

April - June 2000



**SOMEWHERE
A MAN
IS SEARCHING**



The Committee on Masonic Education
The Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M.
of
North Carolina

P Lodge Night
PROGRAM

APRIL -
JUNE 2000

**Somewhere a Man
Is Searching...**

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To the DDGM's, DDGL's, Masters and Officers of the Subordinate Lodges:

My Brothers, shortly after you begin using this Second Quarter Lodge Night Program, I will conclude my term as your Grand Master. It has indeed been my very great honor, privilege and pleasure to have served you this year.

Our Masonic Opinion Survey in 1997 overwhelmingly convinced me that you - the Freemasons of North Carolina - desire more in the way of Masonic Education at your Stated Communications. In too many of our Lodges, the meetings are extremely dull and boring, and few members find them either interesting or enjoyable. Too many of our members attend Lodge only out of a sense of duty or obligation, and not because they enjoy it. I promised you that I would strive to do something about this situation during my year as Grand Master.

By introducing the Lodge Night Program we have made great progress in responding to your requests and meeting your needs, and in making your Lodge meetings more informative, interesting and enjoyable. Each time you attend Lodge a new and fresh program awaits you. It is structured so that it does not interfere with any degree work or special activities that your Lodge may have planned. Yet, it is there and available when needed.

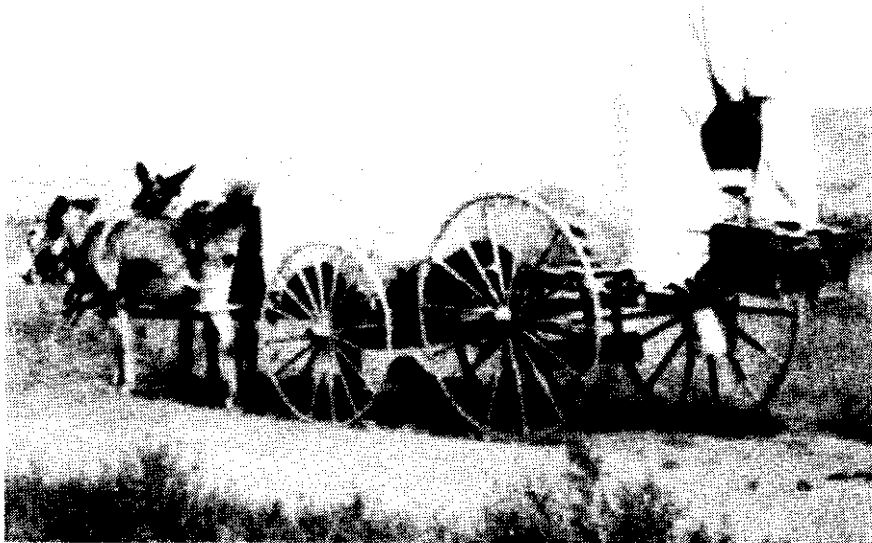
Although space does not allow me to recognize everyone by name, I want to acknowledge and thank all of you who have personally contacted me - whether by telephone, email or in person - to express your approval and appreciation for this program and the other programs and plans which we have brought to fruition this year. Your expressions of gratitude have made this year as your Grand Master THE greatest and most rewarding and fulfilling year of my life, and one which I can assure you that I will never, never, never forget.

Again, thank you, brethren, to each and every one of you. Keep the faith! Let's practice Freemasonry!!! And may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you - now and forever. So mote it be!

Charles M. Ingram
146th Grand Master
1999-2000

1st Stated Communication in April 2000

First - A Safe Physical Refuge



All living things seek a physical place of safety, protection and comfort. Birds fly south for the Winter. Some animals go into seclusion and hibernate. Others migrate to areas where they are better protected and food is more plentiful. Man is no exception. The entire history of mankind is a record of movement to find a “better” place. The vast migrations of mankind across Europe and on to the Americas was an effort to find a “better” life. Even today, when the place we live becomes uncomfortable or threatening we move. We have moved from the inner-cities to the outskirts of town searching for a “better” place for ourselves and families. From there we moved to the suburbs and on to places that used to be called rural. As more of us move to these rural areas, they become urban and some move on. The cycle continues... all in an effort to find a safe, comfortable place

- A. Even in times of peace and prosperity men will seek a “refuge”, a quiet, secure place.

Discussion

1. What physical things do we want in our “refuge”? What physical items do we surround ourselves with in order to feel safe?
2. What physical things can threaten our safety and comfort?
3. How do we deal with such threats?

- B. Men create their own safe places or refuges. Most men have numerous refuges and tend to move between them.

Discussion

1. What do we mean “tend to move between them?”
2. Are our homes refuges? How do they function in that manner?
3. What other refuges do we create?

2nd Stated Communication in April 2000

Next - A Safe Mental Refuge

In the previous section we discussed the importance to all men of finding a safe, secure place for himself and his family. We spend a large part of our lives finding and maintaining these safe places. They are a necessity of life.

- A. A man’s first priority is to provide a safe physical place for himself and his family. Once this is done, after he has provided the necessities of life, he still needs something else. Man, by nature, is a social being. He needs to interact with others. He needs to build relationships.

Discussion

1. What similarities do men require in order to feel comfortable with one another?
2. What kinds of similarities will tend to draw men together?
3. How important is financial ability, physical ability, education etc.
4. What moral requirements do men require from each other?
5. Can men with differing moral requirements be comfortable together?

- B. People tend to band with others of similar interests and likes. People in the same occupations, religion, financial etc. groups often unite to work for some common interest.

Discussion

1. List some groups other than Masonry in your area and discuss how the members of these groups are similar. How are the groups themselves different?
2. Using the same list of groups you used in the last question, how vital is each member's acceptance to the group? Does each member have to possess some special skill in order to get into the group?
3. Does the man of today need to join any of the organizations above? Why? Why is there a tendency today NOT to join ANY organization? Are these valid reasons?

1st Stated Communication in May 2000
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Is Freemasonry An Answer?

Men seek to bond with others who hold similar values, needs and common interests. Having "something in common" is the basis for most organizations. Can we picture a plumber having anything in common with a college professor? Can we picture a doctor working alongside a shoe salesman? What would a lawyer have in common with a banker? As Masons, we can picture each one of these things because it has been a part of Freemasonry for centuries, but our study here is not of present Freemasons, it is of those who might be drawn to the craft, and why. It is common in Masonry for men of differing careers and income levels to be drawn to each other. It is very uncommon in the outside, or what Masons call the "profane" world.

- A. Every area of American life is "compartmentalized". Even the churches in America are classified by those who attend them. "Poor church" and "wealthy church" are terms used regularly. There is the "exclusive" *country club for the wealthy and just the "club" for the not so well off.* Highly educated people usually avoid the less educated and the less educated generally feel uncomfortable around those with more education. There is a division between "white collar" and "blue collar" jobs and a

further division between the high and low level positions in each. There is “management” and there is “labor”. We build and reinforce these divisions daily.

Discussion

1. Thinking as a non-Mason. In the real world, is it in any way logical for men of different careers, religions, and social levels to unite together? Why? Why do they avoid each other?
 2. Why would a non-Mason feel uncomfortable around people from another religion, socioeconomic class, career, etc.?
 3. How do these “outsiders” affect non-Masons?
 4. When we state that Masonry unites “the high and the low, the rich and poor... *men of every country, sect and opinion...*” How believable is it to the outside world? As a non-Mason would you believe it?
- B. Though we would like to believe that Freemasonry is a very natural and desirable process, as we see, some of the precepts of Masonry are quite **unnatural** to modern man. As we discussed earlier, we build refuges to protect us from outside dangers. It would be quite easy, and in the outside world very natural, to see people from another class, religion, etc. as a *threat to the very safety we seek*. Yet, we know as Masons that the precepts of Masonry can work. Each of us has seen it happen countless times.

Discussion

1. What actually happens to change a man who is fearful or untrusting of someone from another religion, socioeconomic or educational group to someone who can lovingly accept these people, who are entirely *foreign to him*, as “brothers”?
2. Is the process instant? Or is it a step-by-step process of the three degrees, lectures, catechisms, and lessons?
3. Within a certain period of time people with absolutely nothing in common have very much in common. What do they have in common? Is this a sound basis for trust and brotherhood?
4. How do the degrees and teachings establish a bond where none would otherwise exist?

2nd Stated Communication in May 2000

Why Would He Come to Us?

Today, we tend to use membership figures as a barometer of the success or failure of an organization. In Freemasonry using membership numbers as a measure of success is relatively new. Such numbers weren't always considered important. Although we have no definite records, after the anti-masonic movement created by the Morgan affair subsided, membership did begin to rise and reached its high point around the 1950's. Since then it has declined.

- A. The decline in membership among all organizations, including Masonry, indicates that membership in an organization does not hold the appeal it did years ago, but we did have a significant time of growth.

Discussion

1. Given the ban on solicitation of members. What drew Masons to the *fraternity prior to the turn of the century? How was the average Mason then different from the Mason of today?*
2. Masonry generally grows in bad times and declines in good times. Yet, the prosperity of the early 1920's and the severity of the Great Depression did not follow this pattern. Why?
3. Masonry began to grow tremendously after WWII. Why did the men returning home desire to join? By 1960 this trend had reversed. Why?

- B. *Different age groups give different reasons for petitioning Masonry. Older members generally adhere to traditional Masonry. Younger members sometimes attempt to relate Masonry with other non-masonic organizations.*

Discussion

1. Poll the men over 60 in your lodge and ask what their PRIMARY reason was for joining the Masonic order.
2. *Do the same for members 59 years of age or under.*
3. Are the results different? How are they different? What has changed?

- C. Traditional Masonry was able to grow without solicitation or advertisement in any form. The belief that good men in the community would be attracted to other men with the same ethical and moral qualifications worked for decades, some would say centuries.

Discussion

1. Would this reliance on "example" work now? Why? Why not?
2. How does the average man react to someone who holds a higher level of ethics and moral standards? How does that man identify with a man of lower, or average morality? Should he try?
3. Would a man of higher moral standards appear "aloof" or "conceited". Does he identify with the real world? Would others avoid him?
4. Did the good Mason of 100 years ago appear "aloof" or "conceited"? Did he identify with what was then considered the real world? Did others avoid him?
5. Explain, then, how Masonry grew. Explain why today would be different.

1st Stated Communication in June 2000

Are We All We Claim To Be?

Masonry claims to be an extremely moral organization based on high principles and uncompromising ethics.

- A. It is very likely that a person who is inquiring about Masonic membership has been impressed by a Mason or group of Masons. He may be basing his opinion on a father or other relative.

Discussion

1. Do we have a higher standard of morality and character than other organizations require? Is this moral level obvious in every member of your lodge? If not, how do you answer the man who asks you why not?
2. When the prospective candidate asks you about how involved is the membership, how active they are, how do you reply?

3. If asked what percentage of our members regularly attend lodge what would you say? How would you reply if asked why everyone doesn't attend on a regular basis.
- B. Uncertainty about our rituals and obligations concern many would-be Masons. There is much information, and misinformation, available about Freemasonry. Some condemn us for what we know as entirely unwarranted or non-existent reasons.

Discussion

1. Though it is highly unlikely that someone who has been convinced we are some form of Satanic cult would even approach us, how do you console the person who fears he may be getting into something that may compete with his religious beliefs?
2. What do you say to the fundamentalist Christian when he says that he has heard that we pray to The Great Architect of the Universe and not to Jesus Christ?

2nd Stated Communication in June 2000

What If a Man Asks Me?

There are two million Masons in the United States of America, but the customs of the "quiet" fraternity that draws no attention to itself makes it almost unknown to the younger generations. Our only public display is at funerals and a small handful of public events authorized by some jurisdictions.

- A. Masonry prohibits solicitation of members. Our customs and CODE require that a man must ask to become a Mason.

Discussion

1. If we cannot advertise or solicit members how does a man know about the Freemasons? How does he know we exist?
2. If a man specifically asks for details about Masonry what would you say? What do we stand for? How difficult is it to become a member? What do we do?

3. Some people become very uncomfortable when asked about Masonry and fear they may divulge some “secret.” What can you NOT discuss with the non-Mason who asks you about the fraternity?
- B. Much of Masonry derives from ritual and symbolism. Many people today are unfamiliar with ritual and do not readily understand symbolism.

Discussion

1. Knowing that someone who is not familiar with ritual and symbolism may not fully appreciate Masonry, how do you explain it to someone who asks you about ritual?
2. What do you say about the need for memorization? How does memorization of the catechisms enhance Masonry? How does it detract from it?
3. How do you explain the difference between Masonry and the social or civic clubs?
4. What do you say to the man who tells you that he doesn't think Masonry is for him?

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BOOKS

FUNDAMENTALISM AND FREEMASONRY by Dr. Gary Leazer (Foreword by Forrest D. Haggard) described by Forrest Haggard as "a thorough study of religious radical fundamentalism in Christianity and their attack on freedom of thought and liberty \$19.95 (PPD). #BK 505

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