

THE COMMUNIQUE

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From the Grand Master ...

Brethren:

The first five months of this Masonic year has been very busy with much travel and January was no exception.

We began the month making our final William Mercer Wilson of this Masonic year presentation to Bro. Grant Boundy of Kemperfeldt Lodge No. 673. He was the “typical” W.M.W. award winner, modest, un-assuming and wondering why everyone was making a fuss over him since he was just doing what all Brothers should do as a Mason.

After Bro. Boundy had received his medal he went to the podium and gave an in depth, informative history of the life and times of M.W.Bro. Wilson’s and his accomplishments. It truly was an evening to remember.

For the last several years the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master have been invited to attend the Ceremony of Installation and Investiture for the Master and the Officers of Friendly Lodge No. 383 English Constitution in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

This year, more than twenty Brethren, four of which were Past Grand Masters from Ontario along with the Grand Master of Quebec, ventured south to enjoy the sun and hospitality. The Brethren witnessed an Installation Ceremony which took approximately fifty minutes to complete, followed by an excellent banquet. During our stay of week one, security was not an issue but one is always taught to be cautious. I feel it is necessary to point out that all expenses including airfare, accommodations of all participants, including myself, were paid for by each individual.

This month, many Masons in our Lodges took time from their work, in the quarries of Masonry, to celebrate an event that occurred on January 25, 1759 when Brother Robbie Burns was born in Alloway Scotland. On that day each year, a toast is proposed to those whose sentiments are touched by his lilting verse and reminds us that “auld acquaintance” should never be forgot.

In my opinion, two of the distinguished characteristics of a Mason are a Mason’s word and a Mason’s handshake. I am not referring to the word or hand shake of identification.

We, as Masons, understand that when we are at variance or entertain feelings of animosity towards another Mason, or in some cases a group of Masons, we must endeavour to settle our differences so that harmony should at all times characterise Freemasonry.

Once we give our word we, as Masons, believe that which was promised must be kept whether it is written or unwritten. We would never rationalize promise breaking and if, by some extraordinary circumstance, the promise is broken we must admit to breaking the promise, apologize and do what we can to make up for the broken promise.

The second distinguishing characteristic of a Mason is the Masons’ handshake. It goes back to the Middle Ages when agreements, deals or treaties were very rarely written down and were most often sealed with a handshake. Historians even suggest that the up-and-down motion of the handshake was supposed to dislodge any knives or daggers that might be hidden up a sleeve. Another explanation is that the handshake was a symbol of good faith when making an oath or promise. Those Masons, who were at a variance, knew that when they clasped hands in a **handshake**, they showed **their word** was a sacred bond.

I end now with two quotes regarding Leadership & Responsibility:

“You can’t escape responsibility by evading it today”
~ Abraham Lincoln

“Management is doing Things Right; Leadership is doing the Right Thing”
~ Peter Drucker

***Paul Todd
Grand Master***

From the Deputy ...

Brethren,

Last year we had several Lodges go dark, but we consecrated two new ones. If you look at the Proceedings of the United Grand Lodge of England you will see that every year they have Lodges closing or amalgamating, but they also have new Lodges forming. Lodges have always been formed and closed as needs and circumstances dictate. A group would form in an area of economic growth, work while that area was prosperous, and then when the men left that area, it would close. That is surely how the operative Lodges building cathedrals worked. When the cathedral was completed, the Lodge would disband.

Now is a good time to take an honest look at your Lodge. There are many excellent programs for improving your Lodge, but sometimes it is just too much. You may have too few members, or they are too old, or just worn out. Maybe it is time to amalgamate, or close.

I find that an amalgamation that chooses a new name does better than one that retains parts of the names of the old Lodges. It's a mindset – a rebirth, essentially a new Lodge with all the excitement that entails.

Surprisingly we have found that we actually retain more members if a Lodge goes dark than if it amalgamates. I think this is because, when his Lodge goes dark, a brother is empowered to find a new Lodge where he fits in and likes what they are doing.

One other difference between closing and amalgamating is, what happens with the money. When two Lodges amalgamate, the amalgamated Lodge usually gets the assets of both former Lodges, with the exception of any Benevolent Fund that had been made a registered charity. Due to its registered status it must stay separate. Also, if one of the Lodges prefers, it could give its money to a local registered charity or the Masonic Foundation of Ontario, but frankly, if that is their attitude, it does not bode well for the success of the amalgamation.

If a Lodge closes, its funds get distributed to Craft Masonic Charities. There is a process whereby these funds may be directed otherwise which essentially involves disposing of the money before the Lodge goes dark.

Note, that in neither circumstance does Grand Lodge get any of the Lodges' money. What Grand Lodge does get are, the books and the warrant

(which we'll give back for historical or display purposes if you ask.) We'll also take, if you wish, Masonic artifacts which we store in the basement to give to other Lodges that may need them (a new Lodge; a Lodge turning gold; after a fire etc.)

There are procedures for amalgamating and closing laid out in the Constitution. It starts with each Lodge making a notice of resolution. But before that, there is an informal process of discussion: discussion within the Lodge; discussion within the District; discussion with Grand Lodge.

I have witnessed several Lodges faced with closing or amalgamating, in which a small group of brave Masons, have made plans to either close the Lodge or turn it around. They laid out the facts to the brethren and the brethren took action. And they are going strong to this day!

Look within, be honest, and discuss, discuss, discuss.

***David J. Cameron
Deputy Grand Master***



Think not this Lodge has ended ...

*With the closing of the volume and the opening of a door,
Think not this Lodge has ended, think what has gone before.
Remember all those worthy men who as apprentice came,
And who developed love and skill and worked in friendships
name.*

*When you take up the working tools to gently put aside,
Think not their work is ended, think how they were applied.
Remember well the lessons taught, to craftsmen tried and true;
Of Masons worthy of the name and apron white and Blue.*

*When your tracing boards are covered and the columns laid at
rest,
Think not their teaching ended, think more a message blessed.
Remember the special meaning to master Masons all,
Of birth and life and learning and waiting for the call.*

*With the sounding of the gavel and as the lights at last go out,
Think not your Lodge has ended, dispel all lingering doubts,
Master, Wardens, Brethren, remember as you depart,
Your Lodge will live forever in every Mason's heart.*

~ Author Unknown

