



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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Editor, M.W. Bro. W.J. COLLETT

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THE DELIVERY OF THE RITUAL

by W. Bro. P.W. Verrall, Master of the Waikato Lodge of Research No. 445

(W. Bro. Verrall is the first Worshipful Master of Waikato Lodge of Research No. 445 which was constituted one week before our Fiat Lux Lodge of Research No. 1981. Permission to publish it was kindly granted by W. Bro. Verrall.)

Tonight I would like to talk about one aspect of the Ritual, its delivery. In my opinion, this aspect is the most important part of our ceremonies and yet there is very little, if any, tuition given in this regard and the only injunctions refer mainly to the adherence to the wording of the script.

Our Ritual is a fine work of art and worthy of the Craft. It was certainly not written overnight but is based on developments that stretch over many hundreds of years. Because it has been committed to writing for a comparatively few years only, as previously it was passed by word of mouth, it is written to be spoken and not read. It is therefore the responsibility of those who speak it to be able to understand and interpret its meaning. It can be, and too often is, delivered a number of times by brethren without really being fully understood. A Brother wrote that "one of the proofs of the stature of the Ritual is that it can still live even after a brother has done his best to murder it".

There is a tremendous similarity, brethren, between our Craft and the Theatre. Just as our Speculative Freemasonry is based on operative masonry so the Theatre presents on stage those occasions which could occur in real life. The Theatre takes a small piece of this real life and draws attention to particular aspects very often with a moral in mind. In Freemasonry we use the artisan mason's work and derive a lesson on the fundamentals of life. Even our ceremonies are equivalent to stage productions for we too have rehearsals and a script, two most essential ingredients, plenty of actors and our Director of Ceremonies as Producer. We even have 'stage hands' to alter the layout of our 'sets' when necessary.

In any production, whether it be masonic or theatrical, it is essential that the message be got over to the audience. In our ceremonies the most important member of the audience is surely the candidate, he is hanging on every word that is spoken and it is disappointing if he is unable to get some understanding out of what is being directed specifically to him.

There are two great dangers. Firstly, there is a tendency to regard the ritual as an irksome routine to be rattled through parrot fashion with only one thought in mind, to get it over. Secondly, and just as bad there are

those who regard the ritual as an opportunity for a full reign of histrionics and either turn it into a farce or a melodrama.

We are certainly not all budding Richard Burtons or Laurence Oliviers, but the delivery of the charges is important. They must be given with sincerity for, as in a straight play, it becomes more effective.

The title of my address is 'Stand Up, Speak Up, Shut Up'. In delivering most parts of the Ritual it is necessary to firstly 'stand up' but before doing so try and place yourself as close as possible to the position you will be speaking from. Before rising take a few deep breaths to relax you and move slowly to the candidate. Only salute once, either at your seat or at the W.M. if crossing the Lodge. Stand relaxed and comfortable with your feet a few inches apart with one foot slightly forward. Don't rock backwards and forwards and this tendency can be avoided if your body weight is slightly forward, in other words if you were shot you would fall on your face rather than your back.

A number of brethren have a tendency to be over-conscious of their hands and if given the chance would gladly leave them on their seats. The easiest and most natural position is to let them hang at your sides. It is possible to close your fists if you prefer but remember that in acting hands can express feelings and to clench them means you are tense, a feeling soon transmitted to the candidate. Hands should certainly not be put in pockets or folded in front or behind you and jingling money, especially if the candidate has just been divested, or clicking fingers can be most distracting and easily spoil what would otherwise be a good ritual delivery. Look the candidate straight in the eye and make him feel you are only talking to him.

While gestures can be effective in the right place, they must appear natural and spontaneous. Paradoxically to look unplanned they have to be carefully rehearsed. Make full gestures, starting with your hand, followed by your body and head, finishing where you began. Don't flick a hand or head in the direction and do not hold a gesture after your point has been made. A gesture must have a reason whether it is directing attention towards something or it is explaining some article. If you are explaining an object you are holding don't

fiddle with it. Make distinct movements during your description and place it down as soon as you are finished.

Finally, when you are standing up try and leave all your bad manners behind, forget the itching ear or nervous fingers. You cannot see them but they are in full view of the candidate and your audience who can find them extremely distracting.

The second maxim 'Speak Up' should really be described as 'Speak Out' for greater volume is not necessarily more intelligible. Speak clearly and crisply with your voice cast upwards and outwards, not down into your figurative, or maybe, real beard. Try and get a good resonance and pronounce every word but don't over enunciate as in 'Let(t) me add(er) to the remarks(s) of the Senior Warden(a)'. Let your charges flow with a minimum of apparent effort with plenty of variety and contrast and not too fast or too slow. Changes in pace, volume, pitch and inflection help to make that charge mean something.

Pauses are most important and fall into two categories a) Natural breath and b) Dramatic.

A great example of the latter comes in the North East Corner when the charge builds up to a climax "by calling upon you to exercise that virtue which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a freemasons heart (pause) I mean (longer pause) Charity".

Pauses can accomplish four things if used properly:

- a) They give time for the Candidate to absorb some of your ideas.
- b) It is a chance for you to concentrate on your next lines.
- c) It gives emphasis and meaning to special parts.
- d) It gives you a chance to catch your breath.

For a suspensory pause you need not take a breath but for period pauses, which should average about 10 words, a breath is essential otherwise you find that you are running out of breath and lose control of your voice.

Try and keep your lungs full for with it you will:

- a) gain confidence
- b) have plenty of reserve air
- c) improve the quality and resonance of your voice, and
- d) hold your chest up and improve your appearance.

Drop your jaw and tongue, open your lips and let that sound come out.

Give variety to the volume of your voice. Early on, while the candidate is getting used to your voice, you may need a higher volume, not shouting but as your vocal power increases you can start to get a change, even in our larger Lodge Rooms, and still be heard. Vary your pitch and endeavour to get an inflection or modulation in your voice, something that we use when talking naturally and unconsciously in normal conversation but which suddenly disappears when we are called upon to do a charge.

Don't PUT emphasis on the wrong words
Don't put EMPHASIS on the wrong words
Don't put emphasis on the WRONG words
Don't put emphasis on the wrong WORDS

By doing this you can not only change the meaning but also fail to put over your message. Try and accent what you consider are important words, not necessarily by making them louder.

By a rising modulation you transmit a feeling of cheerfulness, brightness and height. By a falling inflection you mean things are low, are sad and drab.

Charges are addressed primarily to the candidate and must be intimate to him whilst at the same time they are fully audible to all brethren. Project your own personality, keep the candidate in a state of anticipation on what you are about to say and help him realize the solemnity of the occasion and the beauty of the words you are privileged to speak.

Follow your own normal rate of speech, fast enough to be interesting but slow enough to be understood. Your slow rate will indicate thoughtfulness, deliberation and even sadness. When you speed up the message will be joy, excitement and vigour.

And now something common to most of us, nervousness. Those little butterflies that will not stay still. Firstly, in most cases only you are aware of them and in fact a little nervousness can help you give a far better and more meaningful delivery. Even the most experienced and hardened stage actors will confess to some level of nervousness on opening nights especially.

Remember that nobody present at a ceremony wishes to see you in a state of embarrassment or indignity. If you stumble for words, the prompter will help you audibly but be assured all the brethren will be helping you mentally.

If you have to take a prompt, and this should in no way affect the calibre of your charge, take it quietly as though pausing. The one or two word prompt will immediately give you the clue. Don't turn round and ask for help and when you get it do not apologize or say thank you. This applies in rehearsals especially for the habit gendered there can easily follow in the ceremony itself.

Remember that memorising the words is not all that is required. Learning is the first **not** the last step. Treat every charge in its own context.

Is it **instructional** like the Secrets and Charter or **educational** like the Lesser Lights and 1st T.B. **Narrative** like Traditional History and 2nd T.B. or just **inspiration** like the N.E. Corner, the Charges after Initiation or the Reasons for Preparation.

Accept, with open arms, the opportunity to give a charge, treat it as a great privilege and enjoy it or at least sound as if you are enjoying it.

It is essential to practice, ask any stage actor, and attend all the rehearsals.

My third maxim is just as important as the other two. It is something that all masons should at the appropriate time profess to admire and follow especially when other brethren are talking.

It is just two words "SHUT UP".

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

By a Scottish Minister from the Sunday Post

Centuries ago mankind was given a unique code of conduct, the Ten Commandments. They created the moral climate in which this country's greatness was achieved. But there's an uneasy feeling we're on the slippery slope. Consider the evidence.

I AM the Lord thy God . . . thou shalt have no other gods before me . . .

Take a look round any part of the country on a Sunday morning:

Dad busy on his shiny new car.

Mum taking the joint out of her new deep freezer.

The children glued to coloured telly.

Meanwhile, the church down the road is half-empty.

The sad fact is that nowadays we worship money, and the material possessions it brings.

T HOU shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them . . .

Perhaps we don't make images as such.

But there's no doubt we idolise the new deities.

The Osmonds and Bay City Rollers of the pop world.

The Johnstones and the Dalglishes of the football field.

The Kojaks and Cannons of the TV screen.

They are the folk whose images attract so much adulation in this age of candy-floss hero worship.

T HOU shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . .

There's been an unprecedented increase in the use of bad language.

Nowadays it is thrust at us nonstop.

From the TV and cinema screen . . . in the pub and club . . . from the football terracing . . . even in the classroom.

The blue joke with a religious theme is the "in thing." Sadly, it has all become a way of life.

R EMBER the SABBATH DAY, to keep it holy.

In the everlasting search for wealth, overtime on a Sunday has become an essential.

Some one and a half million workers regularly clock up an average of eight hours overtime a week, much of it on Sundays.

There's an outcry if any effort is made to reduce it. Or interfere with the premium rates it carries.

If not actually working for profit, you can bet Dad will be hard at it — washing the car, mowing the grass, painting his house . . .

Every year the Sabbath is eroded a bit further with cinema shows, sporting events, pubs opening . . .

H ONOUR thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long . . .

Does today's teenage tearaway have any respect for mother or father?

Truancy, hooliganism, vandalism, running away from home, all are sad symptoms of the breakdown of the family.

How often have the words, "But I can't do anything with him. He won't listen to a word I say," been spoken by a distraught parent in court.

T HOU shalt not kill.

Nearly two violent deaths a day.

We now live in an era where life has become cheap and the law of knife and bottle rule the streets.

Where parents batter lives out of innocent babes, where drunk drivers slaughter luckless victims on the roads, where abortions are used to snuff out the flickering flames of new life.

T HOU shalt not commit adultery.

Nothing can equal the speed with which we've raced down this particular slope.

In 1963, adultery was the prime cause in 18,069 divorce petitions.

Ten years later, this had doubled to 35,067.

Our forefathers would turn in their graves if they could see us now.

Though perhaps, it is not to be wondered at in the light of the insidious diet of permissiveness we're fed so remorselessly.

T HOU shalt not steal.

It's rife at all levels in our society.

From the bandit who wantonly raids a bank — to the bairn who goes shoplifting in his local store on a Saturday afternoon.

Saddest of all, the increase in callous thefts from the elderly, the disabled, the helpless, the blind.

T HOU shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Can you honestly cross your heart and say you've never repeated a juicy story about someone down the street?

Or started a rumour about the woman next door on the flimsiest of evidence?

Tale-telling goes on at the coffee morning, in the bus, at the golf club bar, all the time in this day and age.

T HOU shalt not covet thy neighbour's house . . . nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Time was folk in this country were independent and thrifty.

Now, it is the fashion to keep up with the Jones' at any cost.

We are all guilty to some degree.

Envyng the neighbours their smart new bungalow, their holiday in Majorca, their huge new colour TV.

And scheming how we can emulate them.

AS a nation, can anyone doubt we have slipped from the high standards we once set ourselves?

We're as much in danger of becoming morally bankrupt as economically so.

Indeed, many are convinced this is the root cause of all our troubles today.

For the curious thing is our economic decline has gone hand-in-hand with our moral decline.

Could this be why we have lost our way in the world?

Could this be why we flounder from crisis to crisis?



QUARRY LODGE NO. 70

The Seventy-fifth Anniversary project of Quarry Lodge No. 70 began quite by accident. W.Bro. B.A. Sandy Sandford, chairman of the board at Gordon Memorial United Church in Redcliff, became aware that 29th September 1980 would be the sixtieth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the church by M.W.Bro. J.H.W.S. Kemmis, the Grand Master at that time. The Grand Lodge of Alberta met in a special communication at Redcliff on that day in 1920.

The incoming Master decided to promote the idea of a church parade to celebrate the event as his project for 1980. All of the officers for 1980, working and co-operating as a team, readily agreed that this would be a worthy project for the Lodge for the 75th Anniversary of Masonry in Alberta.

Plans were made for a church parade in June. In the Grand Lodge Bulletin of that month, M.W.Bro. Walter E. Foster, in an open letter to all Lodges, strongly recommended that each area should take, as an anniversary project, some event such as a church parade to show that Masonry lives today in Alberta.

Feeling that the weekend of September 27 and 28 should become not just the occasion for a church parade, but, an entire Masonic weekend, the Board of General Purposes decided that plans should be made for a dinner and social evening on Saturday.

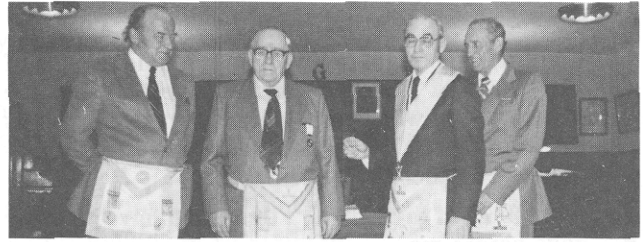
The Dinner and Social Evening was held at the Medicine Hat Shrine clubrooms at 7:30 p.m. R.W.Bro. J.F. Rogers, the Junior Grand Warden and R.W.Bro. T.B. Stevenson, D.D.G.M. were the guests of honour. After dinner and a short welcoming address by the Master, an evening of dancing was enjoyed by all.

At 10:30 the following morning the brethren were assembled at the parking lot of the Redcliff Legion. At 10:45 the procession moved off for Gordon Memorial Church, led by Bro. Fred Standing, Senior Warden of Medicine Hat Lodge No. 2. Members of several Lodges in the district were in attendance.

A brief history of events leading to the laying of the cornerstone and the part that Masons have played in the business and worship of Gordon Memorial over the years was given by W.Bro. Sandford. Dr. Laurence E. Anderson, known to fellow Masons as W.Bro. Larry Anderson, PM of Bow Island Lodge No. 57, then delivered a sermon entitled "The Invisible Expressed", based on 2nd Chronicles 6, the dedication of King Solomon's Temple and the ways that Masonry lives today in the spiritual and temporal life of the community.



EUREKA LODGE NO. 10



At regular meeting of Eureka Lodge No. 10 on February 24th, W.Bro. Clarence Lee Hay was presented with his life membership in Eureka Lodge and his 50 year Jewel.

Pictured above with W.Bro. Hay, are from left to right, his son Don, Treasurer of Eureka Lodge; W.Bro. Hay; W.Bro. George Shackleton who made the presentations and W.Bro. Gordon Hay from Camrose.

W.Bro. Hay lives in Lacombe in retirement and is still active and enjoys good health.

CORNERSTONE LODGE NO. 19



In November Cornerstone Lodge No. 19 observed both the 75th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Alberta and the 75th Anniversary of Cornerstone Lodge. This Lodge was the first one to be instituted after the Grand Lodge of Alberta was formed in 1905. There were eighteen Lodges that came together to form the Grand Lodge and Cornerstone bears the number 19. The evening commenced with a dinner served by the members of the Eastern Star. Following this the Lodge was tyled and a Service of Thanksgiving was conducted by the chaplain, Bro. D. Suitor. There were twelve visiting Lodges all of who brought greetings and congratulations. The picture above shows the gathering.

MASONIC SPRING WORKSHOP

The Masonic Spring Workshop held on April 10, 11, 12, at Banff Centre had an attendance of nearly 500 Masons from Alberta. The brethren enjoyed another outstanding Spring Workshop with M.W.Bro. Morley Merner, P.G.M. inspiring them addresses on the subject "Membership or Masonry". The Schools of Instruction, with a different format from other years, were especially appreciated presenting in dramatic form some of the procedures in the Lodge.