

BY RW TOM JACKSON

FIRST SESSION

WORLD CONFERENCE—WASHINGTON, DC is

OPENING ADDRESS

My Brothers, it is a distinct privilege and honor for me to address the opening of the IX World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges. Today, it is an added pleasure for me to welcome you to my homeland and to the second World Conference to be held in North America, and the first for me as Executive Secretary. It was 10 years ago this month that the Constitution was drafted while meeting in New York City and 12 years ago that the concept of a world conference was conceived.

We have come a long way since our origin but my brothers we have a long way to go toward recapturing the visual image that was once conjured up at the mere mention of Freemasonry as well as the influence in society that once characterized our great craft. I am well aware of what I will say is more applicable in some countries and societies than in others but in this age of global technology, and the "shrinking" of the world, the Freemasonry in no country nor in any society can choose to ignore the image or influence of Freemasonry as a whole.

For this reason, if for no other, the need for fraternal cooperation and understanding within our Grand Lodge leadership may well be paramount for our continued existence. The brotherly love and assistance that characterized Freemasonry of the past appears to be disintegrating in a world in which individualism and commitment to self supplants a commitment to others and as a result organizations like ours must face greater challenges. Along with the action of governments in many countries absorbing the voluntary responsibility that Freemasons assumed as part of their heritage, has lessened not only the need that once existed but the exposure of that need as was revealed to society. The old adage that masons take care of their own is being replaced by the illogical assumption that we can buy back admiration and respect that we have lost by a vast commitment to public charity. My brothers, Freemasonry did not impact this world by this approach nor can it ever hope to regain its influence by this approach. Our goal remains to improve the world by improving the man.

As I have expressed in past conferences, the rise and spread of irregular forms of Freemasonry must be of a concern to all regular Grand Lodges. The need for our craft to present a united front is at least as important today as it was at any time in our past, and yet we continue to find ways to create contention within regular Freemasonry and between Grand Lodges. My brothers it is imperative that we understand and practice the parameters under which regular Freemasonry has operated for several hundred years. The right of jurisdictional integrity must not be infringed upon. Two regular Grand Lodges should not be operating in the same jurisdiction without mutual consent. To empower this to happen simply weakens both.

We must begin to understand the operational variables that exist in Freemasonry in different parts of the world. We cannot expect our craft to function the same way in every country since the environment in which it exists requires it or at least stimulates it to operate in different modes than is found in others. In essence the society in which Freemasonry operates will drive it toward the character that it adopts. This does not mean that if it operates differently from the Freemasonry that you and I are used to, that it is irregular or wrong. So long as the basic philosophical principles of the craft are not infringed upon, its operational character permits it to work toward the same goal.

Another subject which we have discussed in the past remains a challenge to Craft Freemasonry in some parts of the world. Organizations appendant to Craft Freemasonry continues to interfere with the stability of some Grand Lodges. This is an untenable situation and must be addressed by Grand Lodges. In addition, support from all Regular Grand Lodges must be counted upon to combat this interference. Grand Lodges are the supreme authority in every jurisdiction and every Appendant organization is subject to Grand Lodge control in every jurisdiction. Once we condone appendant organizations, subject to Craft Freemasonry, to claim superiority through creating degrees of a higher number and claiming that they are therefore more important than Grand Lodges or by invitational bodies assuming to be a superior form of Freemasonry, we contribute to the weakening of the Masonic fraternity and its ability to regain its rightful place in society.

In recognition of the ongoing challenges to our noble craft and in seeking a proper niche, this conference has been structured to a more practical style while at the same time stimulating us to locate our position in present-day society. While recognizing our self-limiting precepts in avoiding involvement in politics and religion as a craft, we will consider ways in which our precepts and philosophy might contribute to a more stable environment in which the concept of the brotherhood of man might play a contributory role. For this reason one of the major topics is **STANDING UP TO DARKNESS**.

The second major topic; **MAINTAINING GRAND LODGE INTEGRITY** examines the challenge which confronts regular Freemasonry and is a serious threat to our stability on a global scale. Schisms between and within Grand lodges is occurring all too frequently. These issues become exaggerated as a result of modern technology on the World Wide Web. These schisms coupled with an increasing amount of dissatisfaction of our own membership are causing an unrest that we cannot choose to ignore. Let us face it, my brothers, many of our problems today of our own self making. Ego drives us to succeed but lack of control of that ego, destroys the legacy that we leave.

GLOBAL FRATERNAL NETWORKING is the final major topic on our agenda and in it we hope to stimulate thinking on a methodology to contribute to cultural and academic exchanges within our Masonic fraternity while examining and perhaps assisting civic organization's that are more advanced in this field.

Freemasonry has been provided with an opportunity in recent years as a result of best-selling popular novels such as *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons* along with the movie *National Treasure* and its sequel. Whether we agree or disagree with the author's intent or with the movie's purpose, there can be no denying that it has generated a renewed interest in our craft.

I realize that it provides a greater stimulus in North America than it probably does in other areas of the world but as a result of them, writings are being generated that are receiving exposure throughout the world. Many more men are inquiring into the significance of Freemasonry as a result.

For decades, we have failed to attract the young man into our ranks. Now, however, young men are approaching us at a rate that has not been seen for many years. There should be a concern, however, because it is questionable whether we are prepared to receive them. They are young men who are seeking more than we are providing. They have a much greater interest in the philosophical and esoteric aspects of the craft than many of our leaders are capable of providing simply because we have not required it for those decades.

For many Grand Lodges and perhaps for Freemasonry in general this may be the last great opportunity provided for us to reestablish our rightful place in society. We cannot afford not to grasp it and run. It is going to require Masonic leadership to forget their commitment to themselves or to their narrow vision of the craft and to dedicate themselves to the fundamental principles of Freemasonry. It made us great in the past and it can restore our greatness for the future.

The world Conference recognizes and acknowledges that each Grand Lodge is an independent sovereign unit unto itself and has the right to make decisions and take action that it deems appropriate within its operation, so long as it does not violate the philosophy or precepts of Freemasonry.

With that in mind this conference will operate within parameters where the rights of no Grand Lodge will be infringed upon. We must keep in mind that operating philosophies may vary, resulting in emphasis being placed upon different societal aspects in different parts of the world. We, therefore, must remember that when establishing goals we should aim to the universality of interest to the craft everywhere.

As with past conferences I will not review the rules under which this World Conference will conduct its business in accordance with our Constitution.

1. The World Conference will be open to Masonic Grand lodges only.

2. The Grand Master or his representative and the Grand Secretary will be the only brothers permitted to be seated at the conference table and be entitled to speak.

- 3. The World Conference will not discuss political matters.**
- 4. The World Conference will not discuss religious matters.**
- 5. No Grand Lodge will attempt to use the World Conference as a platform to seek special favors or financial assistance from any of the participating Grand Lodges.**

My brothers, it is always a privilege for me to associate with men like you. You represent the epitome of Masonic leadership that has assumed the mantle of responsibility to lead our craft into the future and to regain our prominence not only as the intellectual leader of the world but as the standard of moral and ethical responsibility for which it should be known. The recent assassination of the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Venezuela should serve as a clarion wake-up call to those who have become complacent that the philosophy of our craft remains under attack by those whose own philosophy fails to provide for the inherent rights of men. Our concern is expressed in the first major topic of this conference. Let it continue to serve as a stimulus to unite us in resistance against all forms of tyranny over the inherent rights of man, as it did our brothers of the past.

I sincerely hope that you avail yourself to the opportunity of experiencing the great hospitality as prepared by the Grand Lodge of Washington, DC. This capital of the United States of America reflects not only the importance of a free world but also reflects the influence that Freemasonry played in creating it. I also hope that when you leave this World Conference that you will have made new friends, gained a greater appreciation and understanding of world Freemasonry and thoroughly enjoyed yourselves.



IX World Conference
Of Masonic Grand Lodges
Washington, D.C. - 2008

Address of Bro.: Gustavo Raffi

M.:W.: Grand Master of the Grande Oriente d'Italia

First session

"DARKNESS AND FRATERNITY"

Most Worshipful Grand Masters,

The great mediaeval mystic Bernard of Clairvaux wrote that the time when he lived "had its nights and they were not a few". He meant – in spite of the strength and hope of his unshakeable faith – that darkness, in *his* world, was real, operating, and disquieting. If we jump a few centuries forward, we find the same concern in Kant, but expressed in a different language. Darkness, in this case, is not represented by subtle seductions of the "world", but "the incapacity of man to use his intellect as a guide", with the risk to fall a prey of any kind of illusions: first the very insidious illusion of not using personal critical and rational capabilities, yielding to dogmatism, intolerance, and overwhelming desire.

The red thread uniting Bernard and Kant reaches us.

So much darkness obscures us and the force of dogmatism, intolerance, and overwhelming is always alive and active. At any time of the day, men, women, children, communities, and entire nations suffer and die. They suffer because they have no freedom, because they cannot express themselves, because they cannot rely on criticism and reason. They cannot fully be themselves. However, they also die of starvation, and lack of water, or healthcare. This happens when man, any man, is not allowed to express his own and not conformist ideas; when man is not allowed to practice his religion; when an ideology is imposed on man; and when he is supposed to be blind executor of other people's will.

The ancient darkness has not disappeared. It has a different name, but it recalls old fanaticism, old intolerance, old overwhelming, old superstition, and old desire to subjugate man. In spite of the efforts made for centuries, they have not been removed from the Light of culture, progress, democracy, and freedom. They eternally reappear to prevent human progress, and wring the "right words" from humankind: as his wicked murderers did with Hiram. Guiltily, we do not realize that. Guiltily, we think of something else.

A man and a Freemason cannot forget that their essence is Light, and this Light – in which the Great Architect of the Universe expresses himself – shall dissolve darkness and restore the dawn of real progress. "Sunlight" sings the chorus at the end of *The Magic Flute* by our brother Mozart "has driven away the night, / destroyed the power seized by hypocrites". Hope animated and motivated the revolutionaries who – in 1789, on behalf of the Light of reason – dared destroy the dark Bastille jail, for the triumph of the Light of Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood.

The darkness of intolerance, fanaticism, tyranny, overwhelming, and contempt of man sometimes takes the contours of culture, borrows the words of religion, and uses science, politics, and economy. However, in reality, they are opposed to real culture, real religion, real science, real politics, and real economy. With this background, it is evident that one of the historical tasks of Freemasonry is to fight against darkness. A Freemason can do it, because he knows darkness, its power, its subtle charm, and seductive force, because he tries darkness in his initiatory path, or when he sinks in the depth of earth in the Meditation Room before he goes back up to the Light. By contrast, he also knows them by comparing life and Lodge work – the greatest school of living – with the darkness that permeates the profane world.

Fighting for Light against darkness is the greatest challenge in the future for Universal Freemasonry, if it wants to be at the level of great battles that Freemasons have always undertaken in the past. From Benjamin Franklin to Simon Bolivar, from Garibaldi to Allende to the many glorious Brethren who opposed dictatorships and tyrannies in any part of the world.

In a world where religions, ideologies, and philosophies are in crisis, Freemasonry must bring its own message. It must have the courage of being equal to its centuries-old history, and translating the wisdom contents originating from its History, Tradition, Symbols and Rituals into a modern and effective language. It must proclaim to all that man is its centre and that the implementation of the will of the Great Architect of the Universe to the Glory of whom we all work is found in the renewal of this man, in his freedom and his happiness.

We must be proud of being what we are, without false modesty, but trying to be equal to this task. Following this direction means undertaking a strong, virile, noble, and chivalrous commitment.

In this spirit, the fight against tyranny, intolerance, dogmatism, and ignorance must actually become our password. It must become the word that links the chain uniting Freemasons all

over the world. This is what expresses the authentically and nobly revolutionary content of the Trinomial "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood" at the highest level: revolutionary because it wants to defeat darkness, anywhere it is.

Therefore, it would be desirable to continue the great work already done by our dear Brother Jackson and further strengthen all what is useful to stigmatize fanaticism, oppose tyrannies, and support "the damned of earth": poor, outcast, humble, and despised people, and those whose words are not heard. The institution of a World Freemasonry Day against any fanaticism may be an opportunity to make our continuous commitment for freedom and progress of man clear and evident at a world level.

Most Worshipful Grand Masters,

Freemasonry cannot avoid undertaking the challenge of modernity, otherwise its meaning, consistency, and future would be affected. We must be aware that we are the upholders of an ancient dream: constructing – or reconstructing, if you prefer – different and better man, a man who can look into another man's eyes – no matter his ethnic group, geographical origin, ideas, or religion – and say "You are my brother". For this dream – which contains the essence of esoteric message – we are here in Washington, with our common passion for man and desire for better man. Our wish is to take man out – as Michelangelo's Moses – of the block of marble where he is his prisoner.

Being the upholders of a dream is a huge responsibility, but also a destiny leading us towards the Light, provided that we bring it to all those who share our same experience of being in the world: in this world.

This experience is summarized in one great word. It is a word expressing Hope, Light, and Life: it is "Brotherhood". Brotherhood alone is not able to defeat fanaticism, intolerance, and tyranny: i.e. darkness.

In Brotherhood, there is the completion of our Initiation, the completion of an Esoteric Project coming from far away and looking ahead of us. It is the construction of Man's Temple. And dream upholders have always been great constructors.

First Session
G.L. of India

9th World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges

Standing Up to Darkness:

Ethics: Cultivating Ethical Behavior in a civil Society

By M. W. Bro. Justice Devinder Gupta, O. S. M., M.W the Grand Master of the Grand
Lodge of India

Dear Brethren,

On 11th September 1893, a great Freemason of India Bro. Narendra Dutt, who subsequently renounced the world and became a "Monk", what we call a "Sanyasi" and known to the world as Swami Vivekananda addressed the World Conference of Religions at Chicago, and took the audience by storm, by addressing them as "Sisters and Brothers of America". Today standing before you, I would like to recall what he said then, as it has some relevance to the subject matter of today's discussion viz., 'Standing up to Darkness' He said:

"Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come now; and I fervently hope that

the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be death-knell of all fanaticism, of all prosecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal"

He also quoted on the occasion the following lines which is a translation from a well known Indian hymn:

"As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, so, O lord, the different paths, which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee"

He further added:

"The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is itself a vindication, a declaration to the world the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: "Whosoever comes to Me though whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me"

Brethren, I am sure you will agree with me that there could not have been a better description of what we are passing through in the world today and a more appropriate emphasis of what we ourselves, as Freemasons believe - 'The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man' and the need for overcoming the evil of confrontation between people of different faiths. Since then several World Conferences of Religions have been held including a centenary of the Chicago convention in 1993 and later. In fact in one of the later conferences, a declaration - 'Towards a Global Ethic' was also passed. Yet as we know, things have not changed and we are here discussing the same subject, from the perspective of the principles and tenets of Freemasonry. In a sense it is not surprising that nothing tangible emerged from the earlier efforts, because it was drawn up on what they then considered to be a consensus emerging from the thoughts and concerns of people, belonging to different faiths, who did not have any common bond otherwise. Here is where we as Freemasons are different. We already believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and are united by the common bond of Freemasonry and its excellent principle of Universal Brotherhood.

A recent study on behalf of the United Nations has revealed that among the most destructive forces on the Earth today is the hatred between followers of different faith traditions. Of the almost 50 armed conflicts identified at that time, the vast majority were said to have been motivated to a significant extent, due to hatred by the followers of one faith, for the followers of another faith. The arms industry, the largest industry in the world, larger even than illegal drugs and oil- is said to be supported to a significant extent by the hatred of the followers of one faith for the followers of another faith. Examples of the destructiveness of inter faith hatred are found daily in all major news papers and the media and almost all faiths appear to be involved not only in the spread of intolerance amongst them, but also, in acts of hatred and violence, in one or more of the ethnic and religious wars currently in progress, in different parts of the world.

It is said that when one person speaks of injustice, it is a whisper; when two speak, it becomes a talk, or a dialogue, but when many join, it becomes a force and a movement. If therefore our intention is to make Freemasonry a moving force, towards influencing and cultivating Ethics in Civil Society, we have I think to move rather carefully, because often Freemasonry is

accused of conspiring for the establishment of a World Order. As Freemasons, all of us are well aware that we have no such intentions, because we have always believed in the importance of the individual and his rights and duties, in fact more on his duties to society, than his rights as a member of it. At least I for one, am quite clear in my mind that while discussing this subject, we must carefully define our role as Freemasons in society, particularly since the guidelines for presentation of the papers for discussion indicates that the paper must address practical and action oriented steps and recommendations, not theoretical concepts.

However before proceeding further, it is desirable to understand what we mean by Civil Society, in the context of our discussion. There are, I find, myriads of definitions of Civil Society, but the London School of Centre for Civil Society's working definition, is some what illustrative and apt in the context of our discussions.

Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the

boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

More recently, it has been argued in certain quarters that even non-political organizations in civil society are vital for democracy. This is because they build social capital, trust and shared values, which are transferred into the political sphere and help to hold society together, facilitating an understanding of the interconnectedness of society and the interests within it. I feel that our role as Freemasons will lie somewhat in this context of what has been referred to as 'Social Capital', which is defined as "those tangible and intangible ideas and concepts, which count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a

social unit"....The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself....If he comes into contact with his neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient for the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole, will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations, the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship, of his neighbors.

Since Freemasonry is defined as a system of morality and is also recognized as a moral science, it will be appropriate to pause for a while to understand the two terms "morals' and 'ethics' The word Ethics comes from the Greek word *ethos* - moral character or custom. Morality comes from the Latin word *moralis* - custom or manner. Thus both these deal with the customs or the manner in which people do things. Their modern meanings relate to the way people act - either for good or bad. In a sense therefore Ethics and morals are two sides of the same coin. Webster's dictionary says that morality means -of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior; expressing or teaching a conception of right behavior; conforming

to a standard of right behavior, sanctioned by or operative on one's conscience or ethical judgment.

So the principles of right and wrong behavior, define out morals. Inculcation of Masonic Principles therefore determines our morals and by the inculcation of these principles, we improve our moral, or rather reinforce our morals and become better men, because to become a Freemason, we must already be good upright men. Initiation into Freemasonry, simply so to say re -teaches us, those great moral principles that we have already learnt from our parents and from, hopefully, society itself. Freemasons are, or should therefore be, by definition moral people, who meet on the level, act on the plumb and part on the square, and walk uprightly before God and man, circumscribing their desires, and keeping their passions within due bounds. From morals must proceed ethics. Webster's dictionary defines ethics as - the discipline of dealing with what is good and with moral duty and obligation; a set of moral principles; a theory of system of moral values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group; a guiding philosophy; a consciousness of moral importance; a set of moral issues or aspects. We thus see that from

principles proceed morals and from morals proceed ethics and that each is dependent on the other as none can stand-alone. The principles of Freemasonry are also the same. No one principle stands alone, but works in conjunction, each supporting the other, into a pleasing unified whole. An inference can therefore be easily made that acting on the principles of Freemasonry, in all our lawful activities, we will be moral and upright men, acting with ethics that none can reproach.

All of us present here have voluntarily offered ourselves as candidates for the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry, after having seriously declared on our honour that we are doing so, of our own free will and accord, un-biased by improper solicitations of friends against our own inclinations and un-influenced by Mercenary or other unworthy motives. Further, we have pledged ourselves that we have been prompted to solicit these privileges, by a favourable opinion pre-conceived of the Institution, a general desire for knowledge, and a sincere wish to render ourselves more extensively serviceable to our fellow creatures. The vows we took are also such that there is nothing in them hurtful to our feelings as men of honour,

nothing at variance with our religious beliefs, political opinion, or the allegiance we owe to the rulers of the State to which we belong.

Further, as Freemasons we are informed in no uncertain terms, that no other institution can boast of a more solid foundation, than that on which Freemasonry rests, namely the practice of every moral and social virtue. As we have already seen, it is this practice, which constitutes the ethics of a Freemason, both as an individual and Freemasonry as an Organization. I am sure that not only every Freemason present here, but also the civil society at large, will readily agree with the importance of the very first recommendations made to us as Freemasons, asking for our most serious contemplation, the Volumes Of the Sacred Law, charging us to consider them, as the unerring standard of truth and justice, and to regulate our actions by the divine precepts they contain. We are thereby taught, what can be considered as the golden principles of ethical behaviour viz., the duties we owe to God, our neighbour and to our self. To God- by never mentioning His name but with that awe and reverence, which are due from the creature, to His Creator, by imploring His aid in all our lawful undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and

support. To our neighbour - by acting with him on the square; by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require; by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions; and by doing unto him as, in similar cases, we would wish, he should do unto us, and finally to ourselves - by such a prudent and well regulated course of discipline, as may best conduce to the preservation of our corporeal and mental faculties, in their fullest energy, thereby enabling us to exert those talents, wherewith God has blessed us, as well to His glory, as to the welfare of our fellow-creatures. We are also reminded of our duties as a citizen of the world, enjoining us to be exemplary in the discharge of our civic duties, by paying due obedience to the laws of any State, which may for a time, become the place of our residence, or afford us its protection, while at the same time not losing sight of the allegiance we owe to our native land. As an individual, we are recommended the practice of every domestic and public virtue, so that Prudence may direct us, Temperance chasten us, Fortitude support us and Justice be the guide of all our actions. The virtues of Benevolence and Charity are also recommended for our serious consideration, along with other excellences of character, such as Secrecy, Fidelity and Obedience. Later in the final charge given to us when we become full fledged

Freemasons, we are informed that to improve the morals and correct the manners of men in society must be our constant care, along with the excellent principles of recommending to inferiors, obedience and submission to equals, courtesy and affability and to superiors, kindness and condescension. We are told elsewhere that our aim is to be happy and communicate happiness. We are also informed that the principles and tenets of our profession, which are founded on the basis of Religious Truth and Virtue, teach us to measure our action by the rule of rectitude, square our conduct by the principles of morality, guide our inclinations and even our thoughts within the Compass of propriety.

Having thus given a comprehensive definition of Civil Society and after having dealt with at some length, on the meaning and definition, as also the connection between morality and ethics, in the context of what we believe and conform in Freemasonry, it will be appropriate for me now, to come to the practical aspect, as to how what I have stated so far can be taken further after discussion in this august gathering. I must also hasten to add that without understanding and appreciating the theoretical aspects, I feel that it will be difficult to spell out any practical approach, to this rather

abstract concept. In this context I would like to draw your attention to the Declaration of Human Rights, by the United Nations as far back as December 1948, consisting of 30 articles of basic faith for being adopted universally. In the year 2008, we are now in the 60th year after the declaration. The practical shape I feel that can emerge from the discussions we are having today, is to come out with what we may come out with a similar declaration emerging out of the 9th World Conference of Grand Lodges on what Freemasonry is and what Freemasonry stands for, called the 'Washington Masonic Declaration' on Cultivation of Ethical Behaviour in Civil Society.

No doubt, all Grand Lodge Jurisdictions, whether presently gathered here or not, are in their own way practicing the principles and tenets of Freemasonry and trying to spread its message, in their own fashion, within the conditions prevailing in their own respective jurisdictions, but now that we have gathered here as a group, such a Universal Declaration, can I feel help to take the movement forward, all over the world. I would like to take this opportunity of indicating what I feel could be the broad outline of such a declaration as follows, though not necessarily in any particular order of importance:-

- We as Freemasons affirm that:
 - Freemasonry teaches a common set of core values, which can to form the basis of global ethic, for adoption by individuals, as a way of life, to enable good men to become better members of society and thereby make the world a better place to live.
 - The Universal Motto of Freemasonry "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth" and the Masonic principle of the 'Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man', are best suited for adoption by all men, irrespective of the communities, races, nationalities and religions to which they may belong.
- We declare that:
 - We believe in the golden rule of "Doing unto others, as in similar circumstances we would wish that they should do unto us".
- We as Freemasons commit ourselves to:
 - A culture of non-violence, respect, justice and peace and that we shall not oppress, injure torture or kill other human beings, or knowingly suffer others to do so if in our power to prevent it and conscientiously, forsake violence, as a means of settling the differences.

- A just social and economic order in which everyone has equal chance as an individual to reach his full potential as a human being.
- A global ethic of understanding one and another and to adopt Freemasonry as a socially beneficial, peace fostering and mature and friendly way of life.
- We as Freemasons collectively affirm:
 - That the global situation today needs a vision for people living together in peace, love and harmony by a global ethic we do not mean a world order by any single group, but confirm that the principles and tenets of Freemasonry, stretch across the world, overcoming, let alone geographical barriers, but also the artificial barriers of race, caste, colour, creed and religion
 - That global ethic is a fundamental consequence of binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes and behaviour, as exemplified by the universal principles and tenets of Freemasonry.
- We also assert:
 - That every form of egoism, in the form of class, creed, religion, racism or narrow parochialism should be rejected, and that human beings should be united by strong ties of fellowship and universal brotherhood.
- We also believe:

- That what a global society needs is an inclusive philosophy as propagated by Freemasonry, which cuts across the artificial barriers that divide human beings and prevents them from becoming a global family which our Hindu Vedas call "Vasudeva Kutumbakam" - Family of God!

At the beginning of my presentation I had quoted a great Indian Freemason. By way of conclusion of my presentation, I would now like to quote another great and well known Indian, Mahatma Gandhi, an apostle of peace and non - violence, who advocated that "...we shall behave towards one another as children of the same parents, that we shall have no differences, that the sorrows of each will be the sorrows of the other and that each will help the other in removing them. We shall respect each other's religion and religious feelings and shall not stand in the way of our respective religious practices. We shall always refrain from violence to each other, in the name of religion". What he said in a certain Indian context, more than 60 years ago, I am sure you will all agree, applies equally, to what we see today, in various parts of the world.

I do hope my idea of a declaration emerging from this conference, somewhat on the lines indicated by me, as a practical outcome of our discussions, will find favor. I once again thank the organizers, for the opportunity given to me for presenting this paper. I convey to you all, hearty and Fraternal Greetings, both on my own behalf and on behalf of the members of the Grand Lodge of India. I also thank you for your patient hearing.

First Session

World Conference of
Masonic Grand Lodges

The Freemason and The Human Rights

Minister Waldemar Zveiter
M.W. Grand-Master

Washington, DC.
2008

THE FREEMASON AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS

We know that every esoteric teaching of our doctrine is grounded upon the interpreting of symbols and allegories, through which is shaped the philosophy in which it is structured. Their veiled purpose, which one must extract from them, has the goal, in the successive initiations, of finding a new vision, not only of our cellular-organic configuration, the Id's container, of the spirit that animates matter, but also, in the moral field, where we must perform our actions.

From such introductory development, it must become clear, insofar we make progress in the search for knowledge of the "renewed man", that we are but particles, cells, of the social body in which we are inserted, and thus, regardless of the effort towards individual improvement, its sedimentation shall only be shown and when, it is concurrently focused on the reflection that may come out of our actions in benefit of the Collective. To wit, of this greater Social Organism, of which we are parts, for in a holistic reading, no creature shall achieve a superior stage in life by itself, without being in harmony with the "Whole" in which is it integrated. Therefore, each one must take their share of responsibility for improving the whole that shall develop with them, through such acts.

Whatever interpretation we may take from such symbols and allegories shall, undoubtedly, lead us towards a reflection that they have been structured in a way to provide us with the means, or keys, with which, and in accordance with our own understanding, we shall adapt them to our limitations, enhancing experiments and pathways, followed by our ancestors on the road to knowledge, that the inner initiation - introspection of being - leads us, from micro-organisms of atomic-molecular configuration, up to the macro-organism of social and or cosmic composition.

It is precisely in the teachings of ritual practice of the several degrees comprised in the Masonic Rites that we find, in reiterating the predecessors' philosophy, for instance, the grandeur of the concept of justice as a primary force to the necessary balance which must guide human actions, of the Judge man, who morally and progressively undertakes to respect the conditions necessary for public order and social accord, in compliance and fidelity to that same balance

that governs, in harmony, the permanent expansion of all the bodies integrating the Universal Cosmogony, whose beginning and end are still out of grasp by the limitations of human knowledge.

Likewise, when an initiated becomes fully aware of the concept of freedom to be found in keeping within the boundaries of moral defining the principles of good and evil, and follows the first path, cognizant that the abstraction of concept arises from the feeling of dignity that drives man, propelling him into exercising solidarity, to be materialized in the extent and proportion in which increases the progress of peoples, civilization; becoming fulfilled when his actions and collective acts are the fruit solely of pure reason, justice and love.

It was no other principle, which can be inferred, tuned with the meaning of liturgy and those allegories summarized by Henry C. Claussem, Sovereign Grand Commander of the South Jurisdiction in the USA: "Investigation is the key-word. Every person - more particularly every Mason - must reflect and make a good self-examination of the day's activities, in a spirit of prayer and sobriety. The mistakes made today must be avoided and corrected tomorrow. Each day must transmit some light as our future guide. Then, as time goes by, our character must be shaped and strong in such a way that the world shall issue its judgment and instinctively say: "There goes a fine man, because he is a Mason". The examination leads to judgment in the act of ministering justice. That keeps friendship between men. It keeps the balance oscillating between nation and nation, between a man and his family, between man and man, and between the interests of individuals, who are sometimes opponents, in a way that the rights in conflict may be properly asserted. Justice must serve all and be demanded from all. It is a universal human requirement. Ministering justice between opponents in controversies is not an exact science and mistakes can happen, because secret motives and events are kept within the human breast. But if we repeatedly try to practice justice in our daily lives, we may turn the world into a better place. And by doing so, we know that a fair act is always protected by God".

It must be highlighted that part of the allegories of such degrees is based upon the Egyptian Book of the Dead, from which, among other teachings, some quite dramatic, one might extract many suggestions for our daily lives,

always keeping in mind the most important of them – the belief in the immortality of the soul, the human spirit.

Still quoting Claussem in the study of Philosophism: "There are some degrees presented as crowning of the power of models designed at the Scottish Rite's study desk. Those from the Perfection Lodge have traced for us that our spiritual nature is qualified to assert itself. In philosophical degrees – I mean, as much as in the symbols – the values of virtues teach us to conquer our passions and desires characteristic of the animal senses. There we learn how superior it is, in man, the divine and the spiritual. Life, we begin to understand, is a battle. To fight such battle with success and heroism is the exhausting purpose of man's existence. Genuine fraternity requires mutual respect for opinions, and reciprocal appreciation and charity. The Brotherhood, in that word's true sense, looks for the good side of our neighbor and it expects and takes into account the existence of evil, making generous allowance regarding the faults and failures of God's imperfect children. As we proceed with the studying and assimilation of those teachings, and as we search with all intent, the Real Secret hidden within the occult science of our forefathers, we remember that: "Faith begins where reason surrenders exhausted". Magic, after all, is only the absolute science of nature and its laws. Therefore, the Star of Hope shines for us as authentically as when it attracted the Wise Men to Bethlehem like a magnet. Today, as much as back then at the beginning of creation of the whole Universe, the Point of Balance is the ultra active force in the Almighty's eternal plan. Then, void and matter, matter and anti-matter, positive and negative, light and darkness, male and female, attraction and repulse, good and evil, justice and mercy are examples of what the Magic of Balance may create under the Laws of Universal Balance. Searching for the Sacred Doctrine – the Flaming Star of Truth, the Real Secret of Creation is the duty of an initiated in order to ascend slowly towards his final goal, the state of perfection.

That is why we have in the "Nebula", in the allegory of a certain degree, the representation that "The Law of Balance operates through the universe, and keeps all things at their places". And thus, as at the beginning of creation of the whole Universe, also today the point of balance continues to rest upon the power acting within the Supreme Universal Awareness.

If we can extract such teachings from our philosophy, it is easy to figure out that it shall be incumbent upon the true initiated to search for the answer, desired by all since long lost times, when human beings became aware of their own condition, up to the present days, to the question: What are we, where do we come from and where are we going to?

It must not suffice for us to understand the difference between good and evil, keeping faith and hope, in certainty that frail creatures before the Greatness of the Universe, our lives can be described as a dot between two eternities. A moment between infinite past and an unknown and undefined future;

It must not suffice for us an elementary knowledge, however scientific, of the protozoa configuration of our organic conscience;

It must not suffice for us the certainty that the system of cyclic perishing of such organic matter shall impose on us the fading of our bodies, with the releasing of the spirit that animates it, to follow its infinite path, to beyond eternity.

But precisely because we do not settle for the limitations of such knowledge and, warned, only then, about the Great Enigma for which we have no answer, free spirits on the research, and already aware, not only of the responsibility that discovering knowledge has been imposing upon us, assimilating, in a broad sense, that from all initiation duties the grandest is that of searching efficiency to spread freemasonry teachings among those who do not know them, with the intent of working objectively for the welfare and progress of mankind. We then begin to understand, finally, that if we cannot get the answer about our origin, and the destiny of our future, we know why we are here, and what for.

We know we are here and we live, without neglecting our own improvement, facing the struggles that the battle for life brings upon us, to spread through example and words the Principles of Freemasonry, which in short proclaims:

- that a people is only enslaved when it does not know its own strength and by lacking the courage to break free;

- that men are able, through their willpower, to subdue their passions, and to reach victory they must first learn to resist;

- that God was not made as the image of man and does not have his weaknesses nor his passions, and that is why freemasonry does not define God, as it also does not define the principles of the soul's immortality, leaving each person at liberty to do so, being guided and enlightened by their own conscience;

- that there are no limits whatsoever to the questioning for truth and, to ensure the broadness of such freedom, we demand tolerance from all and encourage those who find solace in religion to embrace it with freedom;

- that freemasonry doctrine it contained entirely in the representation of loving your neighbor, and its moral is deeply rooted in the practicing of solidarity and charity towards all human beings;

- that the Mason cultivates compassion and kindness towards all men, even for those who are still prey to imperfect concepts, developing an effort to abolish prejudice and mistakes;

- that the Mason honors his Motherland, and is willing to give his life to protect its integrity and such of its people, never being embarrassed to convey the Masonic truths fearlessly, and wherever they may be of use;

We know that those principles are fundamental, and to practice them is the mission bestowed upon us on the path to initiation, and thus we may understand, as true initiated in the Order, that although we are not yet able to decipher the mystery of life, we must, however, see that the use we make of it in favor of our progress and the progress of our fellow men is the main key to deciphering that enigma which is so fascinating to us.

Finally, it is imminent to clarify that those representations do not obviously exhaust the teachings contained in the symbols and allegories over which the Universal Freemasonry is structured, they are an endless source for studying, reflecting and researching systematically, that each initiated, by being keen on the theme, might and must further, and develop in accordance with his level of understanding and intellectual capacity the interpretation he can extract from those.

We may state that, without any doubt, the Masonic teachings lead us to introspection. We must repeat and at each step we must search, for the spiritual understanding they convey, the north for our journey on earth, in order that, through our words and actions, we may earn the credit of being granted admission to the Grand Celestial Lodge, where our spirit shall proceed on its evolutionary journey up to the sidereal infinity pursuing the integration into the Unity of the Grand Architect of the Universe: to attain the Supreme Universal Conscience.

Conclusion

Therefore, wherever a mason may find himself to be, he shall never temporize with any actions of the Nation State, taken through their rulers, or by individuals who attain propositions of the **Universal Rights of Man**, keeping himself in a permanent state of vigilance, stimulating the society in which he acts to fight against any and all forms of prejudice, bringing to light at domestic or international courts any and all offenses against human rights; acts with which he shall contribute to establishing peace in the Third Millennium.

About the Author

Waldemar Zveiter, a Lawyer, graduated at the Niterói Law School in 1957. He was Minister at the Higher Court of Appeals, from 1989 to 2001; time when he was also Minister of the Higher Electoral Court for two consecutive years and also a Member of the Federal Courts Council for also two years; Judge at the State of Rio de Janeiro Court of Appeals, from 1983 to 1989; Jurist Member of the Regional Electoral Court of the State of Rio de Janeiro from 1981 to 1983. He Presided the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB) in the former and present State of Rio de Janeiro, from 1973 to 1976; the Symbolic Freemasonry Confederation of Brazil, from 1979 to 1981. He was a member of OAB's Federal Council, from 1977 to 1983; Permanent member of the Brazilian Lawyers Institute and Member of their Superior Council; He was initiated in the Symbolic Lodge Hiram no. 7, in Niterói, Capital of the former State of Rio de Janeiro; he was Worshipful Master of the Symbolic Lodge Washington Luiz no. 25; Junior Grand Warden and Grand Chaplain for three terms of office; Grand-Master of the Masonic Grand Lodge of the State of Rio de Janeiro for two terms of office, and he is currently exercising the same office for the period of 2004-2009.

Is the author of several papers and juridical essays published on specialized magazines and various juridical books. He has also published the poetry books: Prism and Optics; Angularities; Triangularities – Poetries and Affections Collected; The Toga and the Lyre and The Toga and the Lyre II; such being compiled works of poet magistrates; Freemasonry and Political Action (printed twice); Jewish Brazilian Zionist Decalogue and the Federal Constitution; Freemasonry for the Integrity of the Amazon in Defense of Brazil's Sovereignty; Jewish Genesis of Human Rights; The Mason and the Human Rights; Ethics and Politics in the Eyes of Freemasonry; Masonic Manual of External Procedures (Non-Party Participation in Politics); The Higher Court of Appeals; National Federalism and Other Subjects, and Being a Lawyer.

Speaker of renowned merit, his fight on behalf of Human Rights and for the restatement of the Democratic Regime in Brazil, in the various fields of

action he delves in, is acclaimed by everyone. He is the bearer of several titles and honors, among which are highlighted:

Inconfidencia Commendation for the grades "Medal of Honor" and "Grand Medal" - promotion bestowed by the State of Minas Gerais on April 21, 1992; Medal of the Order of Municipal Legislative Merit - bestowed by the Municipal Chamber of Belo Horizonte on December 20, 1990; Judiciary Merit Neck Order - bestowed by the Illustrious State of Rio de Janeiro Court of Appeals in 1988; Title of Honorary Member of the Masonic Grand Lodge in Argentina; Title of Honorary Member of the Masonic Grand Lodge in Uruguay; African Brazilian Commendation of Civic Merit - granted by Zumbi dos Palmares University on the International Day for Fighting against Racial Discrimination; President Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira Medal granted by the National Defense League; Grand Cross of the Marques de Pombal Order of Merit granted by the Cultural Center of the Portuguese Language Community; Honorific Title in the Grade of the Emperor D. Pedro II Historical Merit Commander.

Masonic Integrity
2nd Session



Images and Mirrors in Freemasonry.

When man discovered the mirror he gradually lost his soul. He started to be more troubled with his image than with himself. Is this what happened to freemasonry in our different cultures? If society is our mirror did we, over three centuries of regular freemasonry, lose our souls and by this the spirit of masonry?

Did our ongoing effort to support ethical behaviour in civil society, to counterbalance fanaticism, intolerance and tyranny actually blind us for the duties and responsibilities we have within our Lodges and Grand lodges towards our own brethren? These questions I started to wonder about when I read the list of topics for this conference. I would like to address some issues that refer to masonry itself. From the mirror to the one who stands before it. What issues come from the mirror of the 21st century about our brotherhood? I only mention a few, often-heard, statements. Freemasonry is about:

- Conspiracy and danger
- Immature and naïve boy scouts
- Old men filling their empty hearts with funny rituals
- Guardians of non-existing secrets
- Elite with extreme right-wing tendencies
- Revolutionaries sabotaging governments
- Outdated old-boys network
- Minority organisation without any social relevance
- A secret society with unquestionable dogma's

And last but not least it is an organisation that doesn't meet the requirements of current social values like transparency and equality between man and women and therefore a suspicious organisation. The decline in membership worldwide, with a few exceptions, might be caused by the lack of attraction that comes from an organisation, which is perceived as such.

It could also be the other way around. Maybe the very existence of freemasonry allows society to become aware of the loss of its own soul? Is there a hidden force manipulating society, disguised as democracy? Is the free world facing a manic mood disorder disguised as growth by its blind tendency to expand (economic) territory to control and maintain power? Is the free world on its way to forget that brotherhood of men and appreciation of differences is at the core of human dignity?

"The answer my friend, is blowing in the wind", good old Bob Dylan would probably sing to us as a response to these questions. So when it comes to the future of freemasonry I recommend another lyric, by the former Cat Stevens. "I listen to wind, to the wind of my Soul, I don't know where I'll end up, only God really knows!"

Out of the Past

So let's hold the question in our heart about who we are and who we want to become and continue listening to the wind that blows in and between our hearts. Let the future reveal itself and let's for a while turn our attention towards the past. Three centuries of freemasonry in the free world. Before we, as we man are so used to, go for the action I would like to reflect a little bit on the past with you. The future depends on asking the right questions, while the past provides us with answers that once were given. What answers did the past of freemasonry provide us with? As with my questions, I only mention a few:



- Hardly any and maybe no organisation in the world managed to survive for such a long time. The 252 years old Grand East of the Netherlands, that I represent here today, is older than any political party in our country and is even older than our Monarchy;
- During these centuries Masonic Lodges have been “safe” places for men of dignity and integrity because they remained truthful to their basic principles;
- The autonomous way masonry is organised has been an and still is an “Ideal Image” for how the world could be;
- Autonomy and individual responsibility of members in Lodges, of Lodges within Grand Lodges and among Grand Lodges all over the world without any controlling power over anybody is up to our days a unique management formula;
- Man of different times and cultures have proved to be able to be both supporters of their time in their responsibilities in society and at the same time managed to express Masonic values beyond time;
- By standing apart from politics and sectarianism the Masonic Lodge has always been a background for inspiration and support for its members. A background that stimulates every individual member to take moral responsibility for their membership in the world to the best of their understanding. This background is based on values and believes that are symbolically shared in our rituals, without imposing any particular time-bound action or particular body of knowledge onto any member;
- Through ritual, also known as ‘symbolic action”, freemasons learn to value their inner world, they learn how important it is to use their insights in themselves to support their fellowmen and finally they learn to invest the best of who they are into the world without asking for reward;
- The Masonic ritual teaches us to take part in building a better world in an ambitious way without any attachment to perfection.

A place described as such is bound to be highly attractive. My brethren, I ask you: Can we say this is still true for our Lodges today? Especially in our time with its virtual realities on the screen of our computers, we see a tremendous increase of longing for authentic companionship, meaning and spiritual values. Do the real spiritual seekers come to our lodges or do they prefer to enter the world of Google to find what they are looking for, sitting behind the mirror of a computer screen. And when we manage to get them away from their screens and initiate them, do they find in the Lodge what they were initiated for? Is the Lodge a mirror that responds to this deep longing? Is the Masonic lodge really prepared for the young seekers of the 21st century? I don't think so, to be honest.

False gold and real gold

Three centuries of freemasonry has created a lot of false gold. We've build temples of stone, schools and hospitals. We impressed the world with famous persons who once were masons; we have spent a fortune on charity in our different societies. We practise our rituals in the way they were transferred to us. O yes, our ancestors really practised their understanding of masonry. Good men making the world a better place. We now live with the fruits of their endeavour in stone and in good manner, wondering what to do next. But where is the real gold of our time? For, “where there is false gold, there is real gold”. Asclepius (III 25) once gave Egypt this warning:





“O Egypt, Egypt! Of thy religious rites nothing will survive but fables, which your children’s children will not believe. Nothing telling of your piety will survive, other than words incised on stone.”

Rather than to move on blindly, hang on to and exaggerate the past I strongly suggest that it is up to us to reconnect to the essence of masonry and its spiritual nature. It is my strong belief that we have to counterbalance the dangers of the time in our lodges by mobilizing the forces of renewal in every individual member before the fate of Egypt becomes the fate of masonry and our names end up as words incised on stone. I’m sure that every individual mason is concerned with particular aspects of the current world situation. Yet, masonry itself doesn’t aim to influence the world situation. I full heartedly agree with the Pro Grandmaster of the United Grand Lodge of England, who said in his address to the European Grandmasters meeting in November 2007, that “the only influence masonry should be seeking is over itself and its members”. We need to use this influence in such a way that membership of a Masonic lodge contributes to the quality of life of its members with their particular personal and professional responsibilities.

Core business and Masonic education

First of all, we need to accept that today freemasonry is a minority organisation without any social relevance, step back from the mirror called society and step in front of the mirror called Masonic ritual. After all, initiation is our “core business”. We don’t only need to learn to practice our rituals but we also need to learn to see and to hear how our ritual is mirroring the essence of who we are and who we may become in our hearts and lives. Most of all, we need to learn to share our individual insights with each other in the Lodge. The Masonic Lodge of the 21st century needs to become the place where modern men support each other to reveal and practice this essence in their individual lives outside the Lodge and for the benefit of the world and its inhabitants. We can make this happen by making internal Masonic education in all its different aspects our highest priority for the next decade. Masonic education needs to become the key in our Lodges and between Lodges, in our Grand Lodges and between Grand Lodges. Being a member of a Lodge and going from labour to refreshment a few times a year is not sufficient any more. We have to create space in our Lodges for serious reflection and sharing. A space where we can deepen our understanding of what freemasonry offers with those who share the experience of initiation.

The modern mason wants to talk about what is meaningful for him in relation to his Masonic experience and the significance of this experience for his daily life. Not only in a virtual reality but also in the physical reality. The Lodge needs to become such a physical reality. And let’s not forget the other way around: masonry needs modern men to keep an ancient tradition alive in an ongoing changing world. We have never been with that many in the world but we already are in the world for a very long time.

Finally I would like to remind you that we are not human beings on a spiritual path but that we are spiritual beings on a human path.

The mirror of freemasonry reminds you of both.

Order of Freemasons under the Grand East of the Netherlands,

Diederik van Rossum,
Grand Master.



Masonic Integrity
2nd Session

"PERSONAL INTEGRITY"
THE CORNERSTONE OF MASONIC PHILOSOPHY
By Clayton J. Borne, III, P.G.M.
Grand Lodge, State of Louisiana

In November, 2006 at the 8th World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges, held in conjunction with the Grand Lodge National of France (G.L.N.F.) in Paris France I had the honor of presenting a paper entitled, "Relevancy of Freemasonry in the Twenty-first Century", wherein it was presented that the universal appeal of our fraternal brotherhood over the ages was the direct result of our convictions relative to our Spiritual beliefs, namely the fundamental principles of "Monotheism", defined as the oneness of God; "Transfiguration", defined as mans ability to return to the Spirit state upon death; and "Transformation", defined as the molding of man from a rough stone to a higher State of Spiritual Reality. The Masonic Philosophy demands of each Brother, to individually commit to that spiritual discipline, and have him understand that collectively he has an opportunity to contribute to a cause that leads to a more ordered society and the betterment of mankind. The paper concluded with the conclusion that our fundamental principles and their significance in society are just as relevant today as they were to our ancient brothers.

Accepting this conclusion as the premise for this paper and extrapolating the cause and effect relationship forward in time, what is true is that civilized society and mankind in general will measure the dynamics of our Spiritual Brotherhood not by its idealistic objectives, but whether the Masonic philosophy is truly alive and evident in the lives of each of our brothers. In other words if instead of integrity they see hypocrisy, instead of truth they see prevarication, instead of honesty they see deception; our footprints on the pages of time will be tarnished. Where our history is adorned in a cloak of charity, brazened by badges of truth, honor and courage, the 21st century will continue to see men drawn to our lodges, as the Brotherhood and its destiny is truly a reflection of who we are and all that we do.

As a predicate to this paper I ask each of my brothers the question, "Why do we, as a brotherhood, believe that belief in a Supreme Being is necessary for a personal transformation in our lives and ultimately necessary for the development of a disciplined yet free society?" As an extension of that thought, "Why is a belief in a Supreme Being essential to the landmarks of our fraternity and sacred to the ritual of our "Regular" Masonic Lodges? The answer is fundamental to understanding the Masonic Philosophy or the Masonic Way of Life.

Exactly how were we able to affirm a belief in a Supreme Being and what effect did it have on our lives? Have we truly challenged the concept of the "Being behind Reality" and its effect on the men that we are? Did the Masonic initiation ritual enhance your conviction and your commitment to spiritual growth? Philosophers over the ages have challenged this basic concept and pushed mankind to investigate more specific questions. What is the nature of God and how is God related to the universe? Is God a force responsible for creation? What is the true concept of God? Is it possible to even come to a knowledge of God? And for us, as Masons, why was it essential to the tenants of our brotherhood that we affirm the concept before gaining admission? Why have we severed communications with those Grand Lodges that believe it is no longer essential to the Masonic discipline to embrace a belief in a Supreme Being?

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The concept avoided by many early philosophers and historians yet fundamental to each of our beliefs is, "How do we as humans come to a knowledge of God and why is it important?" Further for the purpose of this paper what effect does this academic inquiry have on our Masonic Brotherhood, its spiritual pursuits and objectives?

After much research, self reflection and thought, it is my sincere belief that a finite creature, such as man, to come to a knowledge of an infinite creature or being such as God, is on its surface impossible. Man as a finite creature can not truly or understand or comprehend the limitless concepts such as eternity or infinity. Despite many brilliant, philosophers, allegations to the contrary finite man conceptionally defines everything in terms of or with limits.

GOD HOWEVER MOST DEFINITELY CAN BE KNOWN. God is known to the extent that his nature would demand it be revealed. That is, in the ways God would choose to reveal himself to his created. An example would be found in our perception and knowledge of nature. As a Christian the revelation would be the embodiment and person of Jesus Christ. There are others. Only in the revelation is a finite knowledge of God possible. By his creation God or the Creator becomes the principal of the Universe. God is the whole of His creation: God is truly the "Grand Architect of the Universe".

EFFECT ON MAN OF A BELIEF IN GOD

I submit that the reason that a belief in God is essential for our Spiritual Brotherhood is because of our fraternity's conviction and purpose to aggressively encourage the development of the spiritual nature of man, knowing well that our successes over time is the creation and development of a self disciplined society. That development must of necessity begin with each of us personally and its success measured by our spiritual advancement. Collectively it created dynamic lodges. The obvious question becomes, how does this process individually and collectively take place and exactly what are the effects and are they truly in harmony with what we believe are our personal objectives and life goals?

Very simply a belief in God has an immediate and direct bearing on our values and convictions. Those disciplines have a direct effect on our behavior. The belief opens the door to the spirit life after death and our ability as finite creatures to pass on an infinite state. Exactly how does this intellectual affirmation or belief transform each of us, and is our Masonic Fraternity doing its part in simulating this growth?

Understanding that once man had a conviction or belief in God, it created, in addition to the most basic concept of survival which dominated and existed in a non orderly barbaric society, a true purpose for life. Belief in a creator, God, transforms man from a rude, self centered, savage state into a creature with a more civilized meaningful purpose. That objective or hope is to unify himself ultimately with his creator with the sincere hope of returning to the spirit or infinite state always with eternity in view. It begins to change our convictions and beliefs and ultimately our lives. How does this process take place?

Our Brotherhood teaches and encourages a philosophy of self transformation and the development of a character that recognizes the need to subordinate personal gain and self interest to the greater good of society. The transformation of the finite spirit in each of us demands a reassessment of the most basic concepts of life in order to give priority and meaning to the fundamental concepts of goodness which are absolutely necessary for the advancement of mankind in a free society, which society evidences an individual and collective self discipline to maintain and insure order. That order has a fundamental principle; that principle is "Truth". Our Brotherhood embraces truth as the heart and soul of each and every virtue. As Masons we advocate a virtuous life. It logically follows that a virtuous life is a life of integrity.

I submit that individual integrity is the essential element in a social structure or order that cultivates and encourages individual and collective freedom and liberty. It insures a disciplined society that cultivates in a secure way the collective peaceful advancement of humanity. In general, where personal integrity is lacking laws become problematic and of little value. This is why we as Masons mandate this unselfish discipline for all of humanity, especially our Brotherhood. How exactly do we individually achieve these idealistic principles and what is our responsibility as Masonic mentors, especially to the Entered Apprentice who is still trying to understand himself and the confusion of the world in which he lives.

MASONIC IDEALS

As we strive to cultivate integrity in our personal lives and collectively in our spiritual brotherhood, our efforts meet with constant resistance. As appalling as it may be realistically, society today is a reflection of disrespect, an unappreciative and uncaring disease that migrates into all aspects of our respective culture. The cure as with all other social problems is education.

The Masonic ideals and their influence on society through the ages have been exerted in no better or nobler purpose than the ageless struggle by the Brotherhood for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and ultimately a secure freedom. Our Fraternity through the ages has been the champions of the oppressed people with the object being the emancipation of mankind from every form of tyranny. Within our lodges Liberty or Freedom, especially in thought, was freely encouraged. That freedom based on these principles made it possible for the natural progression of a transformed life.

The humanist philosophy so prevalent in society poses obstructions to our Masonic ideals. The basic concept of Liberty has always had an aggressive enemy. It is the self centered, selfish concept of entitlement. The entitlement belief is the direct result of the modernist doctrine that there is no rational basis for values. Despite our Masonic brotherhood's continued efforts to promote integrity, the value system of society has been eroded. Much of society values become problematic, in other words nothing is truly good or bad. It's all a matter of opinion. We must of necessity ask then how and why have principals? Do as you please or whatever you can rationalize as being right. Without the liberty to choose our own actions and make our own choices, we lose the qualities of responsibility that make us uniquely human. It is only when people do the right thing freely can we have confidence in their character. If they act out of principles such as truth, benevolence, productiveness as taught in our lodges then we know their actions resulted from good character and the principle of liberty is preserved.

INTEGRITY

The world in which we now live is dramatically changing. Idealistic principles are important to fewer and fewer people. We demand of our leaders, honesty, but we don't really expect them to be honest. Our societies have become problematic where honesty becomes relative and rationalization of all conduct is the norm. We are often saying that our communities are civilized societies of law, but too often laws are broken and then attempts are made to justify the actions. That logic is corruptive, destructive but most importantly contagious.

Prevarication or lying has infected our culture. The generation of today lies without thought. They lie for no apparent reason. Recent surveys state that 90% of society lies in some manner frequently. Truthfulness is no longer a virtue people try to adopt for their lives. Conversely Masonic Philosophers and our Masonic Ritual of instruction view truth as a divine attribute and as we have previously stated truth should be at the heart of each and every virtue.

Marriage and family are no longer sacred institutions. Infidelity is common place. The work ethics of our forefathers are disappearing from society. Procrastination at the workplace is common with no respect or appreciation given to the employment. Society says that it wants respect but modern man's life experiences evidence a serious lack of it. The lack of respect in society is the end result of a lack of purpose, discipline and moral commitment. These are the very ideals that we as Masons, fight to preserve.

A brother whose life evidences qualities of honesty, discipline and courage is proof of a transformed life that has earned respect. His life embodies an individual quest and a determined search for light. It is a fraternal concept shared with our brothers of like mind. This writer submits that the attraction, the spiritual reward, the ultimate objective of our spiritual brotherhood is the character which is the epitome of all virtue, namely "Integrity". In general the quality is defined as our ability to naturally embrace a way of life with moral and ethical principles. Its presence in each of our lives will be the attribute that will continue to draw good men to our Lodges.

The driving force of our Masonic Fraternity is to instill in each of our brothers a mission to create within each man that knocks at our door of our lodges a thirst for integrity. That desire can only be quenched by a commitment to those moral principles or goals in each of our lives. We must teach that truth, honesty and moral principles are of prime importance. The newly made Brother should be instructed to subsequently understand that a man of integrity is unimpeachable; he is steadfast; his word is his bond. He is never critical of others, even those in which he is in opposition. He restrains his emotions or passions. He is reliable and is one to always pay his debt. He should stand upon principle no matter what the consequence whether alone or in a crowd.

CONCLUSION

To the entered apprentice and his search for light, "Integrity" and its Masonic ideals are but an idealistic concept although often cognitively embraced; it is rarely evident in his life. The apprentice, as he begins his transformation, begins to understand that a person of integrity is a person that thrives for consistency of principle and that principle translates to living the ideals. In

other words, ideals such as Truth, Honesty, Charity and Moral Discipline are no longer problematic nor are they idealistic principles. They are to become a true way of life. Our young brother is developing a philosophy of purpose.

The Mason begins to understand that the fullness of life is found in that consistency and he is made aware of the rewards and blessings of living a life with ideals as guiding principles. He realizes in a more profound way that his integrity is defined and is the result of choices made repeatedly in his daily life. The brother begins to realize that the joy in this life's reality is in the journey, the journey with ideals, the journey with purpose.

Our Spiritual Brotherhood is committed to the concept that all of mankind is entitled to be enlightened and that process begins with a God centered life. It develops respect for the laws of society, but more important to us as Masons, it is a self imposed discipline. A discipline that through its ideal generates unbelievable rewards: Freedom of thought, Freedom of religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom to hold diverse beliefs are to name but a few.

Where the dignity of man, especially the Brotherhood, is measured by the integrity of his life, that dignity becomes an ideal of respect; that ideal then can be freely expected and freely given. It is basic to the tenant of our fraternity.

Collectively we as brothers have the opportunity to make the world in which we live a better place, a place of integrity where our Masonic ideals do in fact become a way of life.

Respectfully submitted,

Clayton J. Borne, III, P.G.M.
Grand Lodge, State of Louisiana

The Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

M:W: CLAYTON J. BORNE, III
GRAND MASTER, 2006
433 Metairie Road, Suite 100
Metairie, LA. 70005
Home: 985-674-2905
Office: 504-834-0274
E-mail: chipborne43@aol.com



ORGANIZED 1812

P. O. Box 12357
Alexandria, LA. 71315-2357
318-443-5610
Fax: 318-443-5759

February 26, 2008

Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons
C/o M.W. Bro. Akram R. Elias, G.M.
5428 Mac Arthur Blvd., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Re: 9th World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges
Universal Brotherhood Celebration
May 7-10, 2008

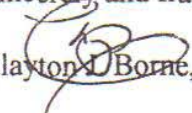
Dear Grand Master,

Our Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Lloyd Hennigan has requested that I represent him at the Conference. Consistent with your instructions the attached paper is being submitted for presentation. Please advise as to your decision relative to acceptance.

Also as per your instructions, the paper will be forwarded by E-Mail to world@dcgrandlodge.org and twjcowboy@aol.com.

It was good to see you at the Scottish Rite Joint Session and the North American Conference of Grand Masters. Nancy and I are looking forward to the Conference. I remain

Sincerely and fraternally,


Clayton J. Borne, III, P.G.M.

Cc: Thomas W. Jackson, R.W. P.G.S.
Executive Secretary
210 Middlespring Road
Shippensburg, PA 17257

M.W. Lloyd Hennigan, G.M.
P.O. Box 1970
Jena, LA 71342

Masonic Integrity
Second Session
G.L. Oaxaca Mexico

V.: H.: THOMAS W. JACKSON, SECRETARIO EJECUTIVO DE LA CONFERENCIA
MUNDIAL

V.: H.: AKRAM R. ELIAS, GRAN MAESTRO DE LA GRAN LOGIA DE WASHINGTON

VV.: HH.: ASISTENTES A LA 9ª. CONFERENCIA MUNCIAL

**PONENCIA: MANTENER LA INTEGRIDAD EN LAS GRANDES LOGIAS PARA
EVITAR CISMAS**

S.: F.: U.:

En todas las Grandes Logias, al cambio de la Trulla suele suceder que aparecen grupos al interior que tratan de desestabilizar la armonía y proyectos de superación que se trazan los nuevos dignatarios y oficiales, con el fin de influenciar la toma de decisiones y el rumbo de la masonería por intereses oscuros que encuentran durante su mandato; y al no encontrar eco para su control, forman grupos espurios que buscan ser reconocidos a nivel nacional, internacional, y por que no decirlo, lo intentan mundialmente, lo que nos induce a exponeros estas reflexiones.

Con el fin de proteger la soberanía y la Jurisdicción de las Grandes Logias Regulares establecidas en la República Mexicana, se integra e instala el Consejo Masónico Nacional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, constituyéndose con los Grandes Maestros de estos Cuerpos Soberanos según el Protocolo aprobado y firmado en el Or.: de Tampico, Tamps., el día 3 de abril de 1934. Días después, durante el IV Congreso Masónico Nacional de la Confederación de Grandes Logias Regulares de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, de fecha 9 de abril de 1934, se aprueba su Ley Fundamental, misma determina su funcionalidad y cuyos objetivos generales son

crear una acción conjunta, uniforme, definida, y permanente de la Francmasonería Universal en los Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

En ese mismo tenor, las Muy Respetables Grandes Logias Regulares, entre ellas algunas establecidas en la República Mexicana y sus Delegaciones acreditadas, se congregan en la Primera Conferencia Interamericana de la Francmasonería Simbólica celebrada en el Or:. de Montevideo, Uruguay, durante los días 14 al 20 de abril de 1947 y constituyen la Confederación Masónica Interamericana.

Lo anterior nos permite valorar las razones, los motivos y los objetivos que tuvieron nuestros hh:. para unificar sus esfuerzos y marchar como un solo hombre en pro de la defensa los principios universales de la Francmasonería, la protección de la soberanía de sus respectivos territorios y el auxilio de sus miembros.

Estos dos candados son importantes nacional e internacionalmente, pero si se pone el tercero mundialmente, se cubren todas las posibilidades de usurpaciones.

Con la finalidad de fortalecernos como cuerpos soberanos a nivel nacional, internacional y mundial y con el propósito de consolidar más la grandeza de nuestra institución, de **proteger nuestro patrimonio** inspirados en nuestro espíritu orgullosamente masónico, proponemos poner un tercer candado, para evitar por estos medios, **la incorporación de grupos espurios** que pretendan el control del poder de nuestra institución, y como consecuencia, la **prevención de cismas** que puedan vulnerar a nuestra institución

Por lo que subrayamos lo siguiente:

- **Respeto absoluto** a la soberanía de las Grandes Logias Confederadas.
- **Respeto a su Jurisdicción Territorial** según la tenga definida es su Estado o País.
- **Respeto y respaldo total** al Muy Respetable Gran Maestro en funciones.

Recibid nuestro fraternal saludo y reconocimiento.

WASINGTHON, D.C., A 8 DE MAYO DE 2008

FRATENALMENTE

HIPOLITO SPLINKER MARTINEZ

EX GR.: MAEST.: Y PRESIDENTE DE LA GRAN COMISION DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES
DE LA MUY RESP.: GR.: LOG.: "BENITO JUAREZ GARCIA" DE LL.: Y AA.: MM.: DEL
ESTADO DE OAXACA, MEXICO Y EX VICEPRESIDENTE DE LA ZONA 1 DE CONFEDERACION
MASONICA INTERAMERICANA

Por la Muy Resp.: Gr.: Log.: "Benito Juárez García" de LL.: y AA.: MM.: del
Estado de Oaxaca, México

JOSE GUADALUPE JUAREZ TREJO

M.: R.: G.: M.:

LUIS CALLEJA CRUZ

GR.: SEC.:

Second Session
Regularity

LA REGULARIDAD MASONICA COMO PIEDRA ANGULAR DE LA FORTALEZA Y DESARROLLO DE LA MASONERIA INTERNACIONAL

La institución masónica ha sido fuerte y ha permanecido con el paso de los tiempos, debido a que existen disposiciones de carácter fundamental que han sido respetadas, en primer lugar, nuestros LANDMARKS, en segundo término, el cumplimiento estricto de nuestros rituales, lo cual forma parte de la fortaleza e integración de la masonería y en tercer lugar, el mutuo reconocimiento y el secreto cumplido de nuestros trabajos.

El desarrollo histórico de la masonería ha mostrado, que cuando no se respetan estas disposiciones, se ha lesionado gravemente la unidad de nuestra gran institución. Algunos conflictos surgidos por el control del poder administrativo de algunas Grandes Logias, han generado la proliferación de grupos masónicos fuera de toda regularidad. Dichos grupos, que se autodenominan Grandes Logias, no surgieron de manera legítima como lo marca la ortodoxia masónica, sino producto de escisiones de las Grandes Logias legalmente constituidas.

Este fenómeno de la existencia de Grandes Logias ilegítimas e irregulares es actualmente un problema que ha ido creciendo, en todas partes del Mundo, en Francia, con el denominado Gran Oriente de Francia, en Italia con la denominada Gran Logia Regular, en Ecuador la llamada Gran Logia Equinoccial y de manera muy reciente el caso de Rusia; en México existe muy desarrollada la masonería regular pero también existen grupos masónicos que dicen ser Grandes Logias, que están ubicadas en el territorio jurisdiccional de la Muy Respetable Gran Logia Valle de México, donde se han generado siete grupos que se autodenominan Grandes Logias, como son los que existen en los Estados de Morelos, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, Puebla, Estado de México y Guerrero, estos grupos masónicos se separaron de la jurisdicción de la Gran Logia Valle de México de manera ilegal, y sin embargo se constituyeron como Gran Logia, con el apoyo de otra Gran Logia Regular de las que existen en México, por lo que esas Grandes Logias Regulares al otorgar Carta Patente a esos grupos masónicos en un territorio que no es de su jurisdicción, atenta contra la regularidad y respeto territorial que debe existir en la masonería regular aquí representada y además viola uno de los Landmark que establece la no intervención en asuntos de otras logias.

Estas actitudes seguidas por algunas Grandes Logias de conceder cartas patente a grupos separatistas y fragmentarios en un territorio que no les pertenecía, ha generado el problema de la proliferación de grupos irregulares en la masonería mundial, lo digno de resaltar es que incluso algunos de esos grupos masónicos acuden a nuestros encuentros mundiales ostentándose como Grandes Logias Regulares. Si este tipo de malas prácticas continúa en las relaciones masónicas mundiales, pronto la masonería regular que somos nosotros y que nos hemos reconocido a través del tiempo, se verá distorsionada en logro de sus altos fines, por esos grupos carentes de toda legitimidad y por la falta de ética de aquellas Grandes Logias Regulares que expidieron cartas patentes, a grupos masónicos inconformes y separatistas.

El anterior panorama antes expuesto, debe ser objeto de una acción definida e inmediata por parte de todas las Grandes Logias Regulares del Mundo, por lo tanto se propone:

1.- Que nuestras Grandes Logias Regulares del mundo, sólo reconozcan a Grandes Logias que acrediten su legitimidad de origen, teniendo especial cuidado en el caso de nuestro país de las Grandes Logias Formadas en los últimos 15 años.

2.- Que cuando exista conflicto de reconocimiento entre dos Grandes Logias, sólo podrán ser aceptadas en las reuniones de las Grandes Logias Regulares y previamente reconocidas, hasta que una comisión expresamente integrada emita un veredicto respecto a la regularidad de dichos grupos masónicos.

3.- Que las Grandes Logias que expidan Cartas Patentes a grupos ilegales y separatistas, invadiendo la jurisdicción de otras Grandes Logias Regulares, sean desconocidas por las Grandes Logias Regulares del Mundo.

4.- Que esta IX Conferencia de Grandes Logias Regulares del Mundo, se pronuncie por la defensa de la REGULARIDAD como concepto fundamental para el desarrollo, crecimiento y fortalecimiento de la masonería mundial.

F R A T E R N A L M E N T E

EDUARDO ATZAYÁCATL RETIZ LICONA
Muy Respetable Gran Maestro
De la Muy Respetable Gran Logia Valle de México

IXth World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges
7-9 May 2008, Washington, DC

Masonic Networking
3rd Session

"Reverting schisms in Europe"

by

Bro. Michael KRAUS,

MW Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Austria

check against delivery !

MW Grand Masters, dear Brethren-in-office,
MW, RW, VW Brethren, and Brethren all:

This World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges rightly put the issue of schisms on its agenda. And this session is rightly termed "Preventing schisms". Prevention is always better and cheaper - in our case less tedious and less emotional - than having to address and, if possible, to revert schisms.

But reality often is different to theory and wishes. Schisms within Masonry are, unfortunately, one of such realities: a reality that English and world Masonry has been facing since its inception. While early English schisms were resolved, European Masonry has been challenged by a major Masonic schism originating in France, since the end of the 19th century. This schism of an ideological character is carrying ramifications into many countries of today's world and does not look as it could be solved easily or quickly.

Beyond this major schism on basic concepts, there are others schisms in many countries, where more than one jurisdiction is claiming regularity: a situation which originated in various reasons including - I have to say, and regrettably - personal views, ambitions and in particular unconciliatory attitudes by individual players.

In addition to these schisms of and between the jurisdictions governing the so-called "blue" or St. John's degrees, there are also schisms in relation to and amongst, systems of further Masonic learning, also often referred to as "higher" or "high degrees", or "appendant degrees". As much has been said and written on this issue, I will not dwell on it.

There is also the gender schism in regular Masonry. Our common concept in this respect is little understood today by the general and interested public. In the 21st century, however, we cannot shy away or use words and concepts not understandable to the world around us including possible candidates and partners of our Brethren. We have to be able to explain in contemporary language and mind-sets, why we are convinced that women should not mix with men in our ritual path of progressive initiation.

Before addressing present schisms, however, we have to clarify *if* schisms should be reverted. I sometimes get the impression that we learned to live with schisms and we got used to even live rather happily and unworriedly with this situation. I do not count myself amongst those who do not care about existing schisms.

Schisms are costly. They are consuming a lot of energy of Brethren which could be better used - used *e.g.* for achieving the goals of Masonry. Schisms, through Internet sites and other media, are today broadly reflected in the public domain. Schisms can mislead candidates and often direct them to the "wrong addresses". And they are presenting a bad picture of Masonry to the public. But, most important of all, schisms unnecessarily divide and undermine the joint collective identity of Brethren.

Dear Brethren,

I am submitting my analysis on schisms in European countries at the end of the 6th year of my tenure which has been marked by an institutional and personal interest and action in European Masonry. I have been focusing, of course, on countries of Austria's neighbourhood of Central Europe, Eastern Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe. In these countries, the Grand Lodge of Austria helped setting up new lodges and new jurisdictions and supported action in reverting schisms.

The number of regular jurisdictions in Europe has been growing fast for more than 15 years. Today, there is practically at least one Craft jurisdiction in each of the European countries in place – unfortunately in many instances more than one. Looking at *today's reality and practice in Europe*, we cannot but regret that the schisms have been growing in number during the last decades and years. Not only were existing schisms not overcome, but a number of new ones added - sometimes because of personal views and ambitions, and sometimes also upon wrong and undue influence from abroad and from other degree systems.

Let me be clear, here, on a couple of cases which happened only recently: It is und must remain unacceptable if a Grand Master of a jurisdiction is holding or running for, - high - political office. Nor can it be condoned if a politician is publicly referring to his membership to the Craft as a means for political campaigning or related party politics issues. This does not mean, however, that politicians cannot be Brethren.

Similarly unacceptable is bringing national or bilateral concerns or problems of European jurisdictions to bodies outside of Europe. Inter-jurisdictional and bilateral issues are to be solved first and foremost in a brotherly spirit between the jurisdictions concerned. I will revert to this issue in more detail later. Jurisdictions writing - often misinformed - accusatory letters in regard to another, often neighbourly jurisdiction, to outside bodies has similarly to be strongly refuted - as has such outside body taking quasi-binding decisions on such issues and conflict-solving methods.

Solving situations of competing jurisdictions in one country - in particular when more than one jurisdiction is following the rules of regularity - is a very complicated affair. We cannot expect so-called irregulars to easily and without previous arrangements amongst both parties, come or come back to our structures. We cannot expect, as equally daily observed in a number of European countries, that two regularly working jurisdictions easily merge into a single one. Giving up traditions, names, lodge charters, petty concepts and, last but not least, Grand Lodge offices is not easy to anybody, including in particular Brethren.

To overcome and revert schisms in Masonry needs creative thinking and courage - as well as a lot of efforts and time. Reverting schisms first and foremost needs flexibility - on *all* sides, including and in particular on the side of the "haves", *i.e.* the jurisdiction which is enjoying broad recognition by regular Masonry. Reverting schisms needs information and knowledge of the specific country and situation including its main actors. Transposing or imposing specific concepts cherished by some outside jurisdiction does not help. Starting the path to revert schisms needs the implementation of our basic Masonic concept: tolerance. All sides have to show tolerance, much more tolerance, when talking to other sides of the same Masonic coin in one country. Only by first accepting the other as Brother and trying to understand him that overcoming schisms can become possible.

First of all, there has to be rules for orientation. Some of these rules can not be ignored nor be open to negotiation, when it comes to regular Masonry. Regularity for us is based upon commonly accepted principles, *i.e.* the '*Basic principles for Grand Lodge recognition*' of the UGLE of 4 September 1929. They were adopted and are being followed in this or a very similar wording by regular jurisdictions. They are not negotiable even when trying to overcome schisms. The term "basic", however, suggests that there may be additional elements of detail not specified by the '*Basic Principles*' themselves. And, like with any rules, there is room for interpretation, which can be developed individually, but preferably in a collective, co-operative way.

During the discussions in the course of the last years on the most blatant and shocking cases of schisms in *regular* Masonry in Europe, voices were raised that such cases could only be solved amongst concerned jurisdictions of a region together and in a co-operative thinking and format. Despite a number of individual actions, no concerned or outside single jurisdiction had demonstrated the will or ability to solve such problems on its own. The developments as observed even went from bad to worse: Schisms in one country led to movements of grouping jurisdictions in Europe - resulting in what some call different groups of regular jurisdictions in Europe following opposite policies of recognition in respect to Masonic regularity of individual countries' situations. This fact should be unacceptable to those of us concerned with the good of Masonry, our - regular - Masonry.

Inter-jurisdictional and bilateral issues are to be solved first and foremost in a brotherly spirit between the jurisdictions concerned.

- In case that this way of addressing problems does not succeed, *mediation*, *i.e.* the talking and advice to both parties by a person or institution specifically requested by both parties, may be useful. Mediation itself, however, does not solve the problem; this to achieve is up to the parties concerned. And mediation cannot be imposed and should be conducted, as long as possible, in a quiet way.
 - Otherwise it would be *arbitration* - and this instrument is not generally used in inter-jurisdiction issues - but could be, if mutually agreed.
 - The third concept of conflict-solution, a quasi-judicial decision by, *e.g.*, a *court* of honour, is not available in Masonry on a supranational level - and is not requested.
-

Last but not least in this context we should be honest to acknowledge that even mediation, as we have witnessed in respect to Russia, has its limits as to effective final solutions.

Can schism be reverted, can it be done? Yes, there are instances where it has been done. Recent developments in Bulgaria, Romania and Austria at small and medium size but foremost in the Czech Republic at large scale are lessons to be learnt from - and to be seen as hopes for further efforts. We in Europe are also very glad and encouraged to have - finally - watched progressive reversions of schisms in the United States of America as regards Prince Hall Masonry.

In Europe, only a few weeks ago, the universally recognised Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic ended a process of many years of finding a way to regularise members of the Grand Orient of the Czech Republic while the latter decided to disband its lodges and jurisdiction. This was in particular possible through and by the two top representatives of the two jurisdictions who knew each other well and *trusted* each other. The Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic - through its brotherly approach towards unrecognised but regularly working Brethren - gained, and Masonry gained. Not only I carry the wish that such example may be followed in other countries, too.

We are still faced with situations in a number of European countries - not only in its Eastern regions -, where more than one jurisdiction consists of lodges which are working in regularity but does not unite with other such jurisdiction, and where foreign jurisdictions are refrained from recognising all of the regular jurisdictions.

In order to solve, to end such unhappy and unpleasant situations, we must have at our disposition, both *concepts* and *organisational frameworks* to support the start and continuation of conflict-solving processes, as the rivalling jurisdictions or their heads usually are not in a position to find solutions themselves.

As to *concepts*, I propose to *separate our judgements on regularity from the policy of recognition*. The so-called "special meeting" of regular European jurisdictions held last November in London upon invitation of the UGLE already implemented this separation of concepts. The basic idea behind this separation of terms is the concept that while recognition is a sovereign decision of policy by individual jurisdictions, regularity is a fact which can be determined by objective criteria.

When working on concepts and in their implementation, we need to show flexibility and novel approaches. By tradition, foreign jurisdictions can recognise more than one jurisdiction per country only if both or all of them are in amity with each other. In order to solve protracted situations of more than one regular jurisdictions in one country, we may have to consider less dogmatic ways. Given the lack, *i.e.* the expressly supported lack of any supranational Masonic authority, we need other means of bringing rivalling regular jurisdictions in one and the same country to solve their situation - a situation which is detrimental to Masonry. We just cannot wait for centuries that situations may resolve themselves or be resolved by chance.

We also need *frameworks* for discussion, for developing ways to solve difficult situations and possibly for enforcing such solutions. Frameworks for problem-solution must by definition be flexible and exclude ritual meetings which are based upon recognition.

A decision on recognition - itself based upon sovereignty and policy - may well be a matter of information as well as of interpretation. A *European body on information on regularity* - not very different from the '*Commission on Information for Recognition*' of the '*Conference of Grand Masters of Masons of North America*' - could enquire upon and discuss, in a cooperative and transparent manner, issues of regularity - distinct from recognition issues.

Such a body which should be open for participation to any regular European jurisdiction, could not only gather and pool information and intelligence from well informed jurisdictions and knowledgeable Brethren, but also be of valuable support to jurisdictions which are not able themselves to judge foreign jurisdictions upon their regularity. The main difference of such European body to the North American body would be its competence on regularity only - leaving decisions of recognition aside -, and its inclusive and co-operative character, *i.e.* its

openness for participation to any regular European jurisdiction upon equal footing. A proposal to this end was made and generally supported at the Prague meeting of April 2007 of the *'European Masonic Forum'*.

This *'European Masonic Forum'* originated in the *'Sinaia Protocol Conference'* which was set up in February 2000 in order to avoid and overcome schisms in Eastern Central and Eastern Europe. The original aims of the *'Sinaia Protocol Conference'* were: following the precepts of regular Masonry, the new jurisdictions talking to each other before reciprocal recognition, aiming at reciprocal and outside recognition, and exchanging information and views amongst Grand Masters in an informal way.

The *'Sinaia Protocol Conference'* itself and its successor, the *'European Masonic Forum / EMF'* can demonstrate a number of success stories. As this gathering was not conditioned upon reciprocal recognition by all participants - but by regularity -, it enabled early contacts and advice. It linked younger and older jurisdictions of Europe – and their top representatives - by dialogue and exchanges. It enabled fraternal contacts across borders in regions torn apart by historic animosities and even by recent civil war. It also resulted, by reverting and preventing schisms, in a number of recognitions within and from across the region. And it provided an open, informal and flexible forum for co-operative discussions of topics of European Masonic interest. Meetings included those on, e.g., *'The future of Masonry'* and on *'A European Masonic identity?'*.

From its inception, the *'European Masonic Forum'* did neither include ritual meetings nor take decisions binding upon participating jurisdictions nor infringe in any way upon their sovereign matters. It discusses, however, issues of European Masonic concern at Grand Lodges' *top* levels, in a structured, co-operative, topic-oriented and problem-solving manner. The EMF certainly does not carry political elements or intentions, but demonstrated the real need for more co-operation between European jurisdictions - including because of the reality and dangers of schisms.

During the last years and even some time before, we have developed good forms of co-operation amongst European jurisdictions - some of which are regularly followed by representatives from outside Europe, in particular the GL of Washington, DC, and its MW Bro. Robert Heyat, the host of this World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges, and its

Executive Secretary, RW Bro. Tom Jackson. The number of annual communications with international invitees, however, has much increased over the last years, which makes it difficult for most of us to reply positively to all such invitations - and thus be present at venues for possible contacts for problem-solving.

What we would really need in Europe - with a certain degree of urgency - is general, structured and regular meetings where most GMs in question could attend and, beyond bilateral corridor and small talks, could jointly discuss issues of concern.

I would not have covered my topic without, at least as a footnote, mentioning the schisms which are based upon differences on one or more basic concepts of Grand Lodge recognition. Here, the question is not how to come to re-unification or unification within ritual frameworks, but *if* to talk to each other, what to talk about and at which level. There are different concepts in different countries. Ignoring or claiming ignorance of other, irregular Masonic jurisdictions is not the right way I would like to see universal Masonry presented to the interested public.

Concluding I propose three lines of action and concepts in order to much enhance our efforts to revert schisms in Masonry in Europe - and to prevent further ones.

First: To this end, firmly upon the basic principles of regularity, first of all, fraternal talks have to be initiated and supported, as well as, if necessary, advised and mediated, if so wished by the parties. Such talks must not be refused by any side. In case that mediation or arbitration is wished and agreed to, by both sides, helping hands from outside the country or countries of conflict should be made available. On the other side, if there are undue refusals from whatever side, outside pressure may be necessary to start and uphold such talks. We may have to discuss much more which form such brotherly *firm* help for the good of Masonry could and should take.

In order to address and solve problems, we need agreed rules. Given the schisms of the 20th century that are still plaguing the Masonry of the 21st century, and the different implementation in practice of the '*Basic principles for Grand Lodge recognition*', we may

have to resort to a possibly more detailed interpretation of them, while keeping them not negotiable. If such contemporary and more advanced interpretation does not suffice, we may have to think of finding ways for jointly agreeing to some additional rules, in particular when it comes to regularity and territory.

Second: In respect to all problems, avenues for solutions should be undertaken based upon the principle of subsidiarity, *i.e.*, first and foremost the parties to the problem have to try finding solutions; only if this way is unsuccessful, third parties may be involved. And only when intra-country efforts of problem-solving do not suffice, outside jurisdictions or prominent representatives thereof and in an *ad personam*-capacity may be invited to help. If this does not lead to a solution, regional arrangements, if available, may come in to address problems in a cooperative way, for the good of Masonry in general.

And third: We need more and better co-operation between jurisdictions - in Europe. Regularity and schisms would and should be main themes of general, structured and regular meetings where most GMs in question could attend and, beyond bilateral corridor and small talks, jointly discuss issues of concern. The informal Luxemburg meetings, the former 'Sinaia Protocol Conference' on Masonry in Eastern Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, today's informal 'European Masonic Forum' and the special London meeting of last November have shown possible formats. The 'European Masonic Forum' can be adapted to the London participation and unite all efforts and wishes by various jurisdictions. It could also serve as framework for a European body on information on regularity.

MW GMs, Dear Brethren-in-office:

At the end of my tenure as GM of the Grand Lodge of Austria my main wish for European and thus world Masonry is to end - and prevent - schisms within jurisdictions, countries and regions. I am convinced that this can only be achieved by more and better understanding and co-operation between jurisdictions which has to include regular, flexible, and structured meetings of substance; by flexible approaches and innovative constructive thinking; by some kind of European structure on information on regularity; in a number of cases possibly by some kind of outside brotherly pressure; and all this firmly anchored in the basic principles for Grand Lodge regularity and recognition.

9th World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges
Washington D.C.

Masonic Networking
3rd. Session

Session-III
Global Fraternal Networking
Friday, May 9th, 9.30 – 12.00 p.m.

Developing and Promoting Cultural and Academic Exchange among
Masons worldwide

By R. W. Bro. S.Krishnan, Past Dy. G.M,
Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of India

Most Worshipful Brethren, Distinguished Brethren on the dais and Brethren all,

At the outset, I must express my sincere thanks to the organizers of this World Conference of Grand Lodges, for giving me this opportunity for presenting a paper before this august gathering.

Before I proceed with the subject matter of my presentation, perhaps it will be appropriate to share with you all, brief details about the Grand Lodge of India. Our M. W. the Grand Master, M. W. Bro. Justice Devinder Gupta, recipient of the Order of Service to Masonry in India, had addressed you in the morning session yesterday, on Cultivating Ethical Behavior in a Civil Society. I am the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of India and have been a Freemason for over 50 years. Freemasonry came to India in Calcutta in 1729 within 12 years' of its establishment in its present form in England in 1717. Freemasonry continued in India under the English, Scottish and Irish Constitutions till November 1961, when 145 of the then Lodges functioning in the country opted to come over to the newly consecrated Grand Lodge of India. Since then, in the last 46 years, we have added 215 more Lodges and thus we have presently 360 Lodges at 160 locations with a membership of about 20,000. We continue to work in amity with the lodges under the three parent Constitutions, which are still functioning in the country. For administrative convenience we have divided the country into four Regions. Out of the 360 Lodges, as many as 70 have completed their centenary, with one Lodge having completed over 230 years and 10 others who have completed 150 years, or more. I am also glad to share with you that we have a happy blend of youth and age and a reasonably good growth.

Coming now to my presentation, I must confess that the subject matter of developing and promoting Cultural and Academic exchange amongst Masons worldwide is somewhat novel in its approach, and an un-chartered territory, in so far as Freemasonry is concerned. It is therefore difficult to decide as to how and where to start this presentation. As far as I am aware, discussions relating to Freemasonry have mostly been confined so far, to its principles and tenets, as well as its symbolism and philosophy extending often to what steps needed to be taken for its growth. Perhaps the time has come to expand the scope of such discussions to see, how we can promote, Cultural and academic exchange between Freemasons of various Grand Lodge Jurisdictions. I am also not sure whether the Grand Lodges of various jurisdictions, whether present here or not, have themselves considered this question of promoting Cultural and academic exchanges amongst Freemasons in their own countries. I must confess that we in India have not considered this aspect seriously so far, though there are examples of a few initiatives taken in this regard. Undoubtedly, tremendous cultural and academic talents do exist within the jurisdiction of most Grand Lodges in the world. We have therefore to see how this can be used as a means of inter jurisdictional exchange, for promoting the cause of Freemasonry, well remembering that Freemasonry is not like some of the organizations, which do exist in various countries of the world, which are involved exclusively in such cultural and academic exchanges between countries. However, viewed in the context of promoting better understanding and interaction, both within and between brethren under different jurisdictions, such exchanges if formalized on some institutional basis, can certainly help in the spread of awareness about Freemasonry, more widely.

The word culture in the context of our topic for discussion, covers in my view, a wide variety of subjects under the broad heading of art and crafts, such as music, painting, dance, drama, literature, books, cinema, sports, to name a few. As for academics, it is also obvious that it covers a very wide range of subjects.

Such cultural and academic exchanges can serve the purpose of building bridges of brotherhood, among the various Masonic Jurisdictions. I find that Webster's dictionary defines 'Bridges' as –"any structure - raised to afford convenient passage over, railroad, ravine or any other obstacle". Not being operative Masons, but speculative or figurative, let us see how the concept of such building bridges, is relevant and important to us. Just as the Working Tools of our degrees have a symbolic meaning for us, building bridges too

has great symbolic significance. As the dictionary meaning indicates, building a bridge is intended to overcome an obstacle and establish a means of physical communication. So a bridge in Freemasonry, may be said to symbolically mean the establishing of not only non-physical communication of the principles and philosophy of Freemasonry, overcoming the barriers of ignorance, prejudice, and misconception, but also as a means of cultural and academic exchange between Masonic jurisdictions. I am reminded in this connection, the famous lines of a poem by Thomas Lovelace, which says-

“ Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cell”

These lines emphasize that human thoughts and imagination cannot be kept confined. As Freemasons, we do not build walls or fences. Our task is not to separate people, on the basis of artificial walls of race, creed, religion, caste color, or culture, but to bring people together, by demolishing such walls and building bridges of understanding and brotherhood between them. Bridges connect. Walls divide. We connect people by brotherhood. We construct passageways of friendship between persons who may otherwise have nothing common between them. We build tolerance as a conveyance to bring people with widely differing faiths together. Thus building bridges is at the heart of Freemasonry. It is said that no man is an island unto himself. People, like islands require bridges- a way to cross over and communicate. If we stay on one side the rest stand on the other. We wait and they wait and every one waits; we don't start, they don't start, stagnation or an uneasy stalemate results in what has come to be known in common parlance as communication gap. We have to ensure that such gaps are properly and soundly bridged and in this context cultural and academic exchange can play a significant role.

However presently, we are concerned here, more with inter-regional communication, in terms of cultural and academic exchange, rather than intra-regional communication as such. Communication, as we all know is a two - way phenomenon. So is a bridge, which provides a means of communication from both sides. Forums like this where Grand Lodges of various countries are meeting, do serve as bridges of communication between Freemasons from different countries and backgrounds. I therefore consider these discussions, as the first step towards building Bridges of Brotherhood to form a basis for the development of cultural and academic exchanges among Freemasons world wide. The second obvious step is the

follow up of the recommendations and suggestions emerging from such forums. We cannot consider our task as finished, as soon as we leave here. An action plan for follow up has therefore to be drawn up first and thereafter pursued.

We must attempt to establish a well-designed process for exchange of information among the Grand Lodges of the world. One obvious solution to this will be to exchange magazines, literature and pamphlets etc brought out by each Grand Lodge, with each other. One difficulty that may be faced in this connection may of course be the different languages that are under use in the Grand Lodges. Some enduring solution to this will however have to be found. We should also have periodical exchange of visits, not only between Grand Lodge Officials, but also at the levels of brethren of Lodges and their families. We must therefore develop a mechanism for promoting what I would like to call 'Masonic Tourism'. Grand Lodges should facilitate such inter- jurisdictional visits, by some suitable arrangements within each Grand Lodge. For example we can exchange details of locations and addresses as well as dates of meetings as also names and addresses of Worshipful Masters and Secretaries of Lodges in various locations in our respective countries. Such information can also be posted on the websites of Grand Lodges and updated periodically, to provide visiting brethren, up to date information about Lodge meetings, which they may be able to attend. I may mention in this connection that lately we are getting a number of such requests from brethren from other jurisdictions visiting our country for attending our Lodge meetings. From all accounts, this has been a very enriching experience, both for our brethren, as well as the visitors, in getting to know each other in an atmosphere of fellowship and brotherhood.

Every country in the world has a wide variety of cultural, historical and academic centers. Since with the advent of globalization the movement of Freemasons world wide has increased considerably, availability of ready information regarding such cultural, historical and academic centers can be of considerable use for brethren visiting various countries, particularly if they can establish contact with brethren in Masonic bodies, meeting at such places. There being no doubt about the helping hand of a brother, visiting brethren of other jurisdictions and their families, can feel quite at home in the company of such brethren, who would readily provide any assistance that may be required by such visiting brethren and their families.

It may be useful, if the Grand Lodges of various jurisdictions can develop a system of Masonic Passport, giving all relevant information relating to a brother, on his visit to other jurisdictions. This will greatly facilitate easy exchange of visits between brethren belonging to various Grand Lodges. Moreover lately there has been considerable increase in the involvement of ladies and families in outside the Lodge activities. In fact the spouses and other close lady relative of Freemasons in India have formed themselves into Association of Ladies of Masonic Fraternity, both for raising funds for charities and in assisting their Masonic spouses in such charitable and philanthropic activities, besides often providing a variety of cultural programmes for the ladies, while the men folk are engaged in Masonic business. This is becoming more and more popular in India and can easily provide the foundation for cultural exchange as well between the Grand Lodge of India and brethren and families of other jurisdictions. In fact a few such very successful programmes held recently have helped locating a variety of talent amongst Freemasons and their families, with the result there is a proposal to start a Masonic Cultural Society, to promote, further such activities. Perhaps similar efforts could be tried by other Grand Lodges as well for providing an opportunity for cultural exchanges in the future. As for academic exchange it may be best to start the ball rolling by identifying academic institutions as well as academic subjects, with which Freemasons are associated to find out how academic exchanges can be started between Masonic jurisdictions.

Organizing of Masonic sports events such as Masonic Golf Tournaments have also been tried to a limited extent in our country. It is also observed that such events do take place in other Masonic jurisdictions as well. Some methodology can therefore be evolved for identifying suitable sports activities, by way of cultural exchange, between various Grand Lodge Jurisdictions. Another initiative taken by one of the Lodges under the Grand Lodge of India is the organizing of a Masonic Car Rally, called "Masons on Wheels" linked with creating awareness and propagation of Eye Donation for which a group of dedicated Freemasons propose to visit every Masonic center in the country. Another group of Masons calling themselves 'Sojourners' have been organizing visits to places of Masonic interest in and around Israel and Jerusalem. Perhaps similar groups can be formed in various Masonic jurisdictions for promoting Masonic Tourism and for cultural and academic exchanges. Some interesting short Masonic skits have also emerged recently and are proving to be quite popular. Such

February 28, 2008

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Subj: **FW: Global Fraternal Networking**
Date: 2/28/2008 12:21:12 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: world@dcgrandlodge.org
To: TWJCowboy@aol.com
CC: rbheyat@aol.com

For your information and consideration.

Mansour Hatefi, P.G.M.
Grand Secretary

From: glindia@vsnl.com [mailto:glindia@vsnl.com] **On Behalf Of** glindia
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2008 5:45 AM
To: World
Subject: Global Fraternal Networking

February 28, 2008

R.W.Bro.Thomas W.Jackson,
Executive Secretary,
World Conference of
Masonic Grand Lodges,
Washington D.C.

Dear Sir and R.W.Brother,

In continuation of my earlier mail forwarding the paper to be presented by our Most Worshipful the Grand Master, I am now attaching my paper for presentation in Session-III to be held on Friday, May 9th from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. on "Developing and Promoting Cultural and Academic Exchange among Masons worldwide", under the Theme- "Global Fraternal Networking." Kindly arrange to acknowledge receipt.

With best wishes,

Yours fraternally,
S.KRISHNAN

BY RW TOM JACKSON
Last Session

CLOSING ADDRESS; WORLD CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON DC

My brothers, we come to the closing of the IX World Conference and I trust that you have established a better understanding of world Freemasonry, its variations contained within its uniformity and the need for an ongoing commitment to the philosophical principles of our craft. One of the greatest values of the World Conference is that it provides the only opportunity for the major leaders of all of world Freemasonry to assemble and to unite our thoughts and minds for a common purpose. As a side benefit, we have found the establishment of relationships that for some will last a lifetime.

Just as important, however, is that it provides the environment for us to be exposed to issues that although confronting other Grand Lodges, will affect Freemasonry on a world level. My brothers, there is no way in today's world that we can afford to fail to work together to resolve issues facing any regular Grand Lodge. The challenges confronting our craft and its commitment to social stability are no less important today than it was at any time in our past. Freedom from all forms of oppression over both the bodies and the minds of man is not any less significant today than it ever was. The rise of terrorism in any form requires our commitment to support the liberty, freedom and equality that today writers acknowledge us as supporting in the past.

Last week I received a communication from the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Bolivia informing me that both he and the Grand Treasurer would have to cancel their plans to attend this conference due to the "unexpected social turmoil affecting his country". His final sentence was; "We all hope in Bolivia that this state of affairs will be just a 'shooting Star', and I think that I must stay as the head of the Grand Lodge of Bolivia in the event of any troubles we could face."

The issue in Bolivia is not an isolated incident in the world and Bolivian Freemasons are not isolated brothers in this fraternal network of ours. Freemasonry must be dedicated to a united effort to support, if not in a material sense at least in a spiritual sense, every brother who needs our assistance.

My greatest dream, before I die, would be to see all Freemasonry united for a common purpose. I know that this will never happen in my lifetime, however. So long as any Grand Lodge fails to operate under the landmarks and parameters that establish regularity, there can be no

unity. Nor can there be unity so long as there is more than one regular Grand Lodge operating in the same geographical location without mutual recognition. It should be our goal to resolve issues that separates regular Freemasonry into opposing camps. It should also be our goal to work to bring regularity to irregular Grand Lodges and stimulate it to become part of the Freemasonry that we know.

I have expressed in my opening address a concern with inflated egos of some of our leadership that contributes negatively, not only to any possible hope of a resolution to restore regularity but also to even cement commitment of the members of their own Grand Lodges. I acknowledge that it is difficult for any one of us to recognize within ourselves the existence of this as a problem. We always seek to leave a lasting legacy but that legacy will depend much upon our ability to control and direct our egos.

We also cannot fail to be aware of the changing environment in which we live as a result of advancement in technology which resulted in the World Wide Web. We can no longer avoid the impact that it is creating upon the operation of our Grand Lodges. We must learn to live with it. It is not going to go away and we must be concerned with our future for we have the rest of her lives to live there.

My brothers, I leave you with the admonition that even as Freemasonry is designed to take good men and make them better, we, as leaders have inherited the responsibility to then improve upon the better man and my brothers that includes each one of us. It has been my great privilege to have spent a few days with you and I hope that your Masonic experience has been enriched.

May you have a safe journey to your homelands and may the Great Architect of the Universe travel with you always.