



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor S. CARL HECKBERT, P.G.M., Vermilion, Alberta

## *Freemasonry and Catholics*

From The Masonic Record

"I cannot but regard it as unfortunate, unnatural, and pathological that the members of the largest religious body in the United States may not be active members of the nation's largest fraternal organization. The walls are beginning to crumble, and I ask your prayers and your help that they will continue to crumble so that the era of our unhappy separation will see the dawn of a new and brighter day." This is a quotation taken from an address given at a Masonic meeting in the United States last year. The speaker, however, was not, as might have been supposed, a member of the Craft. He was, in fact, a Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Father John A. O'Brien, Ph.D., of Notre Dame University, Indiana.

Dr. O'Brien is the author of some fifteen books in the field of philosophy, religion, and education. One, *The Faith of Millions*, has sold more than 800,000 copies. He is a writer with a world-wide readership and contributes to many magazines, including *Reader's Digest*. His address from which the above quotation has been taken was delivered to the Illinois Council of Deliberation of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in June, 1965.

We would be delighted to feel that, with the current moves being actively made to promote Christian unity, there is also a real prospect that the ban imposed by the Catholic Church on its members entering our ancient and honourable institution will be removed before very long. But are there any signs that this is likely to happen at the present time?

At the end of last year, Pope Paul gave authority for Roman Catholic priests to absolve "repentant Freemasons" between 1st January and 29th May, 1966. Because Catholics are not allowed to become Freemasons, they are subject to excommunication if they disobey. In the ordinary way, as has been pointed out in a recent letter from the secretary of the Catholic Truth Society published in the bulletin of the London Grand Rank Association, for anyone who has been excommunicated to return to the Church, it is necessary for the matter to be reported to the Bishop of the diocese. The effect of the Pope's decision was that priests

who normally hear confessions were empowered, within the dates mentioned, to give absolution to Freemasons, provided they were repentant and severed their connection with the Craft.

This hardly indicates a softening of the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Freemasonry, and it would be interesting to know from what our brethren would have to be absolved and of what they would have to repent before they could be welcomed back into their Church. Nevertheless, we must hope that Dr. O'Brien is correct in his view that the walls between the Catholic Church and Freemasonry are beginning to crumble and echo his prayer that "the era of our unhappy separation will see the dawn of a new and brighter day"!

The full text of Dr. O'Brien's address was originally published in "Masonic Temple Topics" (Chicago), but it was reprinted in *The West Australian Craftsman*. Recently, our Australian contemporary also reprinted a pamphlet by Dr. O'Brien entitled "Friendship—First Step to Christian Unity". Much of the pamphlet is devoted to the changes which have taken place in relations between Protestants and Catholics in recent years and to the drawing together of all sections of the Christian faith. Dr. O'Brien does give, however, many examples of the way in which friendly relations and mutual co-operation in charitable activities are developing in that part of the United States in which he lives.

While the development of friendly relations is to be applauded, this does not necessarily imply that the barrier which prevents Roman Catholics from entering Freemasonry is likely to be removed in the foreseeable future. It may indicate tolerance, but not necessarily understanding of the true nature of the Order.

This whole subject was examined in some detail in 1964 by Alec Mellor, in the English translation of his book *Our Separated Brethren, the Freemasons* (Geo. G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.). Anyone interested in this subject could read this book with profit.

**WITHIN THE CRAFT IN ALBERTA****Acacia Lodge Honours Members**

April 1966 was a notable year in Acacia Lodge, Edmonton, when the members took advantage of the opportunity to pay tribute to a number of stalwart Masons whose joint contribution to Freemasonry in the capital city is an impressive one indeed.

The Lodge made the presentation of Fifty Year Jewels to: Bro. Fred Ellis; Bro. K. W. Reikie; Bro. W. Hanson; Bro. S. A. Raby; Bro. E. J. Taylor; W. Bro. Wm. Reed; Bro. L. Lundeen.

Life memberships were conferred, during the same evening to: R. W. Bro. Murray Hamilton, P.D.D.G.M.; Bro. J. J. Barr.

The above interesting item was made available to the Bulletin through the courtesy of R.W. Bro. N. Miller, D.D.G.M. of District No. 10 to whom we are indebted. Acacia Lodge is one of the strongest and most active Lodges in this Grand Jurisdiction and the membership has every reason to be proud of the image of Freemasonry established over a long period of time.

**THE MASONIC BURIAL SERVICE**

In the September issue of the Bulletin a note appeared concerning the Masonic Burial Service which might have given some Brethren the impression that the policy of Grand Lodge was to discontinue the use of this service. This is not the case. The introduction of the new Memorial Service, which has been well received, was to enable Lodges to honour departed Brethren in cases where attendance at the graveside would have been difficult for many members.

The use of one Service or the other would thus appear to be entirely optional to the Lodges.

**THE GRAND LODGE LIBRARY**

Members throughout the Province are advised that the Grand Lodge Library in the Central Masonic Temple in Calgary is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 o'clock noon, and from 1:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. and, in addition, the library service is available from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. each Wednesday, except during the month of December and the fifth Wednesday of any month.

V.W. Bro. Thos. Bayles (41) J.G.D., a member of the Research and Education Committee of Grand Lodge, will be in charge of staffing the library on Wednesdays, with volunteers from the various City of Calgary Lodges giving the necessary assistance.

The library has an excellent collection of Masonic books and publications and members are cordially invited to make use of the fine service available. Material for use in the preparation of articles or addresses is quite complete and the Committee would welcome references to the information now so readily available.

**THE GRAND MASTER'S COLUMN**

It has oft been said that there is a time and a place for everything. This is certainly true with regard to THANKSGIVING. Thanksgiving was never meant to be just a once a year celebration, but rather a time that is set aside for the common man, and especially the Mason, to recognize the gifts of the Divine Creator to humanity. After making this assessment and having come to the realization of how indebted we are to our Creator for our continued well-being, then giving thanks should become habit-forming and represent a portion of our daily supplication.

The trend of modern-day education no doubt tempts men to feel entirely self-sufficient unto themselves and induces them to believe that they have no obligation whatsoever to acknowledge Divine goodness and mercies. History informs us that this mistake is not peculiar to any particular era but is often made when times are good and men become careless in paying their just due. Giving thanks is not just a form of ritual that can be recited. It cannot be accomplished by just our presence at a service, ceremony or celebration, but rather Thanksgiving is a way of life. It is a way of living. It makes us realize we are not sufficient unto ourselves.

So often we hear the phrase 'I am a self-made man' or 'I stand on my own two feet'—which is all very good as it relates to one's fellow-being, but not so in man's relation to his Creator. What power has man to provide himself with the basic fundamentals of life? O yes, man can take a kernel of wheat, prepare it, seed it, nurture it and reap it, receiving a hundred-fold. If the germ in that kernel is destroyed man cannot replace it nor can he give it the power of growth in the first instance.

The weak man succumbs to his weakness, and despair takes hold of him. To all intent and purpose he is of little worth to society. On the other hand the strong man, with faith and spirit in his heart admits his dependence upon the Great Architect of the Universe and gives thanks accordingly. At that time not only will he recognize himself as having attained that all important goal in life—manhood—but others will also. Too few are the men who withstand the trials of daily living and arrive at this state in life. Certainly it is never accomplished by man's vain attempt at being an island unto himself and not recognizing the gifts of man's Creator for the common good of all.

Let us always remember who we are, what is asked of us and what our purpose is in life. To justify our existence as men and as Masons we must live within that moral and spiritual code that is our heritage. This knowledge has not only been a gift to us but we have been given the power to retain it and put it to work in the society we find ourselves living in at the present time. Never has there been such an exciting time in history in which to live. Never has the challenge been greater. We must remember we do not stand alone. For this we must eternally give thanks and make this the greatest THANKSGIVING ever.

*J. Gordon Powers*

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SPONSOR**

**Prepared by: W.Bro. G. E. Parkinson, P.M.,  
Foothills Lodge No. 174, A.F. & A.M., GRA.**

"If, in the circle of your acquaintance . . . (in the Charge of the E. A. degree) . . . and the world at large convinced of its good effects."

This quotation will undoubtedly be familiar to you. You will note that it is negative with regard to recommendation, unless you are sure. . .

Far too many of our brethren did not hear this admonition when they received the degree, or if they did, they forgot it soon after. When someone approaches you for admission to the lodge, it is your duty to satisfy yourself that he will become a good Mason. Some members are so enthused with the Craft that they want to have all their friends join to share with them. Others feel that, just because someone has expressed some interest in it, he should be ushered in forthwith. In either case, we have taken in a lot of members who didn't really want to come in, or who had no business coming in.

Many people spend a lot of time trying to find out all about the Masonic order, thinking that they will then have the "Secrets" without the normal ties of the obligations. Perhaps he has tried at one time or another to gain admission and has been refused. Then, by just asking a casual question, he is suddenly offered a chance to get in. I had this happen to me on one occasion when a man approached me with some considerable knowledge of the Craft. Fortunately, I knew a little more about him than he thought, and he is still looking for someone to sponsor him.

When someone approaches you for admission, do not be afraid to ask him why he wants to become a member. Pry right into his reasons, and do not be afraid of hurting his feelings by asking questions. Remember that at this stage, the future of the lodge depends on you. If you do not take the trouble to find out why he wants to join, you could be letting in one of those who would make trouble.

"How can I know what I am getting into, when no one will talk about Masonry?" This question is one of the usual ones asked, and here is one of the reasons we do not tell everyone all about it. An undesirable person could easily fake the answers to our questions, and thus gain admission. This almost happened in one of our city lodges. A man had been turned down because he did not have a belief in a Supreme Being, but unfortunately, he was told why. He applied to another lodge, but this time he avowed that he did have a belief in a Supreme Being. The investigation form had almost been handed in when he was found out, just by the merest chance.

What should we look for when a man asks us to sponsor him?

(1) The most important thing is that we must know him well. If you don't know him well, then you don't know enough about him to sponsor him. In some cases, you might take the word of a

well known Brother, but this is not even a good idea.

- (2) He must already live and act like a Mason. Masonry does not attempt to make good men out of anyone that comes along, it attempts to take good men and make them better.
- (3) He must have a sincere belief in a Supreme Being. This does not mean that he should go around quoting the Scriptures. It does mean that when you ask him this question, (the answer to which you should already know, if you know him well), he will discuss it openly and frankly.
- (4) You must find out his reasons for wanting to join. In some cases we have found that it was the wife that insisted that he join, but he had no interest at all. These men we do not want. He must have received a good impression of the craft, and have a genuine desire to share in our work. I once investigated a man who mentioned that a number of his employees were members of the Craft, and that every one of them had a reputation for honesty and fair dealing. He felt that if they were representative of Masonry, then he wanted to be one of them. That man was admitted, and today is adding to an already good reputation.

What can you tell the applicant? If he is only a casual acquaintance, only one thing, that he should ask someone whom he knows quite well.

~~If he is well known to you, you can tell him quite a few things that will not be out of the way.~~

- (1) You should tell him that Masonry is not a Benevolent organization. We do help our distressed brethren whenever we can, but that is not our purpose. Also tell him that he won't get 10% off everything he buys from a brother. Some organizations make this one of their enticements to join.
- (2) You can tell him that Masonry is built on a system of morality and brotherly love. This is what Masonry teaches, and it is all it teaches.
- (3) You can tell him that, contrary to popular belief among many non-members, we do not carry on any fight with the Roman Church. More than one man has given up his membership when he found that this was not done.
- (4) You can tell him that we don't go on fund raising drives, or put on campaigns for this or that community project. Masonry teaches men how to live the moral law, and armed with these teachings, he can then carry on the work of his own choice in a much better manner.
- (5) You must tell him about our Initiation fees and dues. These should not cause a hardship to his family.
- (6) Finally, you must tell him that, unless family or business matters interfere, he is expected to attend lodge. In no other way can he learn the lessons taught by the craft, and if he does not learn them, then he might just as well not have joined.

Let us remember that Masonry has been built up over many years, so there is no need for us to rush out to get all the members we can. If we take the time to choose our members carefully, then Masonry will take care of itself. If you do not know the petitioner well, tell him that you cannot recommend him until you know him much better. If he is sincere, he will appreciate the lodge that much more when he does not gain admission. If he is a "joiner", then he will likely decide not to bother.

Now let us assume that the candidate has been accepted. The sponsor is far from finished. It is his duty from now on, to stay with this man and see that his Masonic education proceeds carefully and thoroughly. He should be his Mentor and his coach. He should get the Mentor's book, which will tell him how to go about the important job he has undertaken. All too often we have new members who are I., P., and R., and the sponsor never even does him the courtesy of appearing in lodge. What kind of an impression does the new member get of the lodge if he never sees his sponsor inside it? I leave the answer to that one to you.

Even after he has received his degrees, the sponsor should attempt to accompany him to lodge as often as possible, and explain the various lectures and ceremonies to him. He has taken this man by the hand and led him to our altar, and should be proud enough of his lodge to want him to get the same feeling of "belonging" that he has.

(Submitted through the courtesy of the Research and Education Committee, Grand Lodge of Alberta)

### R.C.M.P. NIGHT AT BRITANNIA

Britannia Lodge, Lloydminster, recently entertained a large assembly of Masons when the Degree Team of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police of Edmonton conferred a Third Degree. The work was excellently done and the evening thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

Offices in the various chairs were as follows:

- W.M.W. Bro. W. N. Lawson, Unity Lodge;
- I.P.M.W. Bro. Claude Green, Manyberries Lodge;
- Assisting in East W. Bro. Arnold Mansell, Crossfield Lodge;
- S. W. Stan Harbin, Redwood Lodge;
- J. W. Jim Corson, Redwood Lodge;
- S. D. Jim McDougall, Redwood Lodge;
- J. D. Roy Murray, Palestine Lodge;
- S. S. & Chaplain, Al. Dunbar, Unity Lodge;
- I. G. Brian Van Norman, Prairie Lodge, Wilkie, Saskatchewan;
- J. S. Clare Stinson, Redwood Lodge;
- Assisting in East, H. Chris Forbes, N.W.M.P. Lodge, Regina, Saskatchewan.

### WHEN IS A MAN A MASON?

An English Past Master suggests this answer; When he has learned to make friends and to keep them; when he can be happy and high-minded amid the drudgeries of life; when no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain; when he knows how to pray, how to love, how to hope; when he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow men and with God, such a man has found the great spirit and philosophy of Freemasonry. The same gifted Freemason also quotes, "Here lies the great directive power of Masonry—that it makes a man aware of the divinity within him". Or, as we say in the ritual, the immortal principles in the perishable frame.

### OLDEST ACTIVE CANADIAN MASON?

Bro. S. J. Best, Secretary of Cornerstone Lodge No. 19, High River, Alberta advises that Bro. W. S. Henry, at the age of 97 years is still attending Lodge meetings and takes a great deal of interest in all Masonic proceedings.

Bro. Henry has been featured many times in national magazines as the oldest Canadian 'Cowboy' and he is well known for his long and active connection with rodeos and stampedes; he is active physically and mentally and Cornerstone Lodge plans on featuring his lengthy Masonic connection on the occasion of their Sixtieth Anniversary notice which will shortly be printed.

Secretary Best feels that Bro. Henry may be the oldest truly active Mason in Canada and we would be glad to have information in this respect. In any case we are glad to offer our most sincere congratulations to Bro. Henry for his long and active career and to wish him still more years of health and happiness.

### ASHLAR LODGE HAS INTERPROVINCIAL VISIT

On Saturday, September 25th eighteen members of Ashlar Lodge, Calgary, paid a fraternal visit to Miriam Lodge, Vernon, B.C., journeying to the B.C. centre over the famous Rogers Pass. The visitors were taken on a tour of the Vernon area and later attended a banquet arranged by the Brethren of Miriam Lodge, when W. Bro. Judge C. M. Morrow delighted the gathering with a fine address. W. Bro. W. H. Harper, P.G.M. of Alberta, now residing in Penticton attended the meeting and was genuinely welcomed by the Calgary Brethren. The visit was an outstanding event for all in attendance and a return visit of the Vernon Brethren is being arranged for November 27th when Ashlar Lodge will host the B.C. members in Calgary.

"I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see;  
I sought my God, but my God Eluded me;  
I sought my brother, and I found all three".