The Cable Tow

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MW Napoleon A. Soriano and Masonic Dignitaries in Okinawa

Strenghtening Ties with Overseas Brethren



MW Nap with some officers of Okinawa Lodge No. 118

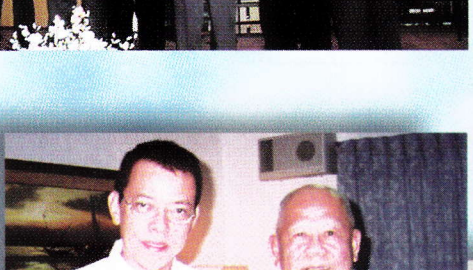


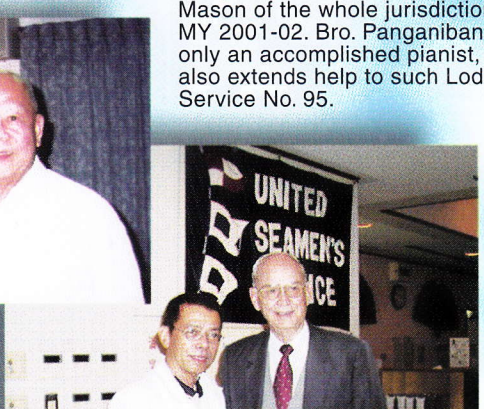
At the right of the Grand Master is VW Agapito S. Suan, Jr., DDGM M.D. No. 28. VW Suan is one of the Most Outstanding DDGMs in the jurisdiction



VW Suan and MW Soriano (both in barong tagalog) show off plaques given them by Okinawa brethren.

MW Soriano with Bro. Bienvenido Panganiban. Most Outstanding Master Mason of the whole jurisdiction for MY 2001-02. Bro. Panganiban is not only an accomplished pianist, but he also extends help to such Lodges as Service No. 95.





The Grand Master poses with MW David Poque, Jr., PGM, Grand Lodge of Japan

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THE CABLETOW *is a bimonthly publication of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines.* ***Main Office****: Plaridel Masonic Temple, San Marcelino St., Ermita, Manila, D2801, Philippines.*

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Our Cover

Visiting Grand Master Napoleon A. Soriano with dignitaries of Masonic District No. 17 (Okinawa). The visit aimed at strengthening ties of Grand Lodge with overseas brethren.

Valedictory Message

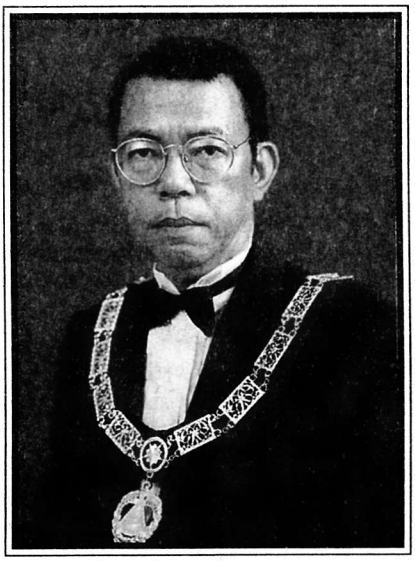
Brethren all:

This is my last message to you since my term of office will end during the Annual Communication of our Grand Lodge at Subic.

A year ago (it seems but weeks ago), you elevated me to the highest office within your power to bestow – that of Grand Master of all Masons in the Philippine grand jurisdiction. I entered upon the performance of the duties of that office with a clear understanding of my limited ability and qualifications to serve and lead you in a manner you have every right to expect of a Brother elevated to the Grand Oriental Chair.

I know, and I assure you, that I have served and led you and the wonderful Masonic family in our grand jurisdiction to the best of my limited ability. Since becoming a Master Mason, I have endeavored to faithfully discharge every duty assigned to me, and I have performed the duties attendant to the Grand Oriental Chair to the best of my limited ability.

I know, likewise, that much has been left undone in order to give due meaning and substance to the theme "Harmony and Progress through Freemasonry." I am optimistic, however, that my successors will follow through the projects we have



MW Napoleon A. Soriano

initiated, particularly the building up of the infrastructure of the Masonic Service Network (MSN), which is designed to better enable us, as a Fraternity, to be of more service to our country and fellow Filipinos, particularly those who have become victims of both environmental and man-made disasters. It is my fond hope that the MSN will come to be our Craft's well-articulated, well-orchestrated, continuing program, so that our countrymen will realize that Masonry indeed has great schemes for human improvement, and that its great aim is "to soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds." Thus, the MSN will become a very potent instrument for

good in our beloved but suffering country.

As I scribble this, my final message to you, I recall the many pleasant occasions in which I saw that every segment of our Masonic family had extended to me and the other officers of our Grand Lodge laudable and helpful cooperation in attaining the goals of the administrative program we put together in order for us to demonstrate unity of purpose and pride in accomplishing things together.

I am appreciative of the unselfish and dedicated service of our Past Grand Masters, who, on many occasions, have demonstrated that although they have received honors at the hands of our Fraternity, there's none that they honor and respect and enjoy and appreciate more than serving their Fraternity in general, our Grand Lodge in particular, and especially their Grand Master. Many other leaders of our Craft have shown their willingness and readiness to work with their Grand Master in any way they could help him. All these brethren have translated into significant action their feeling that, regardless of who the Grand Master is and any difference of opinion they might have with him, he is still their Grand Master, and they want to serve him and serve the Craft as much as they can and to the extent of their abilities to do so. This applies especially to the wonderful group of Brothers who have helped me carry out the many projects and activities of the Grand Master's office.

I am also grateful and appreciative of the many acts of kindness, courtesy and accommodation which the officers and members of Masonic Lodges, Masonic Districts and Appendant Bodies/Orders in the country and overseas, including those of foreign grand jurisdictions, have accorded to me and my party during our visitations. Such acts are, decidedly, eloquent expressions of **unity** and **harmony**, without which **progress** is virtually impossible.

To all of you, then, I want to say, "Thank you very much for a job very well done, so many times, and in so many ways. *Mabuhay po kayong lahat!*"

To my immediate family and loved ones, who, similarly, have been very supportive in so many ways throughout the months and years I have been active in the work of Grand Lodge, I now say "*Sa inyong lahat, maraming salamat.* I love you all!"

And so, another page in the history of our Grand Lodge has been written. At Subic I will unflinchingly report to you my acts and deeds as your Grand Master, and return to you the trust you have generously committed to my care. I trust that my report will, in the main, meet with your approval; for it would be presumptuous for me to suppose that all of you, dear brethren, will approve every one of my acts and deeds as Grand Master. Rest assured, however, that I have tried to rule and govern according to the laws of our Grand Lodge, the rules of human dignity, and the will of the GAOTU.

There remains for me the duty to pass the gavel of authority to my successor.

You and I know very well that he is a Brother who is true to the principles of Freemasonry, who is very faithful to his trust, and who is very capable of leading our Grand Lodge with a steady hand, with a just and upright mind, and with a prayerful heart.

During my year in the Grand East I have seen at close range the unity and harmony of our Masonic family throughout our grand jurisdiction. We will have the opportunity at the Annual Communication in Subic to build further on this strong foundation. I hope that every Lodge will take the duty and responsibility to be represented at the Grand Communication, to take active part in discussions and to vote on important matters which will come before us. I particularly hope that you will decide to increase the Cabletow subscription fee. If we do this, we can yet make *The Cabletow* a veritable "showcase" for Philippine Masonry. We want that **each Mason who reads the publication will feel so proud of their Masonry that he would want to show it to his non-Masonic friends and to use it to prove that "Masonry is good; ergo, let's talk about it!"**

May we continue showing unity and harmony in accomplishing the many worthwhile projects designed to make this a better country to live in. May our conduct illustrate the main sermon of our lives, and may we so conduct ourselves on all occasions as to reflect the lessons we learn in Masonry.

Mabuhay ang Masonerya sa Pilipinas at sa buong mundo! Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat!

NAPOLEON A. SORIANO
Grand Master, 2001-2002

Since becoming a Master Mason, I have endeavored to faithfully discharge every duty assigned to me, and I have performed the duties attendant to the Grand Oriental Chair to the best of my limited ability.... And now I am returning the trust you have generously committed to my care.

Editorial Comment

"THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE ANCIENT FELLOWSHIP AMONG US..." - PIKE

Masonic Charity has been beautifully described by Brother and Colonel M. L. Ehlers, long associated with the York Rite as Grand Secretary, as the "the cornerstone of our ancient and honorable Fraternity," as "the brightest jewel in the Masonic crown," as "the Corinthian pillar whose entablature adds strength, beauty and grace to the Masonic fabric," as "the radiant spark emanating from God, the inexhaustible fountain of love."

Masonic Charity is, according to the same Brother, "not circumscribed by the narrow limits of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, binding up the wounds of the afflicted." It is much broader and much nobler. Masonic Charity is "that Charity that is swift of foot, ready of hand, in the cause of a common humanity. That Charity that writes a Brother's vices in water and his virtues in enduring brass. That Charity of which He who spake as never man spake was the illustrious exemplar...."

The superstructure of Masonic Charity is, Brother Ehlers further points out, friendship, morality and brotherly love, and its capstone is holiness to the Lord.

Such Charity should burn a living fire upon the altar of every Mason's heart.

It is interesting to note, at this juncture, that Brother Ehlers metaphorically, describes Masonic Charity as "the radiant spark emanating from God, the inexhaustible fountain of love," and that he points to Masonic Charity as the Charity "whose capstone is holiness to the Lord."

We should also recall the fact that when we were candidates for the Entered Apprentice Degree, the Senior Deacon placed his left hand on the head of each one of us and prayed thus:

"Vouchsafe Thine aid, Almighty Father of the Universe, to this our present convention, and grant that this candidate for Freemasonry may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful brother among us. Endue him with a competency of Thy Divine Wisdom, that, by the influence of the pure principles of Freemasonry, he may the better be enabled to display the beauties of holiness, to the honor of Thy holy name. Amen."

That, precisely, is what we came here to do — to improve ourselves in Masonry, to be imbued with the pure principles of

Freemasonry, so that we may the better be enabled to display the beauties of holiness, to the honor of God's holy name. We entered Masonry because we wanted to learn its simple lessons of practical morality and its sublime teachings of religious philosophy and to live them consistently in daily life, thereby showing to all and sundry that we Masons are dedicating and devoting our lives to God's service, as well as to the progress of humanity. Yes, that is what we came here to do. We should never lose sight of it.

But, clearly, we should not expect to ever attain our ancient and honorable Fraternity's long-term goal, the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God, if we cannot be true and faithful Brothers within the Craft, within our widespread Masonic Family.

How important it is, then, that we all renew our resolve - nay, our commitment - to be our Brother Mason's keepers. Since Charity begins at home - and home is, to us, the Craft, we must first practice Charity among ourselves, in the Craft and then in our widespread Masonic Family, ever striving to "write a Brother's vices in water and his virtues in enduring brass."

Oftentimes, however, we do not practice with consistent fidelity what we impart to our Candidates. In the ritual of the third degree, for example, we impart to our newly-raised Brothers the import of the Five Points of Fellowship. Yet not a few of us do not put these into consistent application.

How important it is, then, that we, our leaders included, heed the following wise counsel of the author of the celebrated *Morals and Dogma*, Brother Albert Pike:

"To go upon a Brother's errand or to his relief, even barefoot and upon flinty ground; to remember him in your supplications to the Deity; to clasp him to your heart, and to protect him against malice and evil-speaking; to uphold him when about to stumble and fall; and to give him prudent, honest and friendly counsel – these duties are plainly written upon the pages of God's great code of laws and first among the ordinances of Masonry."

We avow, moreover, that we Masons are particularly bound by duty to relieve our distressed fellowmen, especially our distressed worthy Brother Masons, since we are "linked together by an indissoluble chain of *sincere affection.*" (Emphasis added). Yet, instead of being sincerely affectionate to fellow Masons, we are uncharitable to them not a few times.

How important it is, therefore, that we, our leaders included, take into serious consideration and put into constant practice these wise words of Brother Pike: "Masons must be kind to one another. **... There needs to be much more of the spirit of the ancient fellowship among us; more tenderness to each other's faults, more forgiveness, more solicitude for each other's improvement and good fortune;** somewhat of the brotherly feeling, that it be not shame to use the word *Brother.*" (Emphasis added).

We avow, in addition, that "Masonry regards no man on account of his worldly wealth and honors," or that "it is the internal and not the external qualifications which recommend a man to be made a Mason." Yet we often fail to meet on the level in our Masonic functions and fellowship socials due to our tendency to let our Brothers' external qualifications take precedence over their internal qualifications. This also applies, oftentimes, to our choice of candidates for Masonic degrees.

Indeed, dear brethren, there is a need for us to recapture the spirit of the ancient fellowship. There is a need for us to be more imbued than before with the principles of goodness, truth and fidelity so that we will not merely give lip service to, but rather constantly live by, our claim that "... hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us; sincerity and plain-dealing distinguish us; and with heart and tongue, we join in promoting each other's welfare and rejoicing in each other's prosperity."

We need not belabor the all-important point that Masonic Charity begins at home. There needs, as Brother Pike has put it, to be much more of the spirit of the of the ancient fellowship among us. There needs, as the late MW Camilo Osias, PGM, has phrased it, to be "more Masonry among Masons." There needs to be more of Masonic Charity within the Craft and within our widespread Masonic Family. Then and only then can we claim that Freemasonry is a potent contributor to the harmony and progress of our local and national communities. Then and only then can we really focus our attention on taking the lead in the building up, on this planet, of the Temple of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

Masonic Charity, in other words, moves, or should move, in concentric circles – from ourselves to our families, our Lodges, the Masonic fraternity, our neighbors, our local communities, our country, and the world. - eF. R. eN

Masonic Charity is swift of foot, ready of hand, in the cause of a common humanity. it writes a Brother's vices in water and his virtues in enduring brass. it is that Charity of which He who spake as never man spake was the illustrious exemplar.

MASONRY IS USEFUL TO ALL MEN

by Brother Albert Pike

Masonry is useful to all men:

To the learned, because it affords them the opportunity of exercising their talents upon subjects eminently worthy of their attention;

To the illiterate, because it offers them important instruction;

To the young, because it presents them with salutary precepts and good examples, and accustoms them to reflect on the proper mode of living;

To the man of the world, whom it furnishes with noble and useful recreation;

To the traveler, whom it enables to find friends and brothers in countries where else he would be isolated and solitary;

To the worthy man in misfortune, to whom it gives assistance;

To the afflicted, on whom it lavishes consolation;

To the charitable man, whom it enables to do more good, by uniting with those who are charitable like himself; and

To all who have souls capable of appreciating its importance, and of enjoying the charms of a friendship founded on the same principles of religion, morality and philanthropy.

MASONIC WAGES
Edited by VW Rudy L. Ong, PDDGM

Who Owns the Bags?

by Bro. Celestino Ko
Labong Lodge No. 59

Brotherly love, relief and truth. These tenets of Masonry are as ageless in their relevance and their workings so full of surprises. Amidst these fast-paced times of modernization and the cynicism that they breed, adherence to brotherly love, relief and truth by Masons constitute an act of faith. That is why when our Masonic way of life unexpectedly comes to the surface in the little acts of goodness, they become symbolic "Wages" to our labors and the joy they bring must be communicated to the brethren at large so that the faith is sustained. ***The Cabletow*** *therefore encourages the brethren to write to us their experiences so that they can become the corn, wine and oil to our daily lives – Editors.*

As an enthusiastic newly raised young Mason in 1985, I would habitually plaster Square and Compass stickers to windshields, equipment, folders and almost any surface I can get my hands on. The time came when my limping arthritic elderly mother was on a stopover at the Kennedy Airport in New York on her way home. She was with a year-old niece and my 15-year-old brother. My brother was carrying several bags while my mother was carrying a crying baby and pulling about a heavy wheeled suitcase. Suddenly a Caucasian–looking airport staff appeared with an electric golf cart and insisted that they be assisted and that it was for free. After all four of them were settled and moving along, my brother asked why they were being given that special treatment. Instead of answering, the man asked who owned all the bags. My brother said that they belonged to his brother. The man smiled and said, "He is my brother also, and so his family gets a free ride." My brother must have looked confused as the man pointed to the baggage. Without exception, the pieces of baggage were all plastered with Square and Compass stickers.

PSALM 133 AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO US

by J. Flor R. Nicolas, PM (#148)

Psalm 133, the passage to which the Holy Bible is opened upon the altar during the Entered Apprentice degree and which is a song of ascents attributed to David King of Israel, conveys significant instructions whereby each one of us may build his future spiritual, moral and Masonic edifice (his own self) into one whose various parts fit with such exact nicety that it has more the appearance of the handiwork of the GAOTU than that of human hands. How important it is, then, that we take a good second look at the psalm!

The Psalm's Thesis Statement

The psalmist expresses his thesis or controlling idea in the first sentence: "Behold, how good (meaning godly since the word *good* comes from *God*) and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" This exclamation shows that the psalmist rejoiced greatly when he saw the Israelite families that had returned from a protracted exile in Egypt living in and about Jerusalem, crowning the tops of its five mountains, commonly called the mountains of Zion, or spreading down their slopes like precious oil, like heaven-sent dew. He viewed the compact settlement of the returned exiles as a striking evidence of God's blessing.

He develops his thesis statement through the effective use of similes, thereby pointing up the benefits of Brotherly Love, one of the principal tenets of our ancient and honorable Fraternity and the cornerstone of its philosophy.

To Dwell Together in Brotherly Love and Unity Is Godly!

Masonry, decidedly, upholds the thesis statement of Psalm 133. In fact, it stresses that harmony is the strength and support of all societies, especially of ours.

To demonstrate that harmony is the special strength and support of our Fraternity, we must be actively involved in the affairs of our Blue Lodges, Masonic Districts and Grand Lodge.

Specifically, we should regularly attend stated meetings because to dwell together in brotherly love and unity sanctifies us in the eyes of God. The sight of the three great lights of Masonry on the altar should remind us of what we came here to do, viz., to learn to make our moral sense and reason subdue our appetites and passions, or to let the spiritual and divine in us have control over the material and sensual, and to improve ourselves in Masonry. Besides,

through constant interaction with our fellows and brethren, we strengthen the indissoluble chain of sincere affection which links us together "into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree." (*MM Monitor*, p. 27).

When we attend stated meetings, we must, of course, bring nothing offensive or defensive into the Lodge whereby its peace and harmony might be disturbed; for it is the duty of each one of us to help build the temple of Masonic Brotherhood. This duty requires us to put into consistent application our avowal or profession that we meet one another as brothers on the level of honesty and understanding, act by the plumb of uprightness in our several stations before God and man, and part on the square of truth and morality.

This duty is, however, hard to perform. But we know that "when human strength and wisdom fail, we should ever remember that divine assistance is vouchsafed us through the medium of prayer...." (*Ibid.*, p. 49). That is why, toward the end of every stated meeting, we pray thus: "May the blessing of Heaven rest upon us and all regular Masons! May Brotherly Love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us! Amen." (*Ibid.*, pp. 72-73).

After the stated meeting, or any other Masonic assembly, we go forth into the world "out there," armed with our Fraternity's philosophy and teachings, warmed by the sincere affection we have for one another, and possessed of renewed resolve to ever walk and act as just and upright Masons – men to whom others may look for example and inspiration; men who others will say are men of honor, virtue and charitable feelings; men who "practice out of the Lodge those great moral duties which are inculcated in it, and with reverence study and obey the laws which Thou has given us in Thy Holy Word...." (*Ibid.*, p. 72).

Yes, it is incumbent upon each one of us to practice out of the Lodge those great moral duties which are inculcated in it. This obligation calls to mind the following statement of Ill. Albert Pike:

"The natural work of Masonry is practical life; the use of all the faculties in their proper spheres, and for their natural function. Love of truth, justice and generosity, as attributes of God, must appear in a life marked by these qualities; that is the only effectual ordinance of Masonry. ...The natural form of Masonry is goodness, morality, living a true, just affectionate, self-faithful life, from the motive of a good man. It is loyal obedience to God's law." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 162).

In-between stated meetings or other Masonic assemblies, therefore, we should also perform our obligation to reverently study and obey the laws which God has given us in the Volume of the Sacred Law.

We should, moreover, never lose sight of our charge to "be faithful, be just, be true and convince the world, by your actions, that, upon becoming a mm, you

have become a better man. Retain, I entreat you, that goodness of heart, that purity of intention and that love of virtue, which we think you now possess and of which this spotless vestment (the lambskin or white linen apron) wherewith you are now girded is at once the emblem, the badge and the reward." (*MM Monitor*, p. 66).

In fine, in-between meetings or other Masonic assemblies, we should zealously and faithfully do whatever is required by duty, and by the good of our fellows, our country, and mankind.

Individually and collectively, we should, in-between stated meetings or other Masonic assemblies, maintain in their fullest splendor the Masonic ornaments of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Individually and collectively, we should take the responsibility of practicing and disseminating Brotherly Love; in other words, we should use our symbolic trowels more proficiently and more frequently than before. Masonry is, after all, philanthropic; for it recognizes the great truth that all men are of the same origin, have common interests, and should co-operate together to the same end. (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 221).

Individually and collectively, we should, furthermore, pursue more earnestly and more vigorously the great aim we have in view: "to soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds," for to relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent upon us Masons in particular. (*EAM Monitor*, p. 43). Every one of us is obliged to do all that may be in his power in the good work of improving and informing as well as protecting the people; making their physical condition better, relieving their miseries, supplying their wants, and ministering to their necessities. (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 180).

There is no gainsaying the fact that, as Ill. Pike has emphatically put it, "There will always be in this world wrongs to forgive, suffering to alleviate, sorrows asking for sympathy, necessities and destitution to relieve, and ample occasion for the exercise of active charity and beneficence." (Ibid., p. 176).

We have, in addition, ample opportunity for the active exercise of the twin principle of goodness and truth.

We must not only be true unto all men, particularly our brethren in Masonry, but also in all things, and we must also be earnest in doing whatever it is our duty to do. Besides, we must see to it that no man should repent that he has relied upon our resolve, our profession and our word. (*Ibid.*).

Early in our Masonic career, we were taught that truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue; and, as we may have already known, truth develops itself in different modes, such as frankness, reliability, sincerity, straight-forwardness and plain-dealing. (*Ibid.*, p. 184).

We should, therefore, make sure that no one must repent that he has relied upon

our resolve, profession or word that "...while influenced by this principle (of goodness and truth), hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us; sincerity and plain-dealing distinguish us; and with heart and tongue, we join in promoting each other's welfare and rejoicing in each other's prosperity." (EAM Monitor, p. 46). We have been taught, moreover, to write a Brother's virtues in enduring brass and his vices in water.

Oftentimes, however, we do not practice what we profess, nor apply what we have learned.

Let us, then weigh and consider, chew and digest, and then put into consistent application the following reminders from Ill. Albert Pike:

1. "Suffer others to be praised in your presence, and entertain their good and glory with delight; but at no hand disparage them, or lessen the report, or make an objection; and think not the advancement of thy brother is a lessening of thy worth." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 120).

2. "We should either be more severe with ourselves, or less so to others, and consider that whatever good any one can think or say of us, we can tell him of many unworthy and foolish and perhaps worse actions of ours, any one of which, done by another, would be enough, with us, to destroy his reputation." (*Ibid.*).

3. "Masons must be kind one to another. ...There needs to be much more of the spirit of the ancient fellowship among us, more tenderness for each other's faults, more forgiveness, more solicitude for each other's improvement and good fortune; somewhat of brotherly feeling, that it be not shame to use the word brother." (*Ibid.*, p.122)

4. "The duty of the Mason is to endeavor to make man think better of his neighbor; to quiet, instead of aggravating, difficulties; to bring together those who are severed or estranged; to keep friends from becoming foes, and to persuade foes to become friends. To do this, he must needs control his own passions, and be not rash and hasty, nor swift to take offence, nor easy to be angered." (*Ibid.*, p. 123).

5. "See, therefore, that first controlling your own temper, and governing your own passions, you fit yourself to keep peace and harmony among other men, and especially the brethren. Above all , remember that Masonry is the realm of peace, and that 'among Masons there must be no dissension, but only that noble emulation which can best work and best agree.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 124)

In-between stated meetings or other Masonic assemblies, we need, moreover, to be more faithful and more zealous in observing the five points of fellowship, ever remembering that "to go upon a brother's errand or to his relief, even barefoot and upon flinty ground; to remember him in your supplications to the Deity; to clasp him to your heart, and protect him against malice and evil-speaking; to uphold him when about to stumble and fall; and to give him prudent,

honest and friendly counsel – these are duties plainly written upon the pages of God's great code of law, and first among the ordinances of Masonry." (Ibid., p. 137).

Yes, aside from practicing all the teachings and principles of Masonry, particularly Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, we should disseminate them among our fellowmen, especially our fellow Filipinos, as widely as we can, if we do agree with Ill. Albert Pike that "... if men were all Masons, and obeyed with all their heart her mild and gentle teachings, that world would be a paradise; while intolerance and persecution make of it a hell. For this is the Masonic Creed: BELIEVE, in God's Infinite Benevolence, Wisdom and Justice: HOPE, for the final triumph of Good over Evil, and for Perfect Harmony as the final result of all the concords and discords of the Universe: and be CHARITABLE as God is, towards the unfaith, the errors, the follies, and the faults of men: for all make one great brotherhood." (Ibid., p. 531).

In-between stated meetings and other Masonic assemblies, we are bound by both duty and honor "to be faithful to every trust; to support the dignity of your character on all occasions; and strenuously to enforce, by perfect and example, a steady obedience to the tenets of Freemasonry..." (MM Monitor, pp. 64-65).

We should, moreover, get actively involved in the rites, services, assemblies and other activities of our respective churches, thereby showing to all and sundry that, contrary to what our critics and detractors have been spreading in their vilification campaigns, we are not devil-worshippers, nor atheists, nor yet against any religion, but rather firm believers in the existence of God, Who is our father; Who has a paternal interest in our welfare and improvement; Who has given us powers, by means of which we may escape from sin and ruin; Who has destined us to a future life of endless progress toward perfection and a knowledge of Himself. (Morals and Dogma, p. 195).

Since offense is the best defense, and since we should endeavor not only to preserve unsullied the reputation of our Fraternity, but also to remove every aspersion against it, we should also engage in our own information drives, thereby raising the level of the general public's awareness and understanding of Masonry.

There are a lot of things we can tell others, including our critics and detractors, about Masonry and Masons.

We may tell them, for instance, that our firm belief in the existence of God and His Providence, as well as in the immortality of the human soul, enables us to "live calmly, endure patiently, labor resolutely, deny ourselves cheerfully, hope steadfastly, and be conquerors in the great struggle of life." (Ibid.).

We may also tell them that we can live happily by embracing and living by the great truths which Masonry teaches because they are contained within the religions of the world and, therefore, may

be embraced by a man of whatever faith while he practices his own religion.

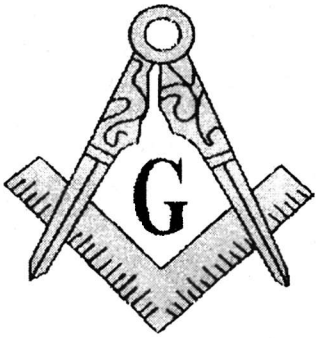
We may, moreover, tell non-Masons, including our critics and detractors, that the statement "I put my trust in God" is Masonry's protest against the belief in a cruel, angry, and revengeful God, to be feared and not reverenced by His creatures (Ibid., p. 196).

We may, furthermore, tell them that we go to church and participate in the rites, services or other activities therein held because we believe that although God does not dwell in edifices made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people; that He has promised that when we come together to seek Him, to acknowledge our sins, and to pray for one another, He will meet with us by His Spirit; that, similarly, Jesus has declared that where we are gathered in His name, there He is in our midst; and that when we assemble to worship God, we should put away every evil thing and adore Him in spirit and truth an in the beauty of holiness.

We may tell others, in addition, that we demonstrate a similar attitude and behavior in Lodge, which shall not stand open unless the Volume of the Sacred Law is opened upon its altar, its pages displaying the proper passage to the degree the Lodge is working in. The open VSL signifies that by the light of its teachings we should regulate our conduct since it is the rule and guide of our faith.

(to be continued)

The duty of the Mason is to endeavor to make man think better of his neighbor; to quiet, instead of aggravating, difficulties; to bring together those who are severed or estranged; to keep friends from becoming foes, and to persuade foes to become friends. To do this, he must needs control his own passions, and be not rash and hasty, nor swift to take offence, nor easy to be angered.
-ALBERT PIKE



BECAUSE WE ARE FREEMASONS

by Flor R. Nicolas, PM (#148)

Because we are Freemasons, our motivation is to lead a rich, full and meaningful because God-centered and charitable life. We vowed, upon being admitted into the fellowship of the Craft, to dedicate and devote our lives to the service of the Grand Architect of the Universe and to the welfare of humanity, as well as to be true and faithful Brothers to fellow Freemasons whithersoever dispersed, with whom we are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection, mutual care, and loving protection. With God's blessing and by the influence of the pure principles of Freemasonry, we strive to display the beauties of holiness, to the honor of God's holy name.

Because we are Freemasons, foremost among our many duties is to love God above all things, because He is the fountain of all things, of all truth, of all justice, and of all activity. Our faith in God is unshakable. God is, as symbolized by our Fraternity's universal emblem, the Square and Compasses with the letter G at the center, the focus of our lives. Never do we enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of God. We implore Him to steady us in every trial and tribulation, as well as to guide us in every thought, word and deed, so that we will the better be enabled to adjust these to right reason and justice. We worship the Deity in all His manifestations, and we sing His praise in every manner.

Because we are Freemasons, we love our honor next to God since it is the only power that will oblige us to be truthful, just and industrious. Our constant endeavor is, therefore, to wear our lambskin or white linen aprons, our Masonic badges, with pleasure to ourselves and honor to the Craft. The apron is our "monitor"; its pure and spotless surface is, to us, "an ever-present reminder of an emblematical or unblemished purity of life and rectitude of conduct, (as well as) a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for purer actions, and for greater achievements."

Because we are Freemasons, we make proficient use of our symbolic working tools. One of these is the 24-Inch Gauge. It constantly reminds us to devote one part of every day to singing God's praise; another part to unselfishly serving society or community, readily responding

to the needy calls of our fellowmen, and flying fast to the relief of our distressed worthy Brother Masons; still another part to responsibly and amorously attending to the needs of our respective families; and the rest to being useful to ourselves. Another working tool we make proficient use of is the Common Gavel, which teaches us the important lesson of "divesting our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our minds as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Because we are Freemasons, we do not lose sight of our long-term goal, which is to build ourselves, "without sound of ax, hammer or any tool of iron," into magnificent spiritual buildings "agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the Universe in the great book(s) of nature and revelation," so that their various parts will fit with such exact nicety that they have more the appearance of the handiwork of the Supreme Architect of the Universe than that of human hands. Our continuous labor is, in other words, to develop ourselves from rough to perfect ashlars, to become Inward Masters, or to attain our own perfection or excellence, by means whereof we will contribute to the progress of mankind. This goal or work is impressed upon our minds and hearts through various Masonic statements and principles. Brother Albert Pike, for instance, reminds us of the symbolism and teaching of the Compass and the Square, upon which, as well as upon the Volume of the Sacred Law, we have taken so many obligations. He has stated:

"For the Apprentice, the points of the Compass are beneath the Square. For the Fellow-Craft, one is above and one beneath. For the Master (Mason), both are dominant, and have rule, control and empire over the symbol of the earthly and the material.

"Freemasonry is the subjugation of the Human that is in man by the Divine; the conquest of the Appetites and Passions by the Moral Sense and the Reason; a continual effort, struggle, and warfare of the Spiritual against the Material and Sensual. (*Morals and Dogma*, or *MD* for short, pp. 854-855).

Yes, **because we are Freemasons**, we strive incessantly and vigorously to make that which in us is spiritual win mastery over that which is material and sensual, so that in each of us also, "as in the Universe which God governs, Harmony and Beauty may be the result of a just equilibrium." (*Ibid.*).

This, decidedly, requires self-discipline. We have got to "observe 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 ourselves to exert the talents wherewith God has blest us as well to His glory as the welfare of our fellowmen."

Because we are Freemasons, we have got to give heed to this proclamation of our ancient and honorable Fraternity: "... there exists a higher and more secret path of life than that which we normally

tread, and that when the outer world and its pursuits and rewards lose their attractiveness for us and prove insufficient to our deeper needs, as sooner or later they will, we are compelled to turn back upon ourselves, to seek and knock at the door of the world within; and it is upon this inner world, and the path to and through it, that Masonry promises light, charts the way, and indicates the qualifications and conditions of progress. **This is the sole aim and intention of Masonry**." (W.L. Wilmshurst, *The Meaning of Masonry*, pp. 12-13).

Because the Volume of the Sacred Law is, together with the Square and Compasses, a great light of Freemasonry, we make optimal use of it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and as the repository of divine precepts by which we regulate our actions. We should not pay mere lip service to, but rather practice, what we prayerfully pronounce toward the end of every stated meeting: *"... wilt Thou be pleased so to influence our hearts and minds that we may, each one of us, practice out of the Lodge those great moral duties which are inculcated in it, and with reverence study and obey the laws which Thou hast given us in Thy Holy Word..."* (Emphasis added).

Because we are Freemasons, we have got to responsibly perform our various duties – our duties to the Lodge, the Masonic Fraternity, the family, the community, the country and the world. We should perform them, not in the hope or expectation of earthly rewards or honors, but rather in the simple expectation of personal satisfaction. Our duties form the path that leads to the object to our quest as Masons: the **True Word**. (See Rex R. Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light*, pp. 17-18.)

Because we are Freemasons, we are quite familiar with our duties to the Lodge, the Masonic District, our Grand Lodge, and the entire Masonic Family. But let us re-view some of these duties.

Because we are Freemasons, we manifest our fidelity to our principles by strictly observing the Constitution of our Fraternity; by adhering to the Ancient Landmarks thereof; and by refusing to recommend anyone to a participation in our privileges, unless we have strong reasons to believe that, by a similar fidelity, he will ultimately reflect honor on our ancient Institution.

Because we are Freemasons, it is at once our duty and honor to support the dignity of our character, as such, on all occasions, ever bearing in mind the perfect points of entrance particularly in strange and mixed companies, as well as to strenuously enforce, by precept and example, a steady obedience to our Fraternity's tenets. We must convince the world, by our actions, that Freemasonry has made us increasingly better men – men who serve as example and inspiration to others; men who others will say are possessed of honor, virtue and charitable feelings; men chastened by temperance, supported by Fortitude, and directed by Prudence; men who are directed by Reason, Justice, and the Plumb to walk uprightly in our several stations before God and man; men whose

lives are admirably adorned by Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; men who are always on the Square because we make our thoughts as straight as we reasonably can, we are unfazed by the opinions of others, whatever their social status may be, and we respect the viewpoint of everyone, having been taught by our Fraternity that every other man has the same right to his opinion and faith that we have to ours; men who are able to meet others, particularly our Brothers in Freemasonry, on the Level.

Because we are Freemasons, we have been charged to be our Brother's keepers. We should lend the attentive ear to the wise counsel of a more experienced and knowledgeable Brother, as well as to whatever problem or concern a distressed worthy Brother entrusts to us. We should use judiciously the instructive tongue to correct the irregularities of our less informed Brethren and to caution the inexperienced among us against any breach of fidelity. All of us must safely lodge in our faithful breasts the mysteries of our Fraternity. We must, moreover, be so regular in our conduct as to remove any aspersion against our venerable Institution. Never should we suffer any consideration, financial or otherwise, to induce us toward unmasonic conduct. We should, at all times, display the discretion, the virtue and the dignity that become a worthy and exemplary Freemason. We ourselves must strenuously support the Craft's laws and regulations, and we must always be ready to assist in seeing them duly executed.

Because we are Freemasons, we are never to palliate nor aggravate our Brethren's offenses. We should, instead, strictly observe the Five Points of Fellowship – going upon a Brother's errand or to his relief, even barefoot and upon flinty ground; remembering him in our supplications to the Deity; clasping him to our hearts, and protecting him against malice and evil-speaking; upholding him when about to stumble and fall; and giving him prudent, honest and friendly counsel. These duties, are, after all, according to Brother Pike, "plainly written upon the pages of God's great code of law" and they are "first among the ordinances of Masonry." (MD, p. 137)

But, of course, **because we are Freemasons**, we have duties to perform in other arenas than the Lodge, the Masonic District, the Grand Lodge, and the whole Masonic Fraternity. We have to responsibly perform these other duties if we are to be true to our families, our friends, our communities (local, national and international), and our God. We must do, earnestly and vigorously, whatever may be required of us by duty, and by the good of our fellows, our country, and mankind (*MD*, p. 116).

Because we are Freemasons, we will do all in our power to be exemplary husbands and fathers, active members of our respective religions, and dynamic leaders of our communities. By direct exertion and cooperation, we exert effort "to improve and inform as well as protect the people (in our communities) to better their physical condition, relieve their miseries, supply their wants, and minister to their necessities..." (*MD*, p.

180)

Because we are Freemasons, we are cognizant of the fact that, as Brother Pike once more has phrased it, "We are not born for ourselves alone; and our country claims her share, and our friends their share of us. As all that the earth produces is created for the use of man, so men are created for the sake of men, that they may mutually do good to one another... sometimes by receiving, sometimes by giving, and sometimes to cement human society by arts, by industry, and by our resources." (*MD*, p. 120). We also see eye to eye with Brother Pike that "There will always be in this world wrongs to forgive, suffering to alleviate, sorrow asking for sympathy, necessities and destitution to relieve, and ample occasion for the exercise of active charity and beneficence (*MD*, p. 147).

Because we are Freemasons, or Initiates of Freemasonry, which is "the patron of the oppressed, as it is the comforter and consoler of the unfortunate and wretched," which is "the advocate of the common people in those things which concern the best interest of mankind," which "hates insolent power and impudent usurpation," which "pities the poor, the sorrowing and the disconsolate," and which "endeavors to raise and improve the ignorant, the sunken and the degraded," let us roll up our sleeves and then WORK, actively and earnestly, for the benefit of our Brethren, our Craft, our country, and mankind, all for God's greater honor and glory. (*MD*, p. 152). Let us proficiently use our working tools, as well as Freemasonry's lessons of practical morality and sublime teachings of religious philosophy, for building its symbolic temple of liberty, equality and fraternity in the souls of men, particularly our countrymen, and nations, especially our very own nation.

Let us do all this *because we are Freemasons both in name and by nature*, and, as such, *"diamonds among gems."*

Masonry is not a secret society, but rather, a revealer of the secrets of man since time immemorial. Since this publication is a window for Philippine Masonry, pass on copies of issues thereof to your kin, friends and associates.

Masonic Brotherly Love

by WB Jesse D. Alto, PM

What is Masonic brotherly love? Why not just brotherly love, or just simply love? "Masonic brotherly love" is, indeed, a very profound and especial topic among Masons.

Let us try to understand the three terms one at a time.

Love

Oftentimes we hear a woman say, "I love that man, provided he loves me, too." Such a statement indicates that ordinary love is personal, feeble, fallable and even selfish. Impersonal or selfless love is, on the other hand, a godlike quality possessed by all beings, although it is more pronounced in man. It is the force that brings diverse activities into oneness. It is the cement that unifies the seemingly diverse manifestations of the universe. It is the force that unites the seemingly separate but actually inseparable beings in the universe.

Love manifests itself as selfless service to all men and other beings. It is understanding, compassion, tolerance and the realization that all are spiritual beings that manifest themselves in different states of consciousness. It is the realization that the state of consciousness of one being differs from that of any other, although the spirit that ensouls them is one.

Love is not lust, nor greed, nor manipulation. It is service; hence, selfless, kind and tolerant, particularly of the weakness of others. Such a love unifies and heals, tending to make men live together in peace and happiness.

Brotherhood

Although we do not have the same human parents, yet we call one another brothers. And the respect, care and assistance we provide to one another is indicative of a much higher and deeper because spiritual relationship.

The process each of us underwent to become a Mason symbolizes the realization that man's true nature is spiritual, and that his physical, emotional and mental faculties are just vehicles of the consciousness which is to be used in the gradual progress toward perfection.

Spiritual brotherhood transcends material riches, possessions and honors. That is why each one of us comes to

this world naked and the body of each will return to dust.

Human brotherhood is spiritual, for all men are brothers under the spiritual fatherhood of God.

Mason

A Mason is, or should be, interested in the realization of his true spiritual nature. His quest is, symbolically speaking, to rebuild himself into a magnificent temple, similar to King Solomon's Temple, the various parts of which fitted with such exact nicety that it had more the appearance of the handiwork of the Supreme Architect of the Universe than that of human hands. He strives to proficiently use his working tools and the three great lights of Masonry as guides toward attaining his goal of human perfection.

The three Lights of the Lodge are, to the Mason, reminders that he should persistently pursue the arduous path to perfection. The Junior Warden serves as a reminder that the Mason should improve his emotional faculties by translating personal and selfish love to impersonal, selfless love of all beings. This kind of love is godlike; it is dedicated to the service of mankind, to the greater glory of God.

The Senior Warden serves as a reminder that the Mason should know what he really is. Indeed, Masonry urges each of its initiates to conform to this statement of the Lord Jesus: "Man, know thyself." This, too, was the dictum of Socrates. The Senior Warden is, in effect, the symbol of knowledge and understanding of man's nature and the role that the Mason will, or should, play in its grand drama of the Universe.

The Worshipful Master serves as a reminder that the Mason should use his physical, emotional and mental faculties toward attaining the perfection of his soul, and that he must have the will power to direct himself toward that goal. But if human strength and wisdom fail, he must, like the Lord Jesus, submit himself to God's will, saying, "Not my will, but Thine, be done!"

The three Lights of the Lodge, which are the pillars thereof, stand for beauty, strength and wisdom. They are also the equilateral triangle of justice, love and wisdom.

How fortunate are those Masons who know and persistently strive toward the main goal of membership in the Masonic fraternity!

Note: This is an adapted version of the short talk WB Alto delivered during the May 2001 stated meeting of Walana Lodge No. 13

Masonry is not secretive. Pass on this copy of THE CABLETOW to others!

THE TYLER AND HIS SWORD

by VW Pyke L. Alibadbad, PJGL

"As the sword is placed in the hands of the Tyler to enable him effectually to guard against the approach of cowans and eavesdroppers, and suffer none to pass or repass but such as are duly qualified, so should it admonish us to guard over our thoughts, a watch to our lips and post a sentinel over our actions, thereby preventing the approach of every unworthy thought and deed, and preventing consciences void of offenses toward God and man."

Thus says the Installing Officer as the Tyler is presented his jewel and implement of his office and led out of the door to the anteroom by the Master of Ceremonies.

In our Grand Jurisdiction, the Tyler is the last Lodge Officer to be installed, and he is placed outside the door to allow no one to pass but those duly qualified.

Our Ordinances also provide that any Master Mason in good standing, whether or not a member of the Lodge, may be appointed Tyler.

But some Lodges falsely claim that tradition dictates that the Immediate Past Master be appointed Tyler. Isn't it quite demeaning for the Immediate Past Master to be placed out of the Lodge right after having served the highest station? His presence in the Lodge may even be so critical and necessary as to assist and guide the new Master, especially on consultations regarding continuing Lodge programs and activities begun in his term.

Maybe the practice of appointing the IPM as Tyler by some Lodge or Lodges has long been in existence and has been adopted by other Lodges as a matter of its common usage. But it is not a general Masonic tradition. Such a practice is nowhere to be found in our regulations, statutes or ancient landmarks. There are even Lodges in which a Tyler serves as such for many years without being changed. But there must be wisdom in the explicit provision in Article II, Section I of the Uniform Code of By-Laws that any Master Mason in good standing, whether or not a member of the Lodge, qualifies to be appointed as Tyler.

Before anything else, however, let us refresh our minds about who the Tyler is, how he got his name, why he carries a sword (not a truncheon or a setting maul), and his other Lodge duties.

Origin of the Name Tiler or Tyler

Masonic records show that the name Tiler first appeared in Anderson's Constitutions of 1738. Some authorities assert that the operative Masons tiled or covered the roof of a building; the one who covered, concealed or protected the

Lodge was, therefore, called Tiler or Tyler. Others say that a stone cutter in France was called "tailleur de Pierre," and this became corrupted into Tiler. The latter explanation, however, has not received much approval.

The Tyler's Old Uniforms

Tylers of old were a class by themselves and wore coats or uniforms distinct from the rest. A Lodge tyler in 18th-century Britain would appear startling or ludicrous in this millennium. The Tyler of one Lodge in Scotland, for example, wore a Turkish costume and carried a scimitar instead of a sword. Other Tyler uniforms were so odd-looking, to say the least. They ranged from a combination of three-coroneted hats or caps with colorful coats or with lustrous black cloaks with the skull and crossbones and other Cabalistic symbols of the Craft. This was at a time when to badger and scare the candidate was an accepted practice and the Tyler was expected to play his part.

The Tyler's Sword

The use of the sword, as well as the office of the Grand Sword Bearer, is, according to Henry Coil, an eminent American. Masonic writer and author, an English innovation, which is entirely without support in Masonic symbolism in any way appropriate to a Lodge officer or member of Lodge. A flaming sword or a sword pointing to a naked breast hardly warrants the sword's presence as a weapon, Coil contends.

The office of the Grand Sword Bearer was created in 1731, when the Duke of Norfolk presented to the Grand Lodge of England the sword of Gustavus Adolfus of Sweden "to be the Grand Master's Sword of State in the future." George Moody, Sword Cutler to the King, was, accordingly, appointed first Grand Sword Bearer of the Grand Lodge.

Coil further states that the symbolism is heraldic, chivalric and feudal, and that it is appropriate to British political and social tradition but not to Freemasonry. He adds that the office was inexcusably copied by American Grand Lodges, evidently without much circumspection, there being here not even an historical incident to support the incongruity.

The introduction of the use of the sword in the Lodge and even the creation of the position of the Tyler can, therefore, be deduced to have emanated after the creation of the position of the Grand Sword Bearer in 1731. In the absence of records to the contrary, this assumption is buttressed by the Anderson's Constitutions of 1738, which first reported the position of Tyler. There was even one English Lodge that never reported such a position until much later.

Formerly, the form of the Tyler's sword was carefully specified as a flaming blade or wavy sword very similar to the wavy "kampilan" of the Moro tribes of Mindanao. It was in allusion to the flaming sword in the Bible, held by the Cherubim guarding the gates of the Garden of Eden after the expulsion therefrom of Adam and Eve.

But the Lodges became short of flaming swords; so, they used instead ordinary straight blade swords. In still more modern times, some have discontinued

the use of the Tyler's sword altogether. Many Grand Jurisdictions have ceased to use it. In New York, Virginia and some other jurisdictions in the USA, however, the Tyler still carries a sword.

As Entered Apprentices, we were informed by the Lecturer that we had been divested of all minerals and metals because we should bring nothing offensive or defensive into the Lodge whereby its peace and harmony might be disturbed. A sword, therefore, has no place in the Lodge. In fact, the carrying by the Tyler of a sword during installation or some other formal ceremonies is a custom becoming less common. In any case, the Tyler is stationed without the Lodge's door. Even the original use of a sword as sharp instrument on the first admission of a candidate into the Lodge appeared inconsistent with the EAM lecture. Hence, the sword has been substituted by the compasses.

This inconsistency having been recognized, the sword has, therefore, aptly become more of a decorative implement and more of a symbol than a weapon used for inflicting wound or pain. It is made more symbolic as it is used "effectually", not "effectively" for guarding against cowans and eavesdroppers; for clearly "effectively" would imply force and physical use of the implement for inflicting pain or wound upon those who are not duly qualified. Moreover, the sword is symbolically used "to admonish us to set a guard over our thoughts, a watch to our lips," etc. This symbolic use of the sword applies not only to the Tyler but to any other Mason. No other implement at the Lodge entrance could provide a more appropriate symbol to effectually divest us of unworthy thoughts and subdue every discordant passion

The Tyler's Duties, Responsibilities

To tile a Lodge is to post the Tyler, who must be a Master Mason in good standing, outside the outer door. He is instructed to keep off cowans and eavesdroppers and other unauthorized persons with the use of the (flaming) sword. There has been no known incident, however, in which a Tyler was forced to cut or pierce anyone. The Tyler must be a Master Mason, even if the Lodge works in a lower degree than that of Master Mason.

The Tyler is required to have a good memory for names and faces since he regularly has to identify those who come to the Lodge. He is often a Past Master, and is generally one very well informed on Masonic law and custom. He should, moreover, be genial and patient, but not effusive.

In the olden times, the Tyler administered the oath to a visiting Brother or Brethren desiring admission in the Tyler's room. Hence, it has been called the Tyler's Oath. Even now the oath is sometimes administered by a Committee on Examination, in the Tyler's room but more often at the Altar.

Specifically, under our Ordinances, the Tyler, in addition to his necessary duties, is to serve all notices and summonses and perform such other services as may be required of him, by the Lodge. For these services, he shall receive such compensation as the Lodge may direct.

WHYS AND WHEREFORES

by Norman B. Leeper

The purpose of this effort is to take a look at the institution of Masonry to see the whys and wherefores of our present circumstance. To see why we are in a state of decline, and what we are doing to correct the situation.

Let's begin by asking a question. What would such notables as John Desaguliers (third Grand Master), William Preston, George Washington or Ben Franklin think of our Fraternity today? Surely it would not be the same as what they were used to. They met in taverns and coffeehouses. There were no lodge buildings. Lodge business was kept to a minimum. The Lodge was small (usually under 50 members). The purpose of the meeting was more for fellowship than for conferring degrees. (The ritual was simpler and proficiencies, if any, were not what they are today). They often met at a table, discussed the events of the day and conducted business while eating and consuming a pint or two.

In brief, the atmosphere of a lodge meeting was entirely different. The principles of yesteryear were the same, but it was the message conveyed, not to the manner of conveyance, that was important. The spirit of the lodge meant more than the advancement to the next degree. It was the building of the mystic tie, that fraternal bonding which we so admired at our initiation into the craft.

What Happened?

Our meetings are in Masonic buildings traditionally called temples (a very suspicious term to non-Masons). Our lodge often numbers over 200 members. We assemble to confer degrees and to conduct monthly meetings to ballot on candidates and pay our bills. Most everything we do, including our dinners, has some ritual. Even on festive occasions, we regularly and ritualistically introduce everyone.

Masonry still has the mystic tie. But that special feeling of fraternal bonding so admired by Masons as individuals is soon lost on the new candidate as his presence in lodge is ignored in the urgent push for rote proficiency. We are losing our fellowship to the pagan god of ritual because "We've always done it that way."

None of this is news. Masons have noted the decline for at least 40 years, and the changes that have taken place have always been hard won. Our ritualistic approach to becoming Masons, our rote proficiencies, our reluctance (often outright refusal) to change has created Masons that are not able to discuss what it is to be a Mason.

Remember the 1989 Conference of Grand Masters? A "grand" study took place that told us, in professional terms,

that we are largely unknown to about 45% of the male population.

Of the total male population, only 2% have an interest in becoming members of the fraternity; 23% might be interested and 75% have no interest at all.

The reasons given for lack of interest: too busy (61%); other recreational activities (56%); work (52%); too much time away from family (49%) and we are a secret society. Moreover, while respected, we are viewed as an old man's club, too ritualistic, without a community purpose, lacking family (wives) involvement and boring.

These are different times. Our children and especially our grandchildren, do not think like the generation that makes up this fraternal organization. Television and computers have provided the younger generation with information that we have spent a lifetime acquiring. The values we cherish are not viewed the same way. While we grew up trusting government, schools, churches and our heroes, the younger generation is generally cynical toward these institutions.

The younger generation has a different education and a different intelligence. To illustrate, watch something as mundane as a game show. How often is the younger generation befuddled or confused at a question we deem to be fundamentally easy? On the other hand, how often do these same contestants answer questions about entertainment or the arts about which the older generation is clueless? How often does our generation go to our children and grandchildren for help with the computer or programming the VCR? Yes, these are different times and our children possess a different intelligence and a different education. Not necessarily better (or worse) but different.

Yes, the times have changed and the fraternity has not. There have been a few token changes, but the fraternity has resisted change to the point that remedial efforts to stem the tide are not very creative. The best efforts are often of a stopgap nature and usually fail because they do not really address the issue. Instead, the solutions to Masonry's dilemma most often concern the effect that membership loss has on the finances of Masonry. That is, the loss of membership means loss of revenue. And as one sage put it, "Lodges needs funds; Grand Lodge needs grand funds."

As an aside, therein lies the root of the Shrine legislation, which eliminated membership in the York and Scottish Rite as a prerequisite to Shrine membership. The Shrine needs to stay alive. They are not getting it from Masonry because of the decline in membership; thus, in their eyes, it is time to do what has to be done... take out the middleman. Nevertheless, and make no mistake about it, the Shrine action, whether or not it is good or bad, was probably necessary. The decline of membership numbers in Masonry means loss of revenue to the Shrine and loss of revenue means loss of ability to perform its mission. And while the Shrine action may be shortsighted, it may also be the best thing that has happened to the rest of the fraternity, if

for no other reason than it serves as a "wake-up" call to our leadership.

Getting back, what does all this mean? What have we done to stem the tide?

Reduced proficiencies, shortened closings, Friend-to-Friend Programs, involvement in community programs, raising dues, and one-day classes are some examples of a more visible Masonry. Each has its failings. Each has its critics. None is a panacea, and none has stemmed the tide.

We are in a rapid state of decline and the revenue base is really hurting. But then isn't that the point? It is the loss of revenue that is driving the changes, and what are those changes? None of substance because the changes proposed skirt the real issue(s), and that issue is the inflexible method of imparting our principles. Our methodology, if the 1989 survey results are to be believed, is boring and too time-consuming, among other things. In short, we are not growing.

Let it be clear, however, that it is not the quality of our message that is failing. In a recent *Scottish Rite Journal*, Lieutenant Grand Commander Ronald Seale, SGIG – Louisiana, stated the problem in terms applicable to all of Masonry, i.e., it is the loss of relevance in Masonry that is causing our inability to stem the tide and with the loss of membership we suffer the financial woes attendant to a shrinking base of members.

He would propose that Masonry redefine itself. Namely, Masonry needs to answer the question "What are Masons?" – not in the sense of our traditional response, but in the context of current society. We need to define what we are trying to do in terms that appeal to that 2% that are interested in becoming Masons. More importantly, Masonry has got to understand the needs of the Candidate and of its members.

To reiterate, the quality of our Masonic principles is sound, but the manner in which we operate is not appealing to potential candidates or members. We need change, meaningful change. The kind of change that is visionary. We need leadership. Not the kind of leadership that is determined by ritual proficiency but the kind of leadership that is necessary to address and solve the problems of our relevancy to the current social structure within which Masonry operates.

Indiana, perhaps, may have taken a step to break some of the traditions that seemingly hold back progress. It has instituted a trial program called "Five Candidate Degree Program" as an optional manner of conferring degrees and proficiency of candidates. Up to five candidates at a time go through the three degrees. It is done in conjunction with a mentoring program, and surprise, it is successful. Indiana has taken in more new members last year than in any of the previous 20 years. And surprise again, excluding death, they have lost fewer members last year than in any of the previous 20 years. Surprise again ... they are young men.

I submit that Masonry need not change

its principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, but it does need to implement them. And Masonry does need leadership with courage to rid our mentality of meaningless anachronisms. Provide the lodges with a reasonably good plan and the only way Masons cannot succeed is for Masons not to WORK.

Isn't success usually built on WORK? What are we waiting for?

Note

Bro. Leeper is the Secretary of the Southern California Research Lodge F. & A.M. His article given above was originally printed in the September 2000 issue of the said Research Lodge's Bulletin and printed in *The Virginia Masonic Herald,* Vol. 94, No. 1, Winter 2001, pp. 17-18.

Comments on Bro. Leeper's Article

Following are some personal comments of V.W. BRO. FLORENCIO Y. SY, PDGL, of Bagumbayan Lodge No. 4, F. & A.M., on Bro. Leeper's article.

"WHYS AND WHEREFORES" - A REVIEW

I would like to share with the brethren my personal comments on some of the items raised by Bro. Leeper in his article "Whys and Wherefores."

What are Masons?

Bro. Leeper cites Lieutenant Grand Commander Ronald Seale, SGIG for Louisiana, who stated in his article in a recent *Scottish Rite Journal* that "it is the loss of relevance in Masonry that is causing our inability to stem the tide (of diminishing membership) and with the loss of membership we suffer the financial woes attendant to a shrinking base of members." Bro. Seale would propose that Masonry redefine itself, that is, answer the question "What are Masons?" in the context of current society.

This question is one of the favorites in my various lectures. As a District Grand Lecturer, I raised the query "What is Freemasonry?" and the brethren usually gave the following traditional textbook responses: (1) It is a moral science, veiled in allegory and taught by symbols only, and (2) It is a progressive moral science taught by degrees only. Hence, I asked further, "What do the two statements have in common?" and they answered, "the word *moral.*" I queried further still, "If morality is so important in Masonry, do we have a moral code to guide us? Or, can we, as mortals, come out with a moral code which closely represents the required Masonic moral values?" Subsequent queries invariably led us back to the lecture of the first

degree, specifically on the movable jewels: the rough ashlars, the perfect ashlars, and the trestleboard.

By the rude and natural state of the rough ashlar we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the perfect ashlar, of that state of perfection at which we hope at last to arrive by a *virtuous* education, *our own* endeavor and the blessings of God. But in our educational attainments – e.g., medicine, engineering, dentistry, etc., we have focused our attention on the physical sciences; these cannot be a representation of a virtuous education. Hence, we have to work toward that state of perfection on our own efforts and we have to use the tools of the Fellow Craft, the definitions of which have profound spiritual implications, for adjusting ourselves as "living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We must, in addition, endeavor to erect our spiritual building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the Universe in the great book of nature and revelation, which is our spiritual, moral and Masonic Trestle Board.

Based on the above pointers derived from the lecture of the first degree, therefore, it is clear that the "path" of Masonry is spiritual in nature. It must be mentioned that our *rude and imperfect state* cannot be corrected by the mere elevation from one degree to another. We have to evolve over time with strong adherence to the teachings and principles laid in our Masonic lectures, which in turn serve as guides for our daily reflections.

Brother Washington, Franklin and Others

At the start of his article, Bro. Leeper poses the question "What would such notables as John Desaguliers (third Grand Master), William Preston, George Washington or Ben Franklin think of our Fraternity today?" Then he points out further that the US Masonic founders had no lodge buildings, their business was short, not much proficiency, but eating and consuming a pint or two.

However, when these US founding fathers, particularly Bro. George Washington, as indicated by the Freemasonry Crystalinks network, "dedicated the US capitol, they used the Masonic symbolism. Masonic influence is evident in the architecture of Washington DC where pyramids, pillars, and numerology are repeated in nearly every official building."

In addition, even the "All Seeing Eye" in the one US dollar bill relates back to Masonic symbolism.

It is, indeed, a wonder that despite the focus of the US Masonic forebears on fellowship rather than on Masonic work, they were able to imprint a profound spiritual symbolism on the whole of Washington DC. From this we can only infer that those founding fathers had learned and understood very extensively the "speculative" and "profound" teachings of Masonry.

The Mystic Tie

Bro. Leeper states that the spirit of the lodge in yesteryears was the building of the mystic tie, "that fraternal bonding which we so admired at our initiation into the craft." Then he says that Masonry still has the mystic tie, but that special feeling of fraternal bonding so admired by Masons as individuals is soon lost on the new candidate as his presence in lodge is ignored in the urgent push for rote proficiency.

We have stubbornly used the phrase "mystic tie," although we may call it friendly tie or fraternal tie.

For a better appreciation of the meaning and practices of the mystic tie, the brethren are encouraged to read *The Mystic Tie* by Bro. Roberts. This book vividly describes incidents that occurred during the civil war in the United States.

One such incident involves a navy officer from the Union. When he was dying on the ship, he expressed the wish that he be given the last Masonic rites. Hence, his body was transferred to a boat and rowed to the shore, which was occupied by the Confederates. The situation having been explained by the Union soldiers, some Confederate Masons arrived and conferred the last rites on the deceased navy officer. More than this, after the war, the navy officer's graveyard was found to be well kept, and his grave was surrounded by properly placed flowering plants.

Such acts cannot be performed by mere mortals; they were acts of men who, although they were enemies at the battle fields, truly practiced the tenets and principles of Masonry.

Such cases indicate that there must be a greater degree of mysticism behind this **mystic tie** – a mysticism which has been inculcated into the hearts and minds of truly active Masons and which adorns their lives.

To be able to arrive at such a mysticism, as well as to understand the mystical teachings, we really have to go through the initial stage of the so called "*rote proficiency*" (hopefully not *robotics proficiency*). More importantly, we have to internalize those mystical teachings everyday until they result in the flowering of the spiritual life before us. As of the present, those mystical teachings still remain concealed in our rituals and lectures.

There is, I believe, a need for a strong group of elders (Past Masters, if you will) that can assist the newly raised Masons in delving deeply into our concealed rituals and lectures. Such a group must act as connector. But they must not only be proficient in the rituals and lectures; they must also be able to understand the hidden meanings of the teachings of Masonry. Otherwise, we would be in the biblical stage where "*a blind leadeth another blind.*"

I want to point out, at this juncture, that on page 399 of her book *A Treatise on White Magic*, Alice Bailey stresses that in Masonry "form and symbol, tool and furniture, temple and tone, office and externalities are prominent factors; they

have veiled the truth and we have therefore **preserved** the outer and visible form of an **inner and spiritual** reality." This statement further magnifies and confirms that there are spiritual factors hidden in our rituals and teachings. Once we discern these, the beauty of our teachings and rituals will be presented to us in its natural forms.

We Need Change and Leadership

Bro. Leeper mentions in the later part of his article that we, as a Fraternity, need meaningful and visionary change, as well as the kind of leadership that has continuity and the courage to facilitate and implement the drastic and radical changes necessary to address and solve the problems of our relevancy to the current social structure within which Masonry operates.

But we are forbidden to make any modifications on our Ancient landmarks. We are constantly reminded even in our installation ceremony that "it is not within the power of any man or body of men to make innovations in the body of Masonry." Besides, in our third degree lecture, we are reminded that "our ancient landmarks you are carefully to preserve, and never to suffer them, on any pretense, to be infringed; and never to countenance any deviations from our established customs."

Indeed, the warnings are all over us. We have to be careful not to alter the hidden effects in our rituals, which will disturb the intended "veiled" spirituality found in our teachings. This will happen if irresponsible changes will be tolerated by a proposal to change Masonry. More importantly, this simple explanation of mine, hopefully, will change the views of some who tend to institute the "copying" of the procedures of some civic organizations around us. In the '70s and earlier, the Craft produced such notable members as were envied and looked up to by others. Why, then, have we reached a reversed situation? This presentation of mine may also serve as a guide for the issuance of future edicts and adoption of future resolutions.

Bro. Leeper mentions, moreover, that the elder generation grew up trusting the government, schools, churches, and our heroes, while younger generation is "**typically cynical**" toward the same institutions.

In addition, he cites the salient findings of the "grand" study commissioned by the 1989 Conference of Grand Masters. The study categorized reasons of the male population for refusing to join Masonry and presented the corresponding percentages. A careful review reveals that the responses are generally "**materialistic**" in nature and do not, therefore, jibe with the spiritual path of Masonry. Since the end of the 2nd world war, the US has tremendously progressed in the sciences, economics and military power to the point that it is now the only superpower left. Inevitably, lifestyles in the US have changed; materialism now dominates while spiritual progress is viewed cynically.

I venture to say that the situation of diminishing new membership in the US

is due to **systemic environs** arising from a **dominantly materialistic** way of life. When did this situation start, only our US brethren can tell us.

I venture to say, furthermore, that putting new leaders who can act **drastically and radically** will inevitably introduce erroneous changes, which will deviate from the nature of our rituals as described earlier by Mrs. Bailey.

In addition, assuming that eventually we shall be having leaders who have the courage to facilitate and implement the drastic and radical changes necessary to address and solve the problems of our relevancy to the current social structure within which Masonry operates, one can just imagine the outcome of the "chop-chop" processes that will eventually prevail and, sooner that we can realize, all the rituals of Masonry will be so mangled that we Masons will not even be able to recognize them anymore.

A similar situation is now seeping into our grand jurisdiction. While the craft is the object of unfair criticism, we ought to imbue our members with the proper attitudes and qualities that should enable them to serve as models worthy of emulation by our newly raised brethren. This deficiency is traceable to the ranks of our past leaders, elected and appointed alike, at the Blue Lodge and Grand Lodge levels. The brethren's anemic proficiency in Masonic teachings and rituals has become a normal occurrence rather than an exception. Our rituals have been transformed into the center point of fun playing; thus, the solemnity that should characterize our rituals has been totally destroyed. These problems are magnified by inadequate floor works and on-the-spot tutoring. We are now faced with these and related concerns. It is hoped that our incumbent, as well as future, leaders focus their attention on remedying these problems.

A Final Word

It is hoped that, as Bro. Leeper suggests, leaders of Lodges provide the members thereof with a reasonably good plan, and that both officers and members do both the inner and outer work of Masonry with a lot more zeal, with a lot more enthusiasm, with a lot more vigor. The inner work of Masonry consists in delving deeply into the meaning of Masonic statements, rituals, symbols and allegories and consistently living Masonry's teachings and principles, and its outer work consists in the wide dissemination of those teachings and principles among our fellowmen.

We have to internalize those mystical teachings everyday until they result in the flowering of the spiritual life before us.

AN OPEN LETTER TO FELLOW MASTER MASONS

Why should you, fellow Master Mason, enter into the world of the Scottish Rite?

Let us, as a starting point of our discussion, recall the symbolism and teaching of the Compass and the Square, upon which, as well as upon the Volume of the Sacred Law, we have taken a great many obligations.

The Compass and the Square, we have been told, symbolize the earthly and material and the divine and spiritual, respectively. Hence, for the Apprentice, the points of the Compass are both beneath the Square; for the Fellowcraft, one is above and one is beneath; and for the Master Mason, both are dominant, and have rule, control, and empire over the Square.

The varied positions of the points of the Compass in relation to the Square has led Brother Albert Pike to define Masonry as "the subjugation of the Human that is in man by the Divine; the conquest of the Appetites and Passions by the Moral Sense and the Reason; a continual effort, struggle, and warfare of the Spiritual against the Material and Sensual," and to stress that every degree of Masonry teaches, by it ceremonial and by its instruction, that the noblest purpose of life and the highest duty of a man are to attain self-knowledge and self-mastery by incessantly and vigorously striving to make that which in him is spiritual and divine win mastery over that which is material and sensual, "so that in him also, as in the Universe which God governs, Harmony and Beauty may be the result of a just equilibrium." (*Morals and Dogma*, or *MD* for short, pp. 854-855).

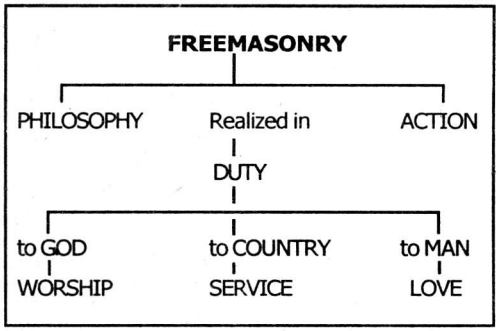
But, as pointed out by another Masonic scholar and philosopher, Brother W.L. Wilmshurst, the self-knowledge which Masonry was designed to teach is "not to be acquired by the formal passage through three or four degrees in as many months." We cannot attain such a knowledge until we have laid aside every other kind of knowledge and persistently, as well as strenuously, pursue a difficult path of life.

States Brother Wilmshurst: "Masonry proclaims the fact that there exists a higher and more secret path of life than that which we normally tread, and that when the outer world and its pursuits and rewards prove insufficient to our deeper needs, as sooner or later they will, we are compelled to turn back upon ourselves, to seek and knock at the door of a world within, and it is upon this inner world, and the path to and through it, that Masonry promises light, charts the way,

and indicates the qualifications and conditions of progress. This is the sole aim and intention of Masonry." (*The Meaning of Masonry*, pp. 12-13).

If that is so, we Master Masons must undertake an honest-to-goodness review of the ceremonial and the instruction of each of the Craft degrees, as well as pursue further the initiatic path of perfection.

The path of perfection, or perhaps more accurately, completion, conceived by the Scottish Rite of Masonry is illustrated by the diagram given below. (See Rex R. Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light*, p.3).



No, dear Brother, the Scottish Rite does not teach the truth; rather, it shows us, its initiates, a way to the truth. It stimulates us to find the truth for ourselves; it serves as a guide because, according to Ill. C. Fred Kleinknecht, 33□, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (A. & A.S.R.) of Freemasonry in the Southern Jurisdiction of the U.S.A., "it teaches the common ground of various philosophical and religious approaches to belief in order that men might be more united in the standards of right and wrong an their understanding of the reality of the Deity." (Foreword, *Ibid.*, vii).

Every sincere Scottish Rite Mason avidly studies the Rituals of the various degrees of the Rite and the *Morals and Dogma*, by Brother Albert Pike. He pays close attention to the exemplification of the various degrees and certain readings, both of which were written or assembled by Brother Pike, and intended by him to function together to provide the Rite's instruction.

The instruction of the Scottish Rite is, according to Ill. Hutchens, "an organized and coherent system of doctrine relating to the perfectibility of human conduct." (*Ibid.*, p.3).

Clearly, no man can be perfect. But the Mason particularly the Scottish Rite Mason, strives, step by step, toward perfection. To him, each degree of Masonry, from the first to the thirty-second, is a step he has to take in order to advance toward perfection. He does not only know and understand the duties inherent in the various titles he has assumed, but he also exerts conscious and conscientious effort to improve himself and the world he lives in.

Indeed, the sincere Scottish Rite Mason strives toward spiritual awareness because he knows that spiritual awareness will the better enable him to become a complete man – one who has, in balance, his religious, political and

moral dimensions. (*Ibid.*).

To become such a man, the sincere Scottish Rite Mason endeavors to imitate the GMHA and, therefore, he is willing to undergo self-denial or sacrifice. He sleeps little, and studies much; says little, and hears and thinks much; learns the simple lessons of practical morality and the sublime teachings of religious philosophy, that he may be able to do, and then does, earnestly and vigorously, whatever may be required of him by duty, and by the good of his fellows, his country, and mankind. (*MD*, p.116).

What does the sincere Scottish Rite Mason do in his intervals of relaxation, his church-going, and his book-reading?

He does those things that are especially designed to prepare his mind for the action of Life. He hears and reads and meditates, that he may act well. He knows very well that the action of Life is itself the great field of spiritual improvement. (*Ibid.*, p. 243).

The sincere Scottish Rite Mason agrees with Ill. Pike that "The natural work of Masonry is practical life; the use of all faculties in their proper spheres, and for their natural function. Love of Truth, justice and generosity, as attributes of God, must appear in a life marked by these qualities; that is the only effectual ordinance of Masonry. ...the natural form of Masonry is goodness, morality, living a true, just, affectionate, self-faithful life, from the motive of a good man. It is loyal obedience to God's law." (*Ibid*, p. 162).

He likewise does his best everyday, precisely because "(Masonry) teaches its toiling children that the scene of their daily life is all spiritual; that the very implements of their toil, the fabrics they weave, the merchandise they barter, are designed for spiritual ends; that so believing, their daily lot may be to them a sphere for the noblest improvement." (*Ibid.*, p. 243).

The Scottish Rite, dear fellow Master Mason, is composed of the Lodge of Perfection, the Chapter of Rose Croix, the Council of Kadosh, and the Consistory.

The Lodge of Perfection consists of 11 degrees, namely: Secret Master (4th), Perfect Master (5th), Intimate Secretary (6th), Provost and Judge (7th), Intendant of the Building (8th), Elu of the Nine (9th), Elu of the Fifteen (10th), Elu of the Twelve or Prince Ameth (11th), Master Architect (12th), Royal Arch of Solomon (13th), and the Perfect Elu (14th).

The Lodge of Perfection degrees are called Ineffable Degrees because their principal purpose is the investigation and contemplation of the ineffable name of God. The term "ineffable" is used in these degrees to refer to the belief of ancient Judaism that the name of God was not to be spoken. This concept forms a metaphor for the Scottish Rite teaching that **all the essential qualities of Deity are incapable of description in language**. (*BL*, p. 9).

If, dear fellow Master Mason, you are a candidate for the Ineffable Degrees, you begin to climb to the skies of spiritual

knowledge. But before beginning the ascent, you are made to review the legend of the GMHA, as well as the concepts of Deity and the Lost Word. These three topics are of utmost concern in the Ineffable Degrees.

As a candidate for these degrees, you will learn that **duty is the one great law of Masonry**, and that **in assuming the various titles, you are to perform the duties inherent in them in order to become an example of proper conduct all leaders are, or should be.** (*Ibid.*, p. 17).

The titles you are to assume in the four degrees of the **Chapter of Rose Croix** are Knight of the East (15th), Prince of Jerusalem (16th), Knight of the East and West (17th), and Knight of Rose Croix (18th).

You will learn that the four Chapter degrees are at once religious, historical, moral and spiritual. You are to express willingness to learn the following topics: Hebrew history, particularly those events revolving around reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem; the Kabalah and the Pythagorean Tetrachtys, which are sources of many Masonic symbols; Christian doctrine, such as the concept of a Messiah, compared and contrasted with other revelatory religions of the ancient world; Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, two eminent patrons of Masonry; and the innermost meanings of the most mystical, as well as controversial, of all the Books of the Bible, the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation. (*Ibid.*, p. 111).

In the Chapter Degrees, you are to pursue faithfully, constantly and perseveringly the great crusade of Masonry, which is to **rebuild the Masonic Temple of liberty, equality and fraternity in the souls of men and nations.**

In the **Council of Kadosh**, you assume other titles and are obliged to faithfully perform the duties inherent in them. In the 19th degree, you assume the title Grand Pontiff; in the 20th , Master of the Symbolic Lodge; in the 21st, Noachite or Prussian Knight; in the 22nd; Knight Royal Axe or Prince of Libanus; in the 23rd, Chief of the Tabernacle; in the 24th; Prince of the Tabrnacle; in the 25th; Knight of the Brazen Serpent; in the 26th, Prince of Mercy or Scottish Trinitarian; in the 27th, Knight Commander of the Temple; in the 28th, Knight of the Sun or Prince Adept; in the 29th, Scottish Knight of St. Andrew; and in the 30th, Knight Kadosh.

Of the degrees encompassed by the Council of Kadosh, Ill. Hutchens has the following to say:

"Although Pike identifies them as **chivalric** or **philosophical**, they are all **intensely mystical** with respect to the lessons conveyed and symbols employed. Even those degrees whose titles are prefaced with "Knight" are not simple dramas illustrating mere knightly virtues but are **complex panoramas of mystical symbolism**." (Ibid., p. 157. Emphasis added).

As regards the word "Kadosh," it is better, according to Ill. Hutchens, to interpret it as meaning "separated" than "holy"; for

the mission of Masonry is not to create "holy" men, but rather, "to set apart from the rest of humanity those exemplary men who practice her noble virtues in the pursuit of truth." (*Ibid.*)

This interpretation jibes well with what the late Brother and Chief Justice Manuel V. Moran stated, namely, "It is the purpose of Masonry to create in the world a band of men to whom others may look for example and inspiration -- men who others will say are men of honor, virtue and charitable feelings."

As a candidate for the Council degrees, you are to explore further the moral, political and religious lessons taught in the Lodge of Perfection and the Chapter of Rose Croix. You are made, moreover, to realize why we Masons must be moral leaders and practitioners of virtue, and why intolerance, superstition and bigotry are the special enemies of human freedom. You are made, furthermore, to examine the widely varied religions of the world, so that you will gain clear and accurate insights into God's nature and the relationship between Him and mankind. If you understand and accept the arguments presented in both the ceremonies and the lectures of the various Council degrees, you begin to develop a rational, coherent and consistent philosophy of life. But, of course, you have to make real in action the virtues you have learned. (*Ibid.*, p. 158).

When, finally, you take the 31st and 32nd degrees, you assume the titles Inspector General and Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, respectively. These are the **Consistory Degrees.**

In the 31st degree, you will discover the dynamic relationship that has existed for centuries between **human law** as a means of achieving justice and **divine justice** as an ideal. You will be asked to judge yourself in the light of this knowledge and the lessons of the preceding degrees. You will also learn that **the path to immortality is more than the mere outward appearance of piety**. (Ibid., p. 295).

In the 32nd degree, you will be given a brief review of the degrees of the Lodge of Perfection, the Chapter of Rose Croix and the Council of Kadosh. Then you will learn the very ancient roots of Masonic Truth – in the East. You will, moreover, receive broader and deeper meanings of the symbols you saw in previous degrees.

Finally, you receive instruction relative to the **Royal Secret**, **Equilibrium**, which forms the capstone of the Scottish Rite instruction and from which is derived human wisdom and virtue or right conduct. (*Ibid.*).

If, fellow Master Mason, you want to become a perfect or complete man or an Inward Master, whose influence over others will bring great result, come tread with us the path of perfection, or better still, completion, as conceived by the Scottish Rite. You will not, we assure you, regret your decision to enter into the exciting because brave new world of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.

Fraternally,

(sgd.) Flor R. Nicolas, 32nd degree KCCH

OUR FLAMING DESIRE TO ENTER THIS FRATERNITY!

by VW Medardo Benjamin Apacible, PDDGM

(A message to all Masons in the speech delivered during the installation ceremonies of Mabini-Kalaw Lodge No. 195 in Lipa City on February 2, 2002.)

When I was asked to be your guest speaker during these installation rites, I did not think twice. I immediately confirmed the invitation for the reason that I would like to take this opportunity to share a few important matters with my brother Masons, their relatives and friends. A forum such as this is an opportunity I have been waiting for.

Brethren, when you and I were still petitioners for the degrees of Masonry, we went out of our own way to insure that we would be accepted. Some of us even served the Lodge as petitioners for a couple of months. Almost everyday, we would inquire about our pending petition. We all had, and manifested, our flaming desire to enter this Fraternity.

However, when we became full-fledged members, some of us would soon forget to attend stated and special meetings despite the fact that we know our obligation, that is, "to obey all summonses sent from within a just and legally constituted Lodge of Master Masons," and worse, some even would forget to pay their dues. Is it really forgetfulness, my brethren?

Is that flaming desire we once felt about entering this Fraternity still in our hearts? Only you alone, and I, can answer the question.

To the relatives and friends of Masons, this I ask of you: please continue supporting Masonry. Encourage your relatives and friends who are Masons to attend religious, Masonic and related activities. Your encouragement is what we need.

We have been hearing some "not so good things" about Masonry. People who have scant information about our Fraternity say that Masonry is a religion.

Some say that Masons are atheists. Some say that Masonry is a secret organization and some say Masonry is a political party.

Perhaps, we are partly to blame for these pieces of misinformation, for not only in the past but even today, we are merely contented in working within the four walls of our Lodge. We never went beyond it, thus contributing to the confirmation of the image that has slowly been etched

upon the public's mind. But times have changed and there is now a need for us to be abreast with and attuned to change.

Let us go for an information drive on what Freemasonry really is. Let us start informing the public that Freemasonry is a fraternity – a fraternal order that espouses the enrichment of one's spiritual life with the aim of making good men better.

Let us further inform the public that Freemasonry is defined simply as the "Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God," which teaches basic moral truths, thereby impressing upon the minds of the members the principal tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth; and the four cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice; which Masons apply in their daily activities.

Furthermore, let the public know that Freemasonry is neither a religion nor its members atheists. Although its ceremonies may be religious in character, yet it definitely is not a religion. As an organization, Freemasonry accepts men of diverse creeds. Freemasonry accepts as members only those who profess a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, who may be referred to as God by Catholics, or Allah by the Muslims, and so on. The term Supreme Being does not refer to a Masonic God, for Freemasonry is not a religion. Yet to us Masons, the Book of Holy Writings, which is a must for all Lodges, is the rule and guide of our conduct and the source of all light and knowledge.

As one of the first lessons in Masonry, we are taught that one should pray for divine guidance before venturing on any great or important undertaking. But that does not make Masonry a religion.

Let is be publicly known that Masons believe in the importance of religion. In fact, Masonry encourages every Mason to be active in the religion and church of his own choice. Masonry teaches that with religion, a man is not alone and lost, but without religion he cannot reach his own spiritual goal. Masonry does not tell a person which religion he should practice, or how he should practice it. That is between the individual and his God.

Let us further inform the public that Masonry is not a secret organization or a secret society. Its principles are published in its writings, its purposes and laws are known, the times and places of lodge meetings are known and the names of all its members are also known to the community. The only secret about Freemasonry is that it has no secrets at all. A non-Mason may read everything about Masonry, from its history to its rituals, but will never have the same feeling of a Mason who had gone the same way as other Masons had gone before. It is this special personal experience which makes us Masons cling to our Fraternity.

Furthermore, let us make it known that we, in the Fraternity, never ask, force or pressure any person to join Masonry. It

must be on one's own free will and accord, and he must first be made a Mason in his heart.

So, when a man decides to join Freemasonry, what must he do? Simple. Approach a Mason and signify his intention, and the rest will follow.

You are all probably aware of the newly organized PNP Square and Compass Club, Camp Vicente Lim Chapter, under the umbrella of the PNP Square and Compass Club of Camp Crame. This club is not exclusively for PNP Masons but is open to all Masons of Region 4. As of this day, the club has registered 113 members and is still accepting latecomers.

One of the purposes of this club is to cross partylines, meaning to interact with Masons in Region 4, regardless of Lodge or Masonic District locations, in order to get Masons involved in national and regional activities such as the national Fire Prevention Month in March, Oplan Summer Vacation also in March, National Prayer for AIDS Victims in May, Independence Day in June, National Disaster Consciousness week in July, and other government and non-government sponsored activities.

A good example of a noble activity is the thrust and campaign of our government on illegal drugs, which is eroding the moral fiber of society. The PNP Square and Compass Club, Camp Vicente Lim Chapter, will definitely get involved in this national thrust and campaign.

You might ask, why get involved in such activities? The answer is simple. By doing so, we are letting the public know that there is such an organization as Freemasonry and that Masons are human beings like you and me, and are concerned and committed citizens who are willing to support any activity which will benefit the community and the country as a whole.

Let us stop the practice of confining ourselves within the four walls of our Lodges. Let us go beyond it. Let us start gaining the respect, support and recognition of the public not only as individual Masons but for the entire Fraternity.

This can only be done if you and I will live within the tenets of Masonry in our daily activities, thereby living up to the expectation that we are Masons in words and in deeds. The more we will succeed if we are fully supported by our families and friends.

Brethren, ladies and gentlemen, these are the few important matters I wanted to share with you; continuous active participation in Masonic meetings and activities; the much-needed support from our families, relatives and friends; public information drive on what Freemasonry is and going public through active participation in community activities, be they local or national.

And as my parting words – fully support Freemasonry and we, the Masons, will live up to its expectations and we shall never fail.

EXCERPTS FROM THE MASONIC NOTES

of VW Isaac F. Arribas, Jr., PSGL, OPC

Many Masons lack interest in Masonry because the Lodge often fails to teach its members, particularly the younger ones, the science and philosophy of Masonry at the time their curiosity about the Craft is still strong and their interest in it still flaming.

This situation is, indeed, ironic because all Freemasonry is a medium of instruction inasmuch as it is "a system of morals, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Its principal tenets are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; its cardinal virtues are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice; and its religion, if religion it may be called, is an unfeigned belief in one living and true God and in a future existence.

"Believe that there is a God; that He is our father; that He has a paternal interest in our welfare and improvement; that He has given us powers, by means of which we escape from sin and ruin; that he has destined us to a future life of endless progress toward perfection and a knowledge of Himself – believe this, as every Mason should, and you can live calmly, endure patiently, labor resolutely, deny yourselves cheerfully, hope steadfastly and be conquerors in the great struggle of life." Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma* (*MD* for short), p. 195.

Allegory and Symbol Defined

An **allegory** is, as we may have already known, "a description of one thing under the image of another. A narrative in which a teaching is conveyed symbolically. Presents a truth under the guise of fictitious narrative or description."

A **symbol** is, on the other hand, "something that stands for, represents, or recalls something else, not by resemblance, but by suggestion or association in thought, especially an object that represents something abstract, as an idea, quality or condition."

Ritual is, indeed, the very soul of Freemasonry. Its proper presentation and understanding are, therefore, imperative.

The ritual, however, deliberately conceals the true explanations of the allegories and symbols contained in it; actually, it often misleads one who studies it.

In any case, the Lodge must provide its members with instruction on the ritual, as well as stimulate them to read and study pieces of Masonic literature. By so doing, they will be helped to develop themselves from rough to perfect ashlars.

Lodge officers should, moreover, carefully scrutinize the internal qualifications of petitioners for Masonic degrees. They must remember that Masonry regards no man on account of his worldly wealth or honors," and that only stones capable of being fashioned should be admitted into the Craft.

There are, sad to say, Masters, officers and coaches in our Lodges, whose task is to give instruction to the brethren, whereby they may pursue their labors, but who are unable to answer the questions of brethren with inquiring minds and a sincere desire to study Masonry. Such Masters, officers and coaches ought to make up for lost time and opportunity by continually and persistently studying the writings and researches of Masonic students and scholars, who have conformed to the admonition that more informed brethren impart knowledge to their less informed counterparts.

Most of the truly great Masonic writers, scholars and philosophers have deplored the lack of esoteric Masonic knowledge among the Craft in general.

Dr. Albert Mackey, for instance, speaks of the "Parrot Masons" – those Masons who commit to memory questions and answers of the catechetical lectures, as well as the formulas of the ritual, but pay no attention to the history and philosophy of our venerable Institution. What are we to do with members of our Lodges who can repeat what they have learned without any conception of its true meaning?

What are we to do, likewise, with those brethren whom Dr. Mackey has ironically described as "Bright Masons" — Masons who are letter perfect in the ritual but cannot explain in their own words the significance of the statements they proficiently and eloquently deliver?

Remarks Dr. Mackey: "The progress of Masonry as a science now requires something more than a mere knowledge of the lectures to constitute a Masonic Scholar."

Needed: Knowledge of Masonry's Symbology, Esoteric Teachings, and History

J. D, Buck stated long ago, "In its ritualism and monitorial lessons, Masonry teaches nothing in morals, in science, in religion or in any other department of human knowledge or human conduct that is not taught elsewhere in current forms of thought, or by the sages of the past. In these directions, it has no secrets of any kind. It is in the ancient symbols of Freemasonry that its real secrets lie concealed, and these are as densely veiled to the Mason as to any other, unless he has studied the science of symbolism in general, and Masonic symbols in particular. The most profound secrets of Masonry are not revealed the Lodge at all. They belong only to the few."

"Rather than being a secret society, Freemasonry is the revealer of secrets. The great truths of ancient man were, in their time, also great secrets and few

were admitted into the sanctuaries where these truths were taught. Today the Craft teaches these great truths to all worthy men who ask to learn them. Many of these truths are taught in the degrees of the Symbolic Lodges; many more are taught in the various Rites which have sprung up in the course of Masonic history." — Rex R. Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light* (*BL* for short) p.1.

"Masonry also has her mission to perform. With her traditions reaching back to the earliest times, and her symbols dating further back than even the monumental history of Egypt extends, she invites all men of all religions to enlist under her banners to war against evil, ignorance and wrong. You are now her knight! To her service your sword is consecrated. May you prove a worthy soldier in a worthy cause." – Pike, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

It is interesting to note that although Buck gave the following statement long ago, it still applies to our current situation:

"There was never a greater need than at the present time, never so great an opportunity as now for Masonry to assume its true place among the institutions of man and force recognition by the simple power of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, based upon philosophy, as nowhere else exist outside of its ancient symbols."

Because, unfortunately, most Masons do not realize the true significance and value of their possessions, those among us who do must speak out. Lodges at present time must constantly instruct and educate their members on Masonry; for the average Mason is lamentably ignorant of the real meaning of Masonic symbology and knows very little of Masonry's esoteric teachings. There are, concededly, mitigating circumstances for this lamentable condition. This is, beyond doubt, a busy, fast-changing, hectic world; few are blessed with the time to acquire such knowledge, even though those who don't have the time have the inclination to do so.

"It is because Masonry impose upon these duties that it is properly and significantly styled work, and he who imagines that he becomes a Mason by merely taking the first two or three Degrees, and that he may, having leisurely stepped upon that small elevation, thenceforward worthily wear the honors of Masonry, without labor or exertion, or self-denial or sacrifice, and that there is nothing to be done in Masonry (except fellowship socials), is strangely deceived. – *Ibid.*, p. 185

Masonry and Mental Science are, it has been said, synonymous. By means of its careful and secret teachings, Masonry has preserved knowledge of Mental Science through the dark ages of ignorance, so that in our more enlightened day, when a man has the right to think for himself and can express his thoughts openly, the great storehouse of knowledge is found stocked with fundamental ideas.

Masonry, we are told, was originated by King Solomon at the building of his Temple. But it is well-established fact that Masonry is an esoteric philosophy

of life, regarded as ancient even in Solomon's time. This philosophy has been traced back to the "Lost Continent of Atlantis." The great Grand Master or "Noah" of the time warned of the impending doom of the continent, assembled the "worthy and well qualified" among their followers, and migrated to Africa. They took with them the truth of that philosophy and established temples in their new dwelling place.

Today, we find that their ruined temples are very similar to our Lodge rooms – with similar floor plans, the same "dark north," and many of the same emblems.

From the philosophy which the Great Grand Master of the "Lost Continent of Atlantis" had established in Africa evolved all other rites.

Other Masonic students and scholars have insisted that historically Freemasonry may be traced to a number of operative Lodges in England. Extant records indicate that in year 1717 four Lodges in London established and constituted themselves as the Grand Lodge of England.

One of the oldest documents containing a written record of Operative Masonry is the Regius Poem or Halliwell Manuscript. Although some Masonic researchers claim that it was written circa 1390 A.D., later carbon dating revealed that it must have been scribbled in 930 A.D.

Twenty other manuscripts indicating the existence of Operative Masonry were discovered later on.

Of the many proposed theories on the origin of Freemasonry, the most generally accepted one is that our present Lodges are the outgrowth of the Operative Lodges, or Guilds, of the Middle Ages. There seems to be no inclination to question the theory that our modern Lodge, as an organization, owes its origin to the Operative Lodges.

But, one may ask, "What about the esoteric teachings of the Craft? Are we to believe that those craftsmen of the medieval guilds, a great many of whom were actually illiterate, conceived an entire philosophy such as Freemasonry, and then, with consummate cunning, concealed it beneath a complicated system of symbolism and allegory?"

Perhaps symbols were used, if at all, for the ethical edification of the rank and file. But they were as ignorant of the underlying meanings of the symbols as are a significant number of latter – day Freemasons. Most probably they but served the purpose of being preserves of the mysteries of Freemasonry. As the reincarnating soul is said to choose the body and environment best suited for its growth and evolution, so many it be that those Operative Lodges of the Middle Ages were chosen to form the "body" for the spiritual teachings of the secret doctrine.

Origin of the Term "Freemason" or "Free Mason"

In regard to the origin of the term "Free" as used in relation with "Mason," enough theories have been advanced to fill volumes. Hence, we will investigate only a few of them

Some authorities advance the theory that in ancient times "bonds-men" could not join the operative Guilds. Hence, they say, a Mason was a "freeman" and, perforce, a "Freemason."

Others attach significance to the word "free" in connection with the candidate's request for admission, it being of his own "free" will and accord.

Both theories find support in the rituals of various Grand Jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions, the candidate professes at the door of the Lodge, as set forth in the Old Charges, that he is "a man, freeborn, etc." Here is predicated the first theory. All rituals support the second theory.

Robert Hewitt Brown, on his part, points out that long before the building of King Solomon's Temple masons were known as "sons of light." The ancients, he says, practiced Masonry under the name of *Lux* (or Light) or its equivalent in any other language of antiquity.

Some other distinguished writers inform us that the word "Masonry" is a corruption of the Greek work "Mesouraneo," which means "I am in the midst of heaven." This alludes to the sun, which is the great source of light.

Still other writers insist that the word "Freemasonry" derives from the ancient Egyptian terms "Phre" and "Mas," which mean the sun and a child, respectively. Hence, they point out, "Phre-Massen" means children of the sun or sons of light.

Masonry: Descendant or Reincarnation of the Mystery Schools

But regardless of the origins of the modern Lodge and the term "Freemason," we can, after freeing the symbolism of modern adaptations, discern in Freemasonry the outline of the teachings of the ancient Mysteries of Egypt, such as one Supreme Being; the immortality of the human soul; and the threefold composition of man: body, soul and spirit (more correctly expressed as physical, psychical and spiritual). These three planes are dealt with in three "grades" or degrees or levels of instruction.

Pythagoras said, "God formed two things in His image: first the Universe itself, and second, man."

The Bible, on the other hand, tells us, "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness."

The ancients postulated the **complete man** as the **triune man**, composed of body, soul and spirit. They symbolized him by the **right angle triangle**. The horizontal side of this triangle represents the physical or material; the perpendicular, the psychical or mental; and the hypotenuse, the spiritual.

While the right angle triangle symbolizes the complete man, the equilateral triangle symbolizes the perfect or spiritual man.

Indeed, the ancients viewed man, not as a "division," but rather as a "unity" – body, soul and spirit. When we render what is due to any individual part, they said, we have served the whole.

The ancient Mysteries aimed at teaching the candidate the secret of making

himself the perfect man. They taught, symbolically speaking, the secret of progressing from the right angle triangle to the equilateral triangle.

As no "whole" can be complete and perfect unless its parts are complete and perfect, the instructions of the Mysteries were divided into three parts, grades or degrees.

The first dealt with the physical; the second, with the psychical; and the third, with the spiritual.

The body is the vehicle of the mind and the spirit. To make it a fitting habitation for them, the Mysteries began their instruction with the purely physical aspect of man and his material relation to the Universe. They stressed that a strong and obedient body is requisite for the development of a strong mind, and that, mind being the instrument of spirit, a strong and well-developed mind is essential to spiritual development.

The Mysteries required a rigorous and dangerous initiation. The candidate must, therefore, have a strong body, if he were to survive the physical ordeals entailed by the actual initiation, as well as the arduous studies necessary for his mental development. This occurred before he was even introduced to the spiritual. The candidate must also understand the operation of material laws, for the ancients subscribed to the theory that the material laws are but the extension into the manifest universe of the spiritual laws. "As above, so below."

The candidate was required to spend **years**, if necessary, in each of the grades preceding before he was permitted to proceed to spiritual instruction.

Obviously, under such a system, it was highly essential to "make the necessary proficiency in the preceding grades (degrees)" before he could be admitted to the next higher.

A Final Word

If Freemasonry is the actual descendant or, if one prefers the term, reincarnation of the Mysteries, back of its "veil of allegory," then, must be concealed a deeper truth than is expounded in the various lectures of the degrees. We should, therefore, be able to discover a similarity between the degrees of Freemasonry and the grades of the ancient Mystery Schools. The first degree should concern itself with the physical or material; the second should deal with the physical or mental; and the third degree should focus mainly on the spiritual.

We must make certain that our candidates are physically, physically and spiritually fit to receive the Masonic degrees, which we, in turn, must confer upon them in the most impressive manner. We must, furthermore, ascertain that each candidate has really understood the ceremonials and instruction of each degree. This requires dedicated tutoring and more rigorous or more strict proficiency examinations. We must make sure that only the worthy and well-qualified are advanced to higher degrees. We must, as an oxymoronic

adage admonishes, "make haste slowly" in this regard.

"Originally the Mysteries were meant to be the beginning of a new life of reason and virtue. The initiated or esoteric companions were taught the doctrine of the One Supreme God, the theory of death and eternity, the hidden mysteries of nature, the prospect of the ultimate restoration of the soul to that state of perfection from which it had fallen, its immortality, and the states of reward and punishment after death. The uninitiated were deemed Profane, unworthy of public employment or private confidence, sometimes proscribed as Atheists, and certain of everlasting punishment beyond the grave." (Pike *MD*, p. 359).

"The Grecian Mysteries established by Pythagoras taught the true method of obtaining a knowledge of the Divine laws, of purifying the soul from its imperfections, of searching for truth, and of practicing virtue; thus imitating the perfections of God. .... Particularly Phytagoras inculcated Silence, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. He taught the immortality of the soul, the Omnipotence of God, and the necessity of personal holiness to qualify a man for admission into the Society of Gods." *Ibid.*, p. 366.

"The object of all the Mysteries was to inspire men with piety, and to console them in the miseries of life. That consolation, so afforded, was the hope of a happier future, and of passing, after death, to a state of eternal felicity. *Ibid.*, p. 379.

It is my fond hope that the MSN will come to be our Craft's well-articulated, well-orchestrated, continuing program, so that our countrymen will ralize that Masonry has great schemes for human improvement, and that is great aim is to relieve human distresses or miseries ....

- MW Nap Soriano

THE LETTER G

VW Samuel P. Fernandez

The letter G is a symbol of geometry and of God. It is usually combined with the square and compasses on Masonic rings and pins. The combination is a symbol of Symbolic Masonry.

Some Masonic scholars led by Bro. and Dr. Albert G. Mackey are not happy with the introduction of the letter **"G"** in our Masonic system. The letter **"G"** is rather modern and confining to the English language. In the "An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences" (p. 288), we have this observation: "It is to be regretted that the letter G, as a symbol, was ever admitted into the Masonic system. The use of it as an initial, would necessary confine it to the English language and to modern times."

MASONIC GEOMETRY

Geometry is a symbol not only of mathematics but of the Divine and moral significance of abstract truth. An ancient philosopher would have it: "God is always geometrifying." Indeed He is! He is the Chief Builder.

Geometry is the basis on which the superstructure of Freemasonry is erected.

In the *Regius Manuscript*, the Constitutions of Freemasonry are called "the Constitutions of the art of geometry according to Euclid."

Thomas Smith Webb, Masonic Scholar and Ritualist, wrote: "Geometry, the first and the noblest of sciences, is the basis on which the superstructure of masonry is erected. By geometry, we may curiously trace Nature, through her various windings, to her most concealed recesses. By it, we discover the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe, and view with delight the proportions which connect this vast machine. By it, we discover how the planets move in their different orbits, and demonstrate their various revolutions. By it, we account for the return of seasons and the variety of scenes which each season displays to the discerning eye. Numberless worlds are around us, all framed by the same Divine Artist, which roll through the vast expanse, and are all conducted by the same unerring laws of nature."

The letter **G** above the Master's Chair may be perceived by Masons as Geometry or God. Operative Masons recognized Geometry intimately as well as Speculative Freemasonry.

Thomas Smith Webb observed: "The study of the liberal arts, that valuable

branch of education which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration; especially the science of geometry which is established as the basis of our art. Geometry, or Masonry, originally synonymous terms, being of a divine and moral nature, is enriched with the most useful knowledge, while it proves the wonderful properties of nature, it demonstrates the more important truths of morality."

G as a symbol is perceived by Freemasons as the *Grand Geometrician* of the Universe.

LETTER G AS PERCEIVED BY MASONIC AUTHORS

Bro. Hutchinson, who wrote as early as 1770 gives this studied opinion in his work *Spirit of Masonry* (Lecture VIII):

"It is now incumbent on me to demonstrate great signification of the letter **G**, wherewith Lodges and the medals of Masons are ornamented. To apply its signification to the name of God only is depriving it of part of its Masonic import; although I have already shown that the symbols used in Lodges are expressive of the Divinity's being, the great object of Masonry, as Architect of the world. This significant letter denotes Geometry, which, to artificers, is the science by which all their labours are calculated and formed; and to Masons, contains the determination, definition, and proof of the order, beauty, and wonderful wisdom of the power of God in His creation."

A distinguished Freemason of South Carolina, Bro. and Dr. Frederick Dalcho, in one of his Orations delivered and published in 1801, observed thus:

"The letter **G**, which ornaments the Master's Lodge, is not only expressive of the name of the Grand Architect of the Universe, but also denotes the science of Geometry, so necessary to the artist. But the adoption of it by Masons implies no more than their respect for those inventions which demonstrate to the world the power, the wisdom, and beneficence of the Almighty Builder in the works of the creation."

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Some scholars are of the opinion that the letter **G** is a corruption of the old Hebrew Cabalistic symbol **'yod'** by which the sacred name of God – in fact, the most sacred name, the Tetragrammaton – is expressed. **Yod**, equivalent in sound to I and Y, is the initial letter of Jehovah, the *Tetragrammaton.*

Yod, a sacred word to the *Talmudist,* has been replaced by the letter G.

In the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, the 14th degree ring has the letter **Yod,** the Ineffable Name, within a triangle.

The triangle is delta in Greek and is a symbol of the deity.

The equilateral triangle, according to Bro. D.W. Nash (Freemasons Magazine, p. 294), which is "viewed in the light of the

doctrines of those who gave it currency as a divine symbol, represents the Great First Cause, the Creator and Container of all things as one and in indivisible, manifesting Himself in an infinity of forms and attributes in this visible universe."

G is the third letter of the Greek alphabet. In Hebrew it is called **Gheemel** and is associated with the Hebrew **Ghadol** or the Latin *magnus*, the **Mighty**.

The **G** may be painted on the wall or sculptured on wood or metal, or suspended over the Master's chair.

The letter **G** is never placed anywhere except in the East where the Worshipful Master presides.

This makes the East not only the seat of the Worshipful Master but a center where the Great Geometrician of the Universe, the Grand Architect, the Creator, the Almighty Builder, demonstrates to the world the power, the wisdom and beneficence, the work of His creation.

G has the same force and signification that the letter **yod** had among the ancient Cabalists.

Buxtorf (Lexicon of the Talmud) defines Cabala "to be a secret science which treats in a mystical and enigmatical manner of things divine, angelical, theological, celestial and metaphysical; the subjects being enveloped in striking symbols and secret modes of teaching."

The place of the letter **G** in the Lodge is of great import to Freemasons. The Oriental Chair is not the only Masonic furniture in the East. It includes the letter **G** to remind us, finite minds, of the place of the Infinite in all our doings, and first and foremost that wisdom and power comes from the Grand Architect of the Universe, the Great Creator and Almighty Builder.

The many acts of kindness, courtesy and accommodation which the officers and members of Masonic Lodges, Masonic Districts and Appendant Bodies/Orders ... are eloquent expressions of unity and harmony, without which progress is virtually impossible.

- MW Nap Soriano

MW & Ill. Soriano, 33° IGH, Speaks Before Scottish Rite Masons

Most Worshipful and Ill. Napoleon A. Soriano, 33rd degree IGH, Grand Master of Masons in the Philippine jurisdiction, was guest of honor and speaker during the Fraternal Luncheon held at the Mason Heroes Hall of the Scottish Rite Temple on Saturday, March 16, 2002 on the occasion of the 52nd Annual Session of the Supreme Council of SGIGs of the 33rd and Last Degree, A.&A.S.R. of Freemasonry of the Republic of the Philippines.

MW and Ill. Soriano focused his speech on the theme *"Mason, Kaisa sa Kapayapaan."*

Said he: "I would proceed by first sharing with you what I understand as the framework wherein the movement for peace is situated. And from there I shall derive what to me are the imperatives that we, as Masons, can do along the movement or process for peace. And thirdly, what we in the Grand Lodge have started to do, beginning with my term."

He described war, the opposite of peace, as "the extension, if not the highest from, of politics," which is, in turn, "the manifestation of struggle between forces whose interest, usually in economics, have become conflictive and diametrically opposed."

He then stated that the Filipino people's war against Spain had come to be understood as "revolutionary" because "that war was the assertion of the national interests of the broad range of classes of Filipinos, save those who collaborated with the Spanish conquistadores. So was the Filipinos' resistance against American colonialism. So was the Filipinos' resistance against Japan."

Next he pointed out that the Philippine Republic is currently confronted by two fronts.

"The Moro front," he said, "is the Moro people's struggle for national self-determination. It all began with the annexation of their homeland into what is now the Philippine Republic during the transition from Spanish colonialism to the American occupation. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) used to be in the forefront until the Tripoli Agreement of 1976. Since then, it has been the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)."

MW and Ill. Soriano described the other bigger front as "the class-based people's war, with both rural and urban component, being waged by different groups."

Among these groups are (1) the National Democratic Front (NDF), the umbrella organization of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP) and its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA); (2) the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PMP), identified with the late Ka. Popoy Lagmay; (3) the Rebolusyonaryong Partidong Manggagawa-Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPM-RPA); (4) the Sosyalistang Partido ng Paggawa (SPP); (5) the Partido Marxista-Leninista ng Pilipinas (PMLP); (6) the Partido Proletaryo Demokratiko (PPD); and the Marxista-Leninistang Partido ng Pilipinas (MLPP) and its military wing, the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB).

All the foregoing groups, according to MW and Ill. Soriano, "advocate the empowerment of the poor sectors. Their interests and programs and those of the government are conflictive, diametrically opposed, mutually exclusive." He stressed that the fact that the forces can be found in more than 50 provinces within the archipelago makes an almost formidable challenge for peace. Then he averred, "Unless the causes of war are significantly obliterated, these forces are here to stay with us – for good. And, interconnectedly, therein lie the prospects of peace, and hopefully even order.

MW and Ill. Soriano then pointed out that 30 years from now the Filipino population would have gone up to 160 million.

Pronounced he: "Consider such a population's demands for food, shelter, water, waste management, peace and order, and so forth. By then, many of us would have crossed to the Great Beyond – and yet peace might not yet have been achieved..."

Having laid down the framework in which the movement for peace is situated, he emphasized that "striving to give meaning and substance to the theme **MASON KAISA SA KAPAYAPAAN** along standpoint, perspective and strategy is quite a formidable challenge.

He said, "While our attitudes constitute the frontline manifestations, the core lies in the breadth of shared information or knowledge. In this regard, the formula **FAMILIARITY PLUS COMFORTABILITY BREED ACCEPTABILITY** enjoys relevance. Hence we must acquire relevant and significant information about the state of the system and the different groups' worldviews, analyses, scenarios and commitments concerning short-term and long-term issues. We have to dialogue or confer with the different groups in order to be better able to get a good, reliable grasp of our war-and-peace situation. We have, in other words, to rationalize our approaches to the issues of war and peace, and I think a logical level of approach can be like this: **Dignosis**; **Scenario-Making** and **Creativity**; **Judgment**; **Planning** and **Action**. Our individual and group behavior, as Masons, whether in communication within or without, that is, in interaction with the other sectors of society, will definitely vary by choice."

MW and Ill. Soriano further explained that "whether we act, variably or invariably, as contributors, or collaborators, or communicators, or

simply as challengers, we cannot escape the fact that we belong to civil society, whose growing clamor is for a radical rethink of society's assumptions and whose cry is getting ever louder for our Fraternity's time-honored values, such as equality, liberty, justice, brotherly love, relief, truth and morality."

He then stressed that the peace talks which have been, for years, going round in circles have not really addressed the issues of (1) **humanizing the war**, (2) **political and constitutional reforms**, (3) **socio-cultural and economic reforms**, and (4) **foreign policy**.

"For now," he said, "tentative agreement has been reached only in how to humanize the ongoing conflagration." He pointed out that "mitigating the effects/ impact of the crises seems to be the urgent call of the day." By this he meant "how to attend to the dead and their kin and to those who barely cheated death and are significantly dislocated ... While the war refuges come in out midst, we also have refugees hit by natural disasters. Thus, diagnosing the crisis and responding to it should be raised to a higher level."

He then explained the Masonic Service Network (MSN), which the Grand Lodge had formed.

"The long view of the MSN," he clarified, "is that of a RESCUE DIAL 3-5-7, similar to the famous RESCUE 9-1-1, established on a nationwide scale. The idea is to provide some organizational form, aside from our usual fraternal formations, through which our energies, as Masons, plus those of our kin and of the Appendant Bodies, can be channeled toward worthy undertakings for peace and development as we engage with other sectors of society with more intensity as well as greater breath and scope."

MW and Ill. Soriano urged the brethren to react to the orientation paper of the MSN printed in the November 2001-January 2002 issue of THE CABLETOW and to submit their reactions to the office of the Grand Master, "so that we can undertake the proper deliberation and adjustments."

He underscored the fact that his successors in the Grand East had committed themselves to establishing "this infrastructure as it cannot, obviously, be fully established within the short term of one Grand Master. **By integrating our relief efforts through the MSN, we can demonstrate in a nationally-coordinated manner the practice of relief and the concrete concerns for peace as well as the eradication of obstacles to it."**

MW and Ill. Soriano urged the brethren to extend full support to the MSN because **"through the MSN we can be better informed about our country's realities and therefore we can more easily recognize our nation's needs and imperatives, by the impact of which we can then make some adjustments in our lifestyles and be more in conformity with the signs of the times."**
Our Grand Master further reasoned out, **"Through our continuing exposure to actual relief life-situations, there**

can be enhanced the cultivation of moral character among the brethren, a character with a strong sense of mission in the service of society."

He concluded his speech with these words:

"With the rationalization of our engagement with relief through the MSN and other home-grown and already existing facilities, there should be generation of more moralogy within the Fraternity as we search for how better still we can be attuned to the needs of those around us.

"There should, logically, be more pressure among all of us brethren to develop our morals, lest we all drift into indifference and be alienated from the other sectors of society and then, predictably, from one another.

"This bleak scenario is, my brethren, more than enough reason for us to be one with the movement for peace, not only in thought, but more importantly, in deed."

Our Grand Master having spoken, he was presented with a plaque of appreciation by MW and Ill. Rosendo C. Herrera, 33rd degree, PGM and SGC, Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite for the Philippines, assisted by Ill. Agerico V. Amagna, Jr., 33rd degree, Grand Secretary General, H.E. The brethren, meanwhile, gave MW and Ill. Soriano a big round of appreciative applause. – **eF.R.eN**

By integrating our relief efforts through the MSN, we can demonstrate in a nationally-coordinated manner the practice of relief and the concrete concerns for peace as well as the eradication of obstacles to it.

– MW Nap Soriano

Psalm 133 Exemplified in MW Soriano's Visit to Virginia

Masons wheresoever dispersed are, indeed, linked together with the indissoluble chain of sincere affection. They enjoy having fellowship with one another, thereby strengthening the chain that binds them firmly together in their noble mission of building Masonry's symbolic temple of liberty, equality and fraternity in the souls of men of every country, sect and opinion.

The photo below shows the brethren of the Philippines and the State of Virginia exemplifying Psalm 133, which starts with the statement "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

M.W. Bro. William Lee Holliday, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of A.F.&A.M. of Virginia (3rd from left, seated) and M.W. Bro. Napoleon A. Soriano, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of F.& A.M. of the Philippines (3rd from right, seated) led the brethren and DeMolays in enjoying one another's company, as may be seen on their smiling faces.



VW Hermie Palamine (2nd from left, seated) and VW Teodulo "Joe" Yap (2nd from right, seated) aver that our Filipino-American brethren and DeMolays in Virginia conquered the visiting Filipino brethren's hearts with their sincere, warm hospitality.

Enhancing Rapport with Our Virginia Brethren and Their Ladies



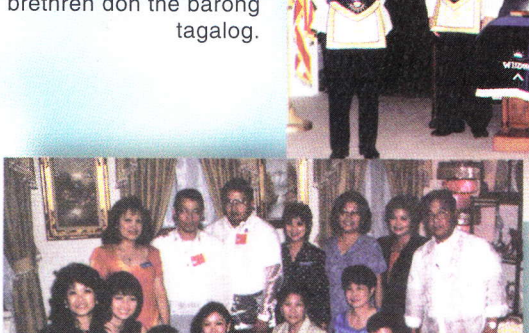
WB Ed Marfori (3rd from left), VW Joe Yap (4th from left), MW Nap Soriano (5th from left), VW Hermie Pamanine (3rd from right) with Virginia Brethren and ladies in front of the MacArthur Memorial Bldg in Virginia, USA.



MW Nap Soriano poses in front of the vintage car of the late Ill. and Gen. Douglas MacArthur



Filipino Masons in Virginia are active. In appreciation of the Masonic labors of the Filipino brethren, some white brethren don the barong tagalog.



Even the ladies of the Filipino brethren in Virginia show enthusiasm for Masonry.

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MW Nap Soriano (2nd from left) with Bernard Molina, Deputy State Master Councilor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, De Molay International. At extreme left is RW Clifford Alan Parker, Deputy Grand Master Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia; at extreme right, MW William Lee Holliday, PGM, also of the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

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