



Grand Lodge Bulletin

M.W. Bro. W. J. COLLETT, Editor

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

by Bro. Philip W. Mayfield
the V.W. the Grand Chaplain

Being a great believer in keeping in touch with first principles, I am always delighted that Christmas is a festival celebration of the first principles of the Christian faith. "Peace On Earth, Good Will Towards Men" is much more than an expression of holiday sentiment. It is an expression of one of the first principles of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and the continuing hope of all good men!

Christmas is a time when we as Masons might well recall first principles which all Masons hold in common and consider them in the light of this injunction first phrased by the angels at Bethlehem. These first principles of Masonry to which I refer are our Ancient Landmarks. (Refer to the Grand Lodge Bulletin October and December, 1974). They form a universal, immutable code for Masons whose origin stems from time immemorial. They represent the fundamental character of our Fraternity.

The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man is a tenet of faith which reminds us that we were all brought into being by the Great Architect of the Universe and that He cares passionately for His creation. The only true response a Mason can make to his Father's love is one of Brotherly love, relief and truth.

The Immortality of the Soul reminds us of the height of regard and the depth of compassion in which we are held by our Creator, whose love will never let us go. By His steadfast love we are rescued from the inevitability of death. No matter what happens, we face the uncertainties and risks of living with the assurance of Hiram in the **Legend of the Third Degree** where Truth, Justice and trust in God triumph over the treachery of evil and death.

The Holy Bible, our rule and guide to faith, is God's revelation to all mankind. It is our moral and masonic trestleboard, the designs on which are for us to follow in the erection of our spiritual building. The law of God reminds us that He not only made us and gives us what we need to live, but also shows us the way of truth and right.

Secrecy is an expression of every Mason's need for a degree of privacy. The Mason's secrecy has not the faintest suggestion of conspiracy. Quite the contrary, this secrecy provides the Mason with the privacy he needs to study, reflect, and contemplate the virtues of life which make him a better man in the eyes of the world and allows him the opportunity to care for his Brother in such a way that the eyes of the world would only impede. A Mason's charity is never conspicuous — its effectiveness does not require it to be so.

No man may fully understand who he is without the opportunity to set himself apart and see himself and his actions as truly unique. Secrecy is a necessity that every Mason must treasure and protect, for it is an essential element of his personal fulfillment and success.

The Symbolism of the Operative Art has been made use of by speculative Masons in such a way that in the practice of the Craft each Mason is reminded of his moral obligations. The gavel, the gauge, the trowel, the level, the plumb, the square and compasses are truly the tools of our craft and are necessary for every Mason to erect his edifice. Thus we are reminded that like all good craftsmen, Masons must have a high regard for their working tools and always keep them ready for the use for which they were designed.

A Mason Must Be A Man, Freeborn and of Lawful Age. We rejoice in our manhood! We do so not because man is higher or lower than woman but because he is uniquely man and craves the unique experience of seeking after and celebrating the highest ideals of his manhood with his Brothers. Our Masonic Fraternity is composed of men who have the freedom and the maturity to responsibly undertake such a search and participate in such a celebration of the ideals which each Mason endeavors to fashion into a way of life for himself.

Christmas is the festival celebration of the birth of Jesus whom Christians call "Son of God". With His birth we celebrate the highest ideals of Faith, Hope, Charity, Peace and Good Will. My hearty wish is that the ideals of Masonry exemplified in the Ancient Landmarks may add immeasurably to the fulfillment of our longing for "Peace On Earth, Good Will Towards Men". MERRY CHRISTMAS!

MORE ABOUT THE LANDMARKS

By M.W. Bro. F. G. Fox, P.G.M.

Two years ago in two short papers I attempted to cast some illumination on our Ancient Landmarks. My object now is to discuss some of the pitfalls that await the Mason who seeks to know and understand them.

To begin let me urge you to try a simple experiment. Run some water in the wash bowl and put one hand in. Then grasp a handful of water and draw your hand out. You will find that all you have managed to get is a thin film of water. Yet you know the water is there in the bowl — you can see it and you can feel it, but you can't quite grasp it, real as it is.

So it is for the Mason who would study the Ancient Landmarks — he knows that they are there, that they are real, but he is forever feeling them slip away just when he thinks that he has them at last.

It can be said truthfully that no one is an authority on the Landmarks, although many Masons have attempted to write with some authority about them. There are several reasons for a great diversity of thought about them. First, the Landmarks are conceived to be of religious, moral, and philosophical character as opposed to usage and custom, which are directly concerned in the day to day administration and government of lodges and Grand Lodges. Second, the elusive character of the Landmarks almost precludes objective study of them. The temperament and personal feelings of the investigator almost inevitably color the conclusions that he draws, if he draws any. Third, there is no universally accepted code of Landmarks and so far as we know there never has been, although the concept of a body of immutable Masonic law is universal among Masons.

Most of us think of the Landmarks, I am sure, as a body of principles, or laws if you like, that govern Masons and are essential to Masonry wherever it exists and in all ages. They have survived the turmoils of human kind for generations because no better laws to govern a man or a body of men have ever been conceived. They are our rock, to which we as Masons must remain firmly anchored. We can alter usage and custom, we can rewrite our constitution, we can legislate, we can make or rescind regulations, but our rock, our Landmarks, must stand unassailable.

Now, some may say "That is all very well, even laudable, but what is it exactly that is immutable, that must stand unassailable?" What are these laws that we call Landmarks?" Those are fair questions, and I concede that any answer I might offer must either be my personal conception of the Landmarks or that of some other Mason who has applied his mind to their study and identification.

Consider the problems the questions raise. It is widely agreed that there are three criteria that distinguish Landmarks — universal acceptance among Masons, existence from time immemorial, and immutability. With such clear guidelines it might be

assumed that the Landmarks ought to be readily identifiable, but that is not the case. The first two particularly are exceedingly troublesome — so much so that I am always tempted to add a fourth criterion, namely, inscrutability. I cannot give unequivocal answers to those questions, nor can anyone else.

Universality could be established beyond doubt only if all jurisdictions officially adopted codes or lists of Landmarks. Comparison of such codes would enable the student to eliminate what we might call local Landmarks, and so arrive at a universal code. But alas — Masonry does not dot its i's and cross its t's in such a tidy way. Many jurisdictions, including ours, have not deemed it necessary or desirable to adopt a formally stated code, and they cannot be included in any attempted comparisons. Universality is, with very few exceptions, almost impossible to establish. Nevertheless, some principles that have the strength of Landmarks, whether they are so called or not, are recognizable in all jurisdictions. For example, the essential belief in the Supreme Being is recognizable in our jurisdiction in the Ritual, in the Ancient Charges, in the Constitution, and in the Proceedings. It is clearly a Landmark to us, although we do not anywhere describe it as such. Other Landmarks can be discerned in the same way, and what is true of our jurisdiction is true of many others that share our reluctance to issue a formal code. Unfortunately, however, no researcher however discerning, can be certain that he has discovered all the Landmarks of such jurisdictions.

It is equally difficult to establish existence from time immemorial. The founders of the modern speculative Craft, and the leaders during the first hundred years or so, were devoted and enthusiastic, but they were not sound and objective students of history. They were creating a philosophical and speculative order from the ruins and remnants of a very ancient operative Craft, of which few records survive, and they unquestionably interpreted those few records in the way that best suited their needs, without regard to the impartial objectivity that should govern research in any discipline. The fact is that we can surmise much about the external or public activities, philosophy, and organization of the operative Craft, but we can prove very little, especially about its internal workings or the form and content of its ceremonies. To prove to a skeptic that any Landmark is of immemorial antiquity is perhaps possible in some instances, but many alleged Landmarks almost certainly have no claim whatever to immemorial antiquity.

Immutability is a different kind of criterion, in that it is a law that is intended to preserve other laws, from the tinkering of those who are unable to contemplate any law without desiring to change or remove it somehow. None of the generally accepted Landmarks is an impediment to the health and advancement of Masonry. On the contrary, all of them are essential parts of the character and personality of the institution. They are unchangeable because they are indispensable. To change or abandon any of them would be to wreak an immediate, and probably ir-

reversible, change in the fundamental character of Masonry.

We are forced to conclude, then, that the three criteria that are said to distinguish Landmarks are admirable in theory, but extremely difficult to apply. We need not and should not conclude, however, that the Landmarks are a Masonic myth, or worse, a refuge for excessively conservative brethren who never want to change anything. They are real enough that they influence every lodge and Grand Lodge officer in his Masonic decisions — and in his everyday life, we hope. Indeed, they influence every Mason who makes an effort to meet the obligations he has accepted, for by his acceptance of those obligations he has accepted at least some of the Landmarks.

I think that when the usual criteria fail to provide a clear answer there is a further, and simpler, test that can be applied — and I have already alluded to it.

If we think about Masonry — its history, ceremonies, philosophy and morality, and the obligations that we have all accepted — we soon realize that there are some parts of Masonic belief and practice that are absolutely essential to the fundamental character of the institution. They could not be changed or abandoned without immediately changing that character, and not for the better. Those beliefs and practices, which happen to be of great age but are not all proven to be of immemorial antiquity, are, I believe, the Landmarks of the Craft. I think that there are seven of them.

1. The fatherhood of God, and its corollary, the brotherhood of man.
2. The immortality of the soul.
3. The Holy Bible or some other book of the law of God.
4. The legend of the third degree.
5. Secrecy.
6. The symbolism of the operative art.
7. A Mason must be a man, freeborn, and of lawful age.

I want to offer a final observation for those brethren who wonder why we in Alberta have never formally adopted a set of Landmarks. We have not done so for the same reason I think, that we have never specified all the powers and prerogatives of the Grand Master. To specify, to codify, is to limit and restrict. As we rely on the good judgment of the Grand Master to limit his use of power, we also rely on the Craft to recognize that we have certain fundamental laws, often apprehended rather than stated, that we must preserve.

DRUMHELLER LODGE NO. 146

The Grand Master and his retinue were present at the Fiftieth Anniversary of Drumheller Lodge No. 146 at its September meeting.

BETWEEN THE PILLARS IN THE GROOVE

W. Bro. R. Wilbraham of Wetaskiwin Lodge No. 15, in the September Lodge Notice of his Lodge writes a message to his brethren and one sentence reads, "With the return of Fall we must now look into getting back into the "Masonic Groove" and become active Masons again. He then proceeds to describe what he means by the "Masonic Groove" — supporting the District Deputy Grand Master in his official visits, working on some projects to prepare for the seventy-fifth birthday of the Lodge and getting ready for the third degree that was coming up.

We had to acknowledge that W. Bro. Wilbraham had carved out a pretty good groove for his brethren for this Fall and really was prepared to put his Lodge to work in a real masonic fashion.

This being among the first of the September notices that we read we looked with anticipation to what the other Worshipful Masters were going to say to their brethren at the opening of the Fall season. It was not long before a sense of depression crept over us. There were a large number of Lodge notices that were absolutely devoid of any Masonic news but just the bare announcement of a meeting. There were others in which the Worshipful Master appeared to consider the Masonic Groove as being a Wine and Cheese Party or a Golf Tournament. These we put aside with a sense of sorrow.

After we had the many Lodge notices divided up in piles our spirits rose again when we came to the conclusion that the majority of our Lodges in Alberta regarded the "Masonic Groove" not as a rut of social affairs and attendance promoting gimmicks but really as getting down to the basic reasons for the existence of Masonic Lodges and that is the pursuing of the Masonic Art.

There is a breath of fresh air blowing over the Masonic Order within Alberta which bring with it the inspiration to examine the basic tenets of Freemasonry and to throw out a lot of the superfluous paraphernalia that has been weighing us down for the past number of years. The power of Freemasonry does not lie in the popularity that we appear to gather in doing surface things. It lies in the constant review of our ancient Landmarks.

So we thank Wetaskiwin Lodge and its Worshipful Master for the inspiration that heralded a start to our Fall and Winter season.

LODGE MOVES

Both Elbow River Lodge No. 180 and Foothills Lodge No. 174 commenced meeting in Bowmont Lodge Hall in the Bowness District of Calgary, this Fall. Elbow River moved from the Central Temple in an effort to cut down expenses. Foothills moved because St. Mark's Lodge in S.W. Calgary, where Foothills has met since its constitution, is to be rebuilt and the lodge was forced to locate other facilities.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE LODGE

At the Masonic Spring Workshop this year one of the Schools of Instruction was called "Contributing to the Lodge". The purpose was to find out how Masons, particularly Past Masters, viewed their contributions to their Lodge. The group was divided up into smaller groups. Each member was asked to make an individual assessment, then the small group made an assessment and then the large group. There were two sessions morning and afternoon. The morning sessions had sixteen groups of 6 members each for a total of 96. The afternoon group had twelve groups of 6 members for a total of 72 members. In all 168 members took part.

There was considerable interest in the exercise and much discussion was generated. Some members took kits home to present them to their home lodge and others have written to the Grand Lodge Office for kits. Many have asked that the results at the Spring Workshop be published. Below we print the ten contributions that were to be discussed.

Contributing To The Lodge

- A. Learn one section of the ritual thoroughly and deliver it on request.
- B. Advise the Lodge on financial and budget matters.
- C. Keep knowledge of ritual fresh and be available on request to substitute for absent officers.
- D. Attend Lodge Meetings regularly.
- E. Advise the Master regarding his program and (or) the appointment of officers.
- F. Assist in visitation of the sick and distressed members of the Lodge.
- G. Take part in the affairs of Grand Lodge.
- H. Advise young Masons on proper deportment while in and out of Lodge.
- I. Prepare and deliver Masonic Research papers.
- J. Be conscientious while serving on character committees.

Below is the chart of results. It shows the Morning results with weighted scores and the order in which the contributions were selected. The same is done for the Afternoon session. The Average is the combination of the the Morning and Afternoon results. The Predetermined scores are those that were derived from giving the exercise to a group of Past Grand Masters previous to the Spring Workshop.

There are some interesting conclusions that an individual may draw from these results if he spends a little time analyzing them.

Contributions	Morning		Afternoon		Average		Predetermined Scores	
	Group Score	Rating	Group Score	Rating	Group Score	Rating	Group Score	Rating
A	2.15	6	2.00	6	2.08	6	1.50	9
B	1.30	10	1.40	9	1.35	10	2.25	6
C	3.33	2	3.64	2	3.49	2	4.00	1
D	4.56	1	4.74	1	4.65	1	3.50	3
E	1.49	9	1.31	10	1.40	9	1.25	10
F	3.04	3	3.19	3	3.12	3	2.00	7
G	1.85	8	1.98	7	1.92	7	1.75	8
H	2.33	5	2.82	5	2.58	5	3.75	2
I	1.98	7	1.79	8	1.89	8	2.75	5
J	2.78	4	2.99	4	2.89	4	3.00	4

MAILBAG

Editor,
The Grand Lodge Bulletin—

The interest shown in my paper on preparing and delivering the Work is most gratifying. I have had many Brethren approach me to say they found it informative and helpful to them. That is very satisfying.

Your paragraph regarding the contentious point of using a tape recorder should produce some interesting replies.

My posture on this point is as follows. First, I would make it clear that I do not suggest this means to memorize secret Work. This, of course, would violate our obligation. That brings me to my second point. I do not believe the ritual contains any secrets. The secrets are not written therein. If they were, the M.W. Grand Lodge would be in violation of the obligation. Such is not the case. I do not advocate the indiscriminate divulging of our ritual, however.

Actually, in my own experience, the only time I have used the tape recorder is when I committed to memory the General Charge from our Installation Ceremony. I do not feel it is secret. As a matter of fact I deem it to be a pity that the world cannot be exposed to this noble oration.

However, if the Committee on the Work should rule me out of order on this matter, I apologize for my error and will conform to their ruling. My belief, nevertheless, will be that which I have expressed.

My purpose in writing the article was beneficent, and if I have erred, it was with honest intent.

Fraternally yours,
Myron Lusk P.M.



CAVELL LODGE NO. 125

A special evening was held to honor R.W. Bro. Arthur G. Warren for his many years of faithful service to the Order. An Honorary Life Membership was presented by R.W. Bro. W. H. Jamieson of Cavell. Guest speakers were M.W. Bro. George Sterling P.G.M., M.W. Bro. Gordon Towers P.G.M.

Many Lodges from central Alberta were represented.