



The Overy Papers

Number 19 - Brotherly Love

Good Evening Brethren,

This evening I have been asked to give a talk on Brotherly Love one of the three ideals of freemasonry that with Relief, and Truth makes us stand out as good Freemasons.

It is a difficult talk for me, as knowing my faults but the harmony of the Lodge is paramount to me. So having said that please bear with me and if you need to chastise me please do it after the lodge is closed.

For this I needed the help of what I call a "Masonic Buddy" and found this story on a website of one of my Buddies V.W.Bro. Norman McEvoy.

It is called The Holy Men

The author & origin are unknown, but as VW Bro Norm said, blame it on me.

Some years ago a new Master Mason had a problem. It seemed that he and his wife had made a solemn vow that there would be no secrets in their married life.

And then he became a Freemason.

"What do they do?" She Asked, "I can't tell you", he replied.

"Your breaking our Marriage Vows!" She stated, "I can't help it", he replied

"That's not good enough!" She stated. "OK I'll try", he replied.

"You see there are three types of people who are Freemasons."

"You're kidding me" she replied "Pray, tell me,"

"Well" he said "there are Walkers, Talkers and Holy Men."

"What are you talking about?" Maybe you can hear your wife there.

"Well" he said. "When you first enter the lodge room, you are blindfolded & there is a man who holds you firmly by the arm. He leads you around the room while you listen to people talk to you about things and you have no idea what they mean. I thought maybe later someone will tell me what they really said!

"I think they were the Walkers."

Every so often we stop and someone else starts to speak, again I honestly don't I don't have a clue what they were talking about, but then I figured out someone is sure to fill me, in after it was all over.

"I think they were called the Talkers."

"OK" she said "but who were the **Holy Men?**"

Well every so often, while all this was all going on, there were moments when it seemed that there was a hesitation, when someone didn't seem to know what to say or do and then voices could be heard in the Lodge Room saying.

"Oh My God" "Oh My God"

I don't know who they were but I figured they must have been **The Holy Men.**

This Year I will have been a Freemason for 37 Years and I can reflect on many occasions when these Holy Men have, by their unwarranted criticism, virtually destroyed the confidence & enthusiasm of a Brother who has made an honest effort to perform Ritual in Open Lodge.

In 2002 I came to Abbotsford to retire I decided it was time to put down my final roots.

My Gypsy lifestyle meant I was a bit reluctant to join and leave another Masonic lodge but I did decided to join Abbotsford Lodge #70 in about 2006. At first I must confess it was not a welcoming experience. But since 2011 when I decided to take an active part and concentrate my efforts on first the Historian and next Masonic Education, it has been very satisfying.

Sad to say I still hear the Holy Men, of course they don't all say "Oh my God" but they are there giving us the benefit of their groans of displeasure and comments of similar ilk.

Surely it is essential that these "Holy Men" give our New Generation of Freemasons the **RIGHT** to make their own mistakes and grow from them. That means we should back off and become positive mentors to our Lodge Officers and also especially to the new members in our midst.

If you are not happy with the way the lodge is going, do something about it. It may be just that little encouragement, to those members who want to make our lodge strong and a pleasure to visit.

Tonight we have members from other lodges and I would be surprised if they have not had occasionally similar occurrences.

I know I make mistakes but then, if you want don't want to make a mistake, the answer is, to do nothing.

Last month I inadvertently upset our VW Brother Secretary. I had made a statement that he objected to and he sent me an e-mail berating me. I told him it was a common term used in Britain and what he understood it to mean was a modern interpretation, that was not meant. I now, apologise to that Brother, in open lodge as a proof of "Brotherly Love".

I did phone him back and profusely apologised. To me it is a common term and in one of those foibles' of life, it was said to me, later that day when I was told I had been made an official war bride by the local Canadian Legion to allow me to represent them at an official function and I took the remark with pride. But then things like this will occasionally happen, between two countries that only just speak the same language.

Nobody said that living up to our Masonic Commitments was going to be easy task but if you want that quality of life that we want aspire to, the effort is well worth the time spent.

As you know I have been publishing a new edition of our ritual. To do this I have two stalwarts who proof read my efforts. As an author this is a standard procedure and one that produces a very thick skin.

On one occasion, one proof reader said that one sentence is incorrect while another disagreed. So I asked them to discuss it over a coffee, and decide who was right, and let me know what they decided. It was important as the sentence was used six times in our book of rituals. I knew that there must have been a bit of give and take in the decision but in what makes us good Masons and with no animosity the decision was made. I thank my mentors VW Bro Dick Savage and VW Bro. Con Neudorf for having treated the issue as King Solomon would have done.

Of course there was one small thing I did not mention to them. In the ritual the sentence, as I said is used in six places and there was I think three different versions of the sentence anyway. So for the first time in 100 years they now all read the same. It also means that for 100 years each WM has used them without

making a comment at the difference and to be honest it did not matter one iota, no communications from Grand Lodge not even a groan from the "Holy Men".

So let us try and make Brotherly Love mean something practical, instead of just two words in our Ritual.

I do know there is one difference of a opinion that has not been solved by "Brotherly Love". And that is between Abbottsford Lodge and Pacific Lodge that shares the same building. I have never found what the cause is and I have tried but it is still there and you can feel it.

I suspect that it is between a small number of people from each side and I feel it is about time we put aside our differences and opinions and start again. I could not find one person who knew what the problem was. But then I thought maybe it is not just in our lodge but in other lodges in our district or in our jurisdiction or maybe in our world.

So please put the trowel to work and spread the cement of Brotherly Love and Affection, in such a way that we can put this behind us and accept that we have differences, but they should be not differences that divide us.

And to finish I would like to mention another Masonic Lodge that recently has had real problems.

It was on 27 January 2016 the local law enforcement of Dousman, Wisconsin, thwarted a potential tragedy at the Humphrey Scottish Rite Masonic Centre in Milwaukee which houses several Masonic organizations as well as the Dyslexia Centre for Children.

The reason for the Jihadist attack was explained by Angel Millar a journalist with the local newspaper. She said the Jihad believes Freemasonry is responsible for introducing Western Culture to Muslim-majority countries in order to corrupt them. And Freemasonry is associated with alcohol, pornography, democracy and women's rights.

M.W.Bro. Franklin J. Struble, Grand Master of Masons in Wisconsin responded in true Masonic Tradition with no angry attacks, no drums, no placards, but a straight forward announcement on what we stand for.

"Freemasonry promotes love among all people regardless of religious belief. Indeed, Freemasonry is one of the few organizations in the world that include and welcome those of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths.

Many of the founders of this country were Freemasons and thus our freedoms of speech, assembly, press and especially of religion can be traced directly to the tenets of Freemasonry. As a result, Freemasonry over the course of time has been the target of attack by the intolerant zealot. We will continue to promote, protect and defend love for all people regardless of religious belief as we have for over three hundred years.

Thank you Most Worshipful Brother Struble for reminding us and the world. Maybe this should put our problems into perspective and maybe we do not really, have any big problems. Next year we will be celebrating our 300 years so let us get rid of the old issues and move forward to the next 100 years with a more positive attitude.

Thank you and whatever I say may we continue in peace and harmony.

Bro. Bill Overy

Member of the Education Committee of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.