns. Skulls were found which when covered with plaster revealed features that by all opinions were more advanced and finer than those of the usual Mediterranean dwellers of the time. All of this protected by a massive wall that surrounded the town, a millennium before Joshua. It was raised in the middle of a ditch nearly thirty feet wide and seven feet deep, dug out of

the rock "without the help of picks and hoes". It was an explosive development whose causes are still unknown to us. Jericho was on the west side of the Jordan to protect the crossing.

A settlement has been found on the eastern side—its modern name is Tell Ghassul. It clearly controlled the vital crossover point and the road leading to it. It was here that the Israelites crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. This is a road still followed to this day, using a crossing point nowadays called the Allenby Bridge.

The discoveries at Tell Ghassul are even more astounding than what had been uncovered at Jericho. Even the oldest level of habitation, *circa* 7500 BCE, was paved with bricks, and though the period of settlement stretched from the end of the Stone Age to the Bronze Age, the archaeologists were amazed to find that the same civilization revealed itself at all levels.

In the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the start of the Exodus, the Bible states, "Solomon began construction of the Temple on Mount Moriah, as had been shown to his father David". The masons who were selected to build the Temple of Solomon were declared "free" and were exempted together with their descendants from import duties on goods and all taxes. They were also given the right to bear arms.

While timbers cut from the cedars of Lebanon and the purest gold of Ophir were imported and copper for the specified washbasins was mined and smelted in the famed King Solomon's Mines, the structure itself had to be erected with "hewn and cut stones, large and costly stones.

The stone ashlar had to be prepared and cut to size and shaped elsewhere, for the construction was subject to a strict prohibition against the use of any iron tools for the Temple. The stone blocks had to be transported, brought over to the site for assembly only.

"And the House, when it was ready before it was brought hammer nor axe nor any tool was in building" (1 Kings in building, was thither; so that of iron heard in 6-7) built of stone made there was neither the House while it King Solomon's Quarries can be found underneath the Old City of Jerusalem. The underground quarry could explain what is written in the above quotation from 1 Kings, that no sound of metallic tools was heard at the building site of the Temple. If the stones were prepared underground, no noise would have reached the construction site.

It took seven years to complete the building of the Temple and to equip it with all the ritual utensils.

The Temple was divided into three parts, entered through a large gateway flanked by two specially designed pillars. The front part was called the Ulam ("Hallway"); the largest middle part was the Ekhal, a Hebrew term stemming from the Sumerian *E.GAL* ("Great Abode"). Screened off from that was the innermost part, the Holy of Holies. It was called the *Dvir*—literally: The Speaker—for it held the Ark of the Covenant with the two Cherubim upon it, from which God had spoken to Moses during the Exodus. The great altar and the washbasins were in the courtyard, not in the Temple.

Biblical data and references, age-old traditions and archaeological evidence have left no doubt that the Temple that Solomon built (the First Temple) stood upon the great stone platform that still crowns Mount Moriah, (also known as the Holy Mount, Mount of the Lord, or the Temple Mount). Given the dimensions of the Temple and the size of the platform, there is general agreement where the Temple stood, and that the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies was emplaced upon a rock outcropping, a Sacred Rock, which according to unwavering traditions was the rock upon which Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. The rock has been called in Jewish scriptures *Even Sheti' yah*—"Foundation Stone"—for it was from that stone that "the whole world was woven".

The First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonian king

Nebuchadnezzar in 576 BCE, and was rebuilt by Jewish exiles returning from Babylon 70 years later. The Second Temple was later substantially enhanced and aggrandized by the Judean king Herod, during his reign from 36 to 4 BCE. But the Second Temple, in all its phases, adhered to the original layout, location, and the siting of the Holy of Holies upon the Sacred Rock. And when the Moslems captured Jerusalem in the seventh century CE, they claimed that it was from that Sacred Rock that Mohammed ascended heavenward for a nighttime visit: and they enshrined the place by the building the Dome of the Rock (c. 691 CE - also shelter and magnify it).

Geologically the rock is an outcropping of the underlying natural rock, protruding above the level of the stone platform some five or six feet (the face is not even. Its visible face has been cut and shaped, with an impressive degree of precision to form rectangular, elongated, horizontal and vertical receptacles and niches of varying depths and sizes. These cuts and niches date back at least to the time of the First Temple. There is, however, no mention whatsoever in the relevant passages in the Bible of any such cutting by Solomon: indeed it would have been impossible—because of the strict prohibition against the use of metal axes and other tools on the Mount.

The enigma of the Sacred Rock and what had stood on top of it is magnified by the mystery of what might have stood under it. For the rock is not a simple outcropping. It is hollow. In fact, given permission, one can descend a flight of stairs built by the Moslem authorities, and end up in a cave-like cavern the rocky roof of which is the protruding upper part of the Sacred Rock. This cavern—whether natural or not is uncertain—also features deep niches and receptacles, both in the rocky walls and also in the floor. At one place there is what looks like an opening into a dark tunnel, but what it is and where it leads is a well kept Moslem secret.

Nineteenth-century travellers have stated that this cavern is not the last subsurface cavity associated with the Sacred Rock: they stated that there is yet another, lower cavity beneath it

Israeli researchers, fanatically barred from the area, have determined with the aid of soil-penetrating radar and sonar technology that there is indeed another major cavity under the Sacred Rock.

What might have been hidden there must for the time being remain just speculation. What is certain, is that the biblical Prophets and the Psalmist referred to this Sacred Rock when they had used the term "Rock of Israel" as a euphemism for "Yahweh". And the Prophet Isaiah (30:29), speaking of the future time of universal redemption on the Day of the Lord, prophesied that the nations of the Earth shall come to Jerusalem to praise the Lord "on the Mount of Yahweh, at the Rock of Israel".

The Temple Mount is covered by a horizontal stone platform, slightly off perfect rectangular in shape (because of the contours of the terrain), whose size is about 1,600 by 900 feet, for a total stone paved area of close to 1,500,000 square feet (27+ acres). Although it is believed that the present day platform includes sections, at the extreme south and possibly also in the north, that had been added between the First Temple's building and the destruction of the Second Temple, it is certain that the bulk of the platform is original: it is certainly so regarding the slightly raised portion, where the Sacred Rock (and thus the Dome of the Rock) are located.

As the visible sides of the platform's retaining walls show, and as more recent excavations have revealed, the natural bedrock of Mount Moriah slopes considerably from north to south. Though no one can say with any certainty what the size of the platform had been in the time of Solomon, nor estimate precisely the depth of the slopes that had to be filled, an arbitrary assumption of a platform measuring only 1,000,000 square feet and an average depth of 60 feet, (much less in the north, much more in the south), the result is a landfill requiring 60,000,000 cubic feet (2,000,000 cubic yards) of aggregate (soil, fieldstones). This is a very major undertaking.

Yet nowhere in the Bible is there even a mention or a hint of such an undertaking. The instructions for the First Temple cover pages upon pages in the Bible. Every small detail is given and measurements are precise to an amazing degree. But it all applies to the House of Yahweh. Not a word about the platform on which it was to stand: and that could only mean that the platform has already been there; there was no need to construct it.

Standing out in complete contrast to that absence of mention are the repeated references in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings to the *Millo*, literally "the filling"—a project begun by David and enlarged by Solomon "to fill up parts of the slopes on the southeastern corner of the sacred platform, so as to enable the City of David to expand northward, closer to the ancient platform. Recent excavations in that area indicate, however, that what was done was to raise the sloping level by constructing a series of terraces that grew smaller as they rose: that was much easier than first surrounding the expanded area with high retaining walls and filling up the gap with aggregate.

This contrast undoubtedly corroborates the conclusion that neither David nor Solomon built the vast platform on Mount Moriah, with the immense retaining walls and enormous amount of landfill required. All the evidence suggests that the platform already existed when the construction of the Temple was even contemplated.

Who then built the platform, with all the earthworks and stonework that it entailed? Possibly the same master builders who had built the platform at Baalbek (and, for that matter, the vast and precisely positioned platform on which the Great Pyramid of Giza stands).

The great platform that covers the Temple Mount is surrounded by walls that serve both as retaining walls and as fortifications. The Bible reports that Solomon built such walls, as did Judean kings after him. Until the reunification of Jerusalem by Israel in 1967, the Western Wall was no more than a sliver of a wall, about a hundred feet or so squeezed between residential houses. In front was left a narrow space for the prayers (Wailing Wall), and on both sides, rising house atop house, it encroached on the Holy Mount. When the houses were removed, a large plaza was formed in front of the Western Wall and its extension all the way to its southern corner was unveiled. And, for the first time in almost two millennia it was realized that the retaining walls extend downward nearly as much as they had been exposed above what has been considered ground level. The lower courses were found to be larger, better shaped, and of course much older.

Beckoning with mystery was the extension of the Western Wall to the north. In 1860 Captain Charles Wilson explored an archway (which still bears his name) that led northward to a tunnel-like passage and westward to a series of arched chambers and vaults. The removal of the encroaching dwellings revealed that the current street level lay atop several lower, now-subterranean, levels of ancient structures that included more passages and archways. Israeli archaeologists concluded that Wilson's Arch was the entrance way to what must have been in earlier times an open-air street that ran along the Western Wall. Finally these assumptions were confirmed, which led to the opening in 1996 of the "Archaeological Tunnel".

Extending for about 1600 feet, the Western Wall Tunnel uncovered and passes through remains of streets, water tunnels, water pools, archways, structures, and marketplaces from Byzantine, Roman, Herodian, Hasmonian and biblical times.

All along the visitor can see—and touch—the actual parts of the western retaining wall from the earliest times. The greatest surprise lies in the more southerly section of the uncovered wall.

There—at the ancient street level, but not yet the lowest bottom course—there had been emplaced massive stone blocks and on top of them four colossal blocks each weighing hundreds of tons. Here, a 120 foot

section is made up of stone blocks that are an extraordinary 11 feet high, about double even the unusually large blocks that form the course below. Only four stone blocks make up the section; one of them is a colossal 42 feet long, another is 40 feet long, and a third over 25 feet long. Soil penetrating radar and other soundings have indicated that the depths of these stones is 14 feet. The largest of the three is thus a stone of about 6,500 cubic feet, weighing 1,200,000 pounds, which is about 600 tons. The others weigh about 570 tons and 355 tons.

The blocks used in the construction of the Great Pyramid in Giza average 2.5 tons each, with the largest weighing about 15 tons. Indeed, the

only comparison that comes to mind are the three Trilithons in the great stone platform of Baalbek, that also form a course above somewhat smaller, but still colossal stone blocks. Who could have emplaced such colossal stone blocks, and for what purpose? All the evidence implies that they were in place prior to the building of the First Temple. It is also clear that they are not part of the native rock; they lie well above it, and have a somewhat different hue. (In fact, the latest discoveries west of Jerusalem suggest that they might have come from a quarry there). How they were transported and raised to the required level and then pushed into the necessary emplacement, remain questions that archæologists are unable to resolve.



St John's Church, Gamrie-mor, and the connexion with Roslin Chapel

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY W. BRO. A. DAVID SERRY, ANCIENT LIGHT LODGE NO. 88

We as freemasons often are guilty of forgetting the outstanding history of our order, how it evolved, and on the great men upon whose shoulders our order was devised and handed down to us. Alas, we have been too consumed with rank and fortune rather than that of the illustrious legends and recorded history of our order. Let me share with you a troubling question. Would we have Freemasonry today if those grand old men of our order who practiced the ideal of Freemasonry had preoccupied their time gaining position at any cost and be aided and abetted by some drunken clique of some freemasons? I think not. Our masonic order and our roots are founded on brotherly love and truth. It must be, and still must be embedded in our minds, with no exceptions, or deviations. Successful masonic lodges are, and were the temple of the Great Architect because the masonic lodge is the temple society in which the spirit of the Great Architect has a welcome home.

Origen said "We are most of all the Great Architect's Temple when we prepare ourselves to receive the Great Architect's Spirit." However if we introduce dissension and strife and divisions into the life and fellowship of the Great Architect's Temple, we destroy the Temple in a double sense.

We make it impossible for the great Architect's spirit to operate. Immediately bitterness enters a lodge, *love* goes from it. The *truth* can neither be spoken or heard rightly in an atmosphere of bitterness. Where *love* is, the Great Architect is, but where hatred and bitterness are, the Great Architect stands like the poor candidate for initiation stands at the door and knocks but receives no entry. The very badge of a masonic lodge is *love* for the brethren.

We freemasons must ever remember that those who destroy that love and fellowship, destroy the masonic lodge and therefore the temple of the Great Architect. They further split up the lodge. They reduce the lodge to a series of disconnected brethren. Successful lodges must always guard against this from ever happening. The lodge's greatest weakness still is its divisions.

What then is the root cause of these weaknesses? When a lodge starts to worship intellectual superiority: "Oh! Bro. X is so good at ritual and Bro. Y is so hopeless at ritual, or Bro. X has great worldly wisdom; so we worship one brother and denigrate another. It is this very pride in human wisdom that makes us assess, analyze, criticize the way a message is delivered, The correctness of the rhetoric, the weight of the oratory. The trouble about this intellectual pride is that it always is two things.

It is disputatious and cannot keep silent and admire, it must talk and criticize. Intellectual pride is characteristically exclusive and has a tendency to look down on others or shove them aside, as inferiors. It tends to cut men off from each other rather than to unite them. Our forefathers in the Craft

knew this better, alas, than we.

Now I want you all to look at the map of Scotland, then close your eyes for a moment and go back 1,010 years, and further back to 300BCE. Imagine yourself standing on the lush grass that covers Cullykhan. Over near the cliff edge you can see smoke arising from a foundry that produced bronze weapons, then iron ones. These arms were sold to Romans, Norsemen, Angles, Saxons. Looking again at the map of Scotland it is not really known when the Vikings and the Norsemen first commenced attacks on Britain. The first raid was at a monastery called Llandesfarne situated on an island off North umbria. The territories known as the Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands were Viking sovereign territory and were ceded to Scotland 1,010 years ago when the last and final battle was held at the site called the St. John's Church which still stands today, minus its roof. History does record that around the third century CE, the Lord of the Isles, St. Clair was appointed by the Norsemen/Norway to be governor of the Isles of Orkney and Shetland.

The Scottish army commander of 1,010 years ago promised his men that if they would help defeat the Vikings he would build a church and the Church of St. John was built. The Vikings launched a further attack and drove the Scots army out of the church and off the position they had held. The Vikings stabled their horses in the church and the Scots army were mortally offended. A call went out for reinforcements and the Scottish King arrived a week later and the battle was joined again.

Our farm looked right over Gamrie Bay at the church but I never had ever visited and did so on my last trip home. Imagine my surprise as a freemason that I was to see the churchyard, wall to wall Knights Templar graves. There was a Knights Templar Priory at Banff some eight miles away and they joined the second battle. So many were killed that the farm directly above the church is called Bloodymires to this day. Once the Scots army had gained the heights above the church they rolled down great boulders down upon the Vikings and defeated them once and for all. The Isles of Orkney and Shetland were ceded to Scotland after this final battle. St. Clair, Lord of the Isles, took up residence in Thurso and Wick changing his name to Sinclair and a descendant of his Knights Templar all built Roslin Chapel. The Sinclair clan were one of the first to join the rebellion of 1745 for Bonnie Prince Charlie. St. Joh'n Church was of course a Catholic church and remained so until the reformation of the churches in Scotland. The reason the church is known as the church of the skulls is that right above the pulpit the skulls of the Viking leaders were there above the preacher's head. There is one other Viking settlement in Scotland at Ullapool at the head of Loch Broom on the West coast.

The importance of tolerance in Freemasonry

PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY R.W. BRO. PHILIP DURELL, JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN

For me one of the greatest attributes and attractions of Freemasonry is that we are constantly reminded in our rituals and ceremonies to practice tolerance and toleration and that constant reminder is particularly important in a world of increasing polarization of opinions.

A few examples;

- Address to the Brethren : a man who towards himself is a severe judge, but who is tolerant of the debilities of his neighbour
- Investiture of the Chaplain: It will be your duty to lead the devotional exercises of the Lodge, which should be practiced in the spirit of universal tolerance which characterizes our Institution
- Shrine Initiation Ceremony Prologue: The purpose of the Order of the Mystic Shrine is the teaching of the broad principles of Toleration...
- Scottish Right 14th Degree: respect the opinions, and be perfectly tolerant of the errors of each other in matters of faith and belief and to be tolerant even of intolerance.

Tolerance is a central theme of Freemasonry—not too surprising for without tolerance it is impossible to practice universal Brotherly Love or for harmony to reign in the peaceful sanctity of the Lodge.

Tolerance and toleration have very similar meanings and here I will generally refer to tolerance. The *Oxford Dictionary* definitions are;

Tolerance: the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with.

Toleration: the practice of tolerating something, in particular differences of opinion or behaviour.

Essentially tolerance is a willingness to be tolerant and toleration is the practice of being tolerant. Practicing toleration is difficult for most of us because we have to disagree with or dislike something—a word or action—otherwise there is nothing that we need tolerate! This isn't a sermon, as I find myself frequently intolerant and need constant reminders to be more tolerant—this is just another element of our journey from the rough toward the smooth ashlar.

One might say that there are certain actions or words that we just cannot tolerate but to be tolerant even of intolerance we have to strive to be tolerant even in the prosecution of such actions. That is something that I personally have the most difficulty with—how can I be tolerant of an action or a word that is in itself intolerant? Especially when it is contrary to our strong sense of justice—another one of the virtues taught in Freemasonry.

We naturally think that we are tolerant and that it is other people who should be more tolerant. It is much easier to justify our opinions and minimize others in support of our own. However if we honestly think about our own thoughts, words and deeds we might find a surprising amount of intolerance. This is a natural state as our attitudes to others are instilled at an early age—but we can and should seek to improve. How often have you unthinkingly forwarded emails that might be racially or religiously offensive

to others—may be even to the recipient? Next time, I suggest the delete button and if you feel strongly enough perhaps a polite comment to the sender. How often do we repeat negative things about another Brother without checking the veracity of a rumour? How much easier would it be to remember one of the Five Points of Fellowship?

Cheek to cheek or mouth to ear, that we will ever whisper good counsel in the ear of a brother, and in the most tender manner remind him of his faults, and endeavour to aid in his reformation, and will give him due and timely notice, so that he may ward off all approaching danger.

Intolerant people affect those around them in a negative manner. They do not bother to consider feelings of others nor do they care as they believe they have “right” on their side or that they are entitled to express their intolerant opinions anywhere including in lodge—but there is a huge difference in having an opinion and being opinionated as an opinionated person believes his or hers to be the only right opinion. It is incumbent upon us as freemasons to emphasize the positive and to seek resolution not confrontation, to reduce intolerance by our own example. Remember that we should avoid private piques and quarrels and endeavour to resolve our differences—outside the lodge if necessary—in order to preserve peace and harmony within the lodge.

So how do we as individuals make a stand for tolerance? How can we improve our own levels of tolerance? Building tolerance and trust cannot be done overnight, it takes time and commitment. Intolerance is often rooted in ignorance and fear: fear of the unknown, of the “other”, other cultures, religions and nations. Intolerance is also closely linked to an exaggerated sense of self-worth and pride: notions taught and learned at an early age. Therefore we need to place greater emphasis on education—especially in our capacity as parents and grandparents to teach children about tolerance, human rights and fundamental freedoms. But we should not forget that education does not end in school, and that adults need to make an effort to educate themselves. If you don't think society can change then consider television programs of a few decades ago that wouldn't make it on air today—*Archie Bunker?* Or *Steptoe & Sons* for ex-Brits! The internet is a wonderful tool for education and we can educate ourselves on other races and religions, and avoid learned stereotyping. Unfortunately the internet is also efficient at spreading hate—just look at the antimasonic sites! -But we should have the ability to differentiate.

In Freemasonry we set a higher standard for ourselves, and we can start by endeavouring to being more tolerant of contrary opinions in lodge, our community and our country—in fact our ritual and ceremonies require it

Brethren, thank you for listening. May peace and harmony prevail in your lodge and may you practice out of the lodge those beautiful lessons taught therein.

The Urantia Book

**PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY W. BRO. WILLIAM SCHNEIDER, KING EDWARD LODGE No. 28**

The Urantia Book (sometimes called the Urantia Papers or The Fifth Epochal Revelation) is a spiritual and philosophical book that discusses God, Jesus, science, cosmology, religion, history, and destiny. Originating in Chicago, Illinois, sometime between 1924 and 1955, its authorship remains a matter of speculation. Among other topics, the book expounds on the origin and meaning of life, humankind's place in the universe, the relationship between God and people, and the life of Jesus.

It is written as if directly presented by numerous celestial beings appointed to the task of providing an "epochal" religious revelation. According to *The Urantia Book*, God is the creator and upholder of all reality, an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, infinite, and eternal spirit

personality. The book teaches that the universe is vastly older than current scientific theories state, and that the universe is the product of intelligent and purposeful organization. More than one third of the content of the book is devoted to a narrative about Jesus while facets of other world religions are incorporated in the book, including Islam, Taoism, Judaism, Hinduism, Shinto, and Confucianism.

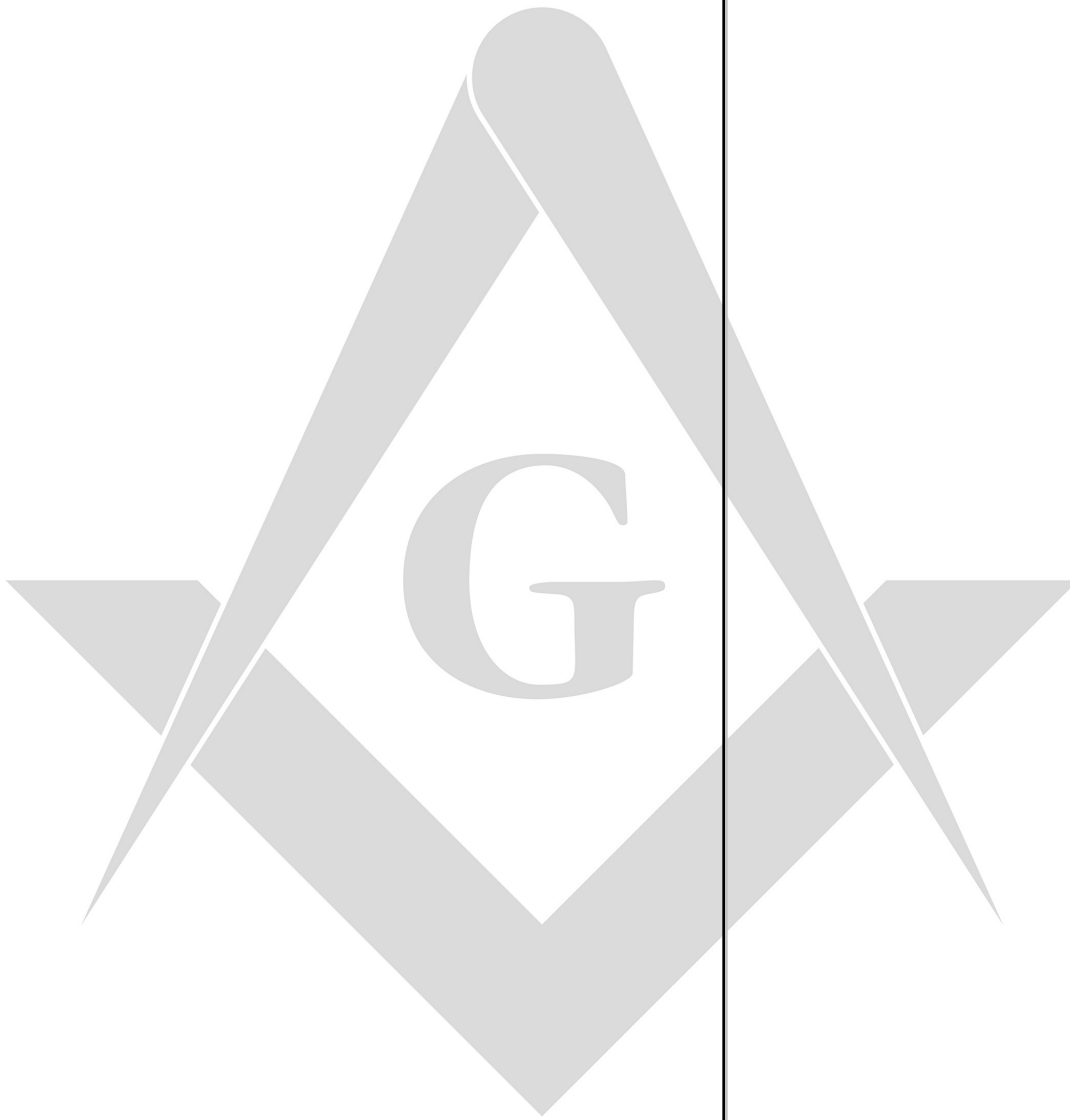
The Urantia Book has been enjoyed by some as a form of science fiction, historical fiction, or fantasy. *The Urantia Book* is noted for its high level of internal consistency and an advanced writing style. First published in 1955, *The Urantia Book* harmonizes science, religion, and philosophy, while illuminating mankind's origin, history and destiny.

Attributions of the Tree of Life in a Masonic Temple

**PRESENTED AT THE GRAND MASONIC DAY, 21 JANUARY 2012
BY W. BRO. PAUL G. FINCH, BRITANNIA LODGE NO. 73**

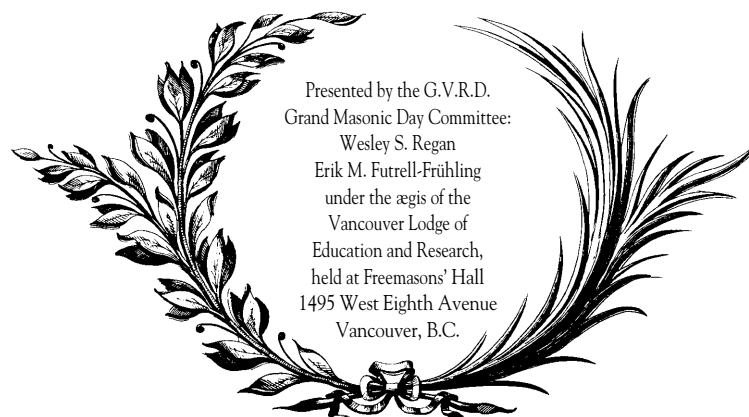
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W. Bro. Wesley S. Regan ♁ *Putting masonic charity to work*
R.W. Bro. Douglas C. Collins ♁ *Houston, we have a problem*
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