



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

Vol. 55, No. 10

Editor, W. Bro. Kingsley Dean

December 1990

## Christmas Message 1990

The familiar song, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace to men of goodwill" once again sounds in our ears which have grown accustomed to other songs and to the noise of discord. Indeed, because of the din and clamour produced by human passion and violence, we have to strain our ears to catch even a distant whisper of the message of the Bethlehem choir. The notes of evil are much too strident.

Part of the song echoes the wistful yearning of the people in every continent who long for Peace and Goodwill, the only possible foundation for a stable society. In what was literally a "stable society," with ox and ass standing by, the Babe of Bethlehem uttered his first cry which was later articulated into words of Peace and Goodwill. God was speaking to a disintegrated and violent world in the Babe of Bethlehem and, through him, offering the Peace and Goodwill.

The Angels had their priorities right. First of all, glory must be accorded to God in the highest, for only then can peace and goodwill become realities. Peace and goodwill are derivatives from the glory of God: they are the by-products of a practical acknowledgement of God's Sovereignty. You will have noticed that the Angels' song had social dimensions. Peace is the creative quality of a society in which human relations are open and tensions balanced in mutual understanding, while goodwill is the positive attitude which men adopt to one another in a community of persons. Both are unattainable without a clear acknowledgement of an Ultimate Authority which is, in our Masonic parlance, the G.A.O.U. Peace is the active co-operation of diverse individuals and groups, each committed to God's will and respecting all others as persons of infinite worth. Peace is human tension resolved in love.

"Glory to God in the highest," then, means accepting the priority of God. Remember our answer when questioned in the First Degree, "In whom do you place your trust?" Surely the answer "God" needs no prompting. If there is one single note running through whole V.O.S.L. it is that God demands obedience from men if they are ever to enjoy a society which is stable and progressive with its projects held in balance by goodwill. Peace and goodwill are the twin offspring of obedience to God and personal identification with all his other children. Our Most Worshipful the Grand Master, Don Millar, in a moving address to one of our local Lodges where an Entered Apprentice Degree was

conferred, alluded to the fact that there are now some five million Masons worldwide and how great an influence, he said, this could have in the affairs of the world. The numbers may be small in comparison with the five or more billion of the world, but we must remember the parable in the V.O.S.L. about the effect of a grain of salt?

The gift God sent to the world on that first Christmas did not come primarily in the mysterious awe of the cathedral where human voices were hushed and men spoke holy words. He came in the mire of a stable, in a crowded town, in streets where angry voices were raised in protest, just like today. And into these unholy places he brought an obedient, serving spirit, giving glory to God in the highest and out of his pain was born a new hope for the world.

As your Grand Chaplain, I wish you all a blessed and happy Christmas and I pray that we will uphold the ideal of brotherly love to all people and make our influence felt in the world. Blessings to each one of you and your families.

The Rev. Canon W.R. (Bert) McQuaid  
The V.W. Grand Chaplain

## Winter Solstice

Speculative Masonry professes the proposition that the Grand Geometrician of the Universe determined the points in time when the sun would reach its greatest declination north or south of the celestial equator. The two moments occur on June 21 and December 21. Each solstice is upon the elliptic midway between the equinoxes. The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. In the Julian calendar it fell on the twenty-fifth day of December.

Ancient aborigines worshipped the sun — their lives depended on its yearly round in the heavens. Feast and fire festivals seemed propitious when the heat of the great luminary began to wane. Perhaps the sun god would gain enough strength from the food and warmth to bring him back to life again.

The Druids gathered mistletoe with great ceremony and hung it in their homes. The Saxons used holly, ivy and bay. Some of the German tribes sacrificed to Odin's sacred tree.

The more sophisticated Romans worshipped the sun god with an elaborate ceremony which paid tribute to the benign god of plenty. Saturnalia reigned for a whole week. They decorated their temples and homes with green boughs and flowers. It was the season for merrymaking and the giving of presents.

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As Christianity spread among pagan peoples, many of the practices of the winter solstice were blended into those of the missionaries. The celebrations became both secular and religious. From the pagan accent on light we trace the use of candles and open fires (the ubiquitous yule log custom).

In northern Europe — and later in America — merry-making, music, wassailing, feasting, singing, games, dancing, gift giving, mummers and masques were all part of the secular celebrations which lasted throughout the holiday season.

The licentiousness of those earlier winter-solstice festivities were eventually curtailed by the Christian fundamentalists who restricted them to the New Year celebrations.

The Gospels say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth and the early church did not celebrate it. In the late third or early fourth century of the common era, the Christian Church chose to celebrate the birthday of its Founder on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December in order to transfer the devotion of the heathen from the sun to Him who was called the Sun of Righteousness. December 25<sup>th</sup> was regarded by the heathen as the nativity of the sun. In Syria and Egypt the celebrants retired into ritualistic shrines from which they emerged with a loud cry, "The virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!" The new-born sun was represented by the image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, was exhibited to his worshippers. No doubt the heathen virgin was a form of Astarte, a great Babylonian goddess. The old Persian deity Mithra was identified with the sun and his nativity also fell on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

Nothing in the above secular exposition should detract from the celebration of Christmas by Christian masons. The Masons who are Hindu Brahmans, Buddhists, Moslems, and Jews do not espouse Christian customs. The common bond which universally unites Masons is the fundamental doctrine, dogma, tenet of belief in the existence of an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient Being who will reward virtue and punish vice. Freemasons must be ever tolerant and supportive of a Brother's religious beliefs and customs, even though they may be anathema to his own.

W.Bro. A. Kingsley Dean

## Hanukkah

(Reprinted from **Grand Lodge Bulletin**, December, 1987)

The story of "Hanukkah" commemorates the restoration and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Macabees. The Temple was destroyed by the Greek King Antiochus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.E. As part of this rededication, it was necessary to rekindle the Temple lamp (Menorah) which was always kept burning in the Holy Place. Only one small flask of sacramental oil could be found. This was usually sufficient to keep the lamp burning for one day only. Miraculously, the lamp burned for eight days. Hence, the holiday lasts for eight days and is called "The Festival of Lights."

After the Greeks conquered Israel, they endeavoured to "Hellenize" the country. This aroused the resentment of the religious elements of the Jewish population. They refused to surrender to the Greek practices of paganism and the acceptance of Hellenic deities. The Jews, led by Mattathias and his five sons and a few hundred followers, revolted. Eventually, the Jews, led by Judah, the Maccabees son of Mattathias, routed the enemy and reentered the Holy City.

Hanukkah is celebrated in accordance with the lunar calendar, starting on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Kislev — the day the Maccabees entered the Holy Temple. This falls on a different day each year but usually in the month of December.

In the spirit of the festival, small presents are given to the children, homes are decorated with Hanukkah motifs and dairy foods are generally eaten. The most widespread food eaten during the holiday are potato "latkes" (pancakes). Prayers are said both in the home and in the synagogue and the candles are lit on the menorah. One candle is lit each successive night until the last night when all eight candles are lit.

Considering the historical background of Hanukkah, it is most remarkable that Jewish tradition hardly mentions the military exploits of the Macabean warriors. A successful revolution was immortalized as a religious triumph.

David Dworkin, Zetland Lodge No. 83

## Grand Master's Itinerary

### For December 1990

- December 3 Al Shamal Temple
- December 6 Joint Meeting at Edson: Edson No. 68 and Hinton No. 178
- December 7 Lodge of Perfection; Edmonton
- December 8 Commercial No. 81; Installation
- December 13 Saskatchewan No. 92; Installation
- December 14 Temple No. 167; Installation
- December 20 Ivanhoe No. 142; Installation

## Saskatchewan Lodge's Levee

This annual event will be held as usual at the  
**Central Masonic Temple, Edmonton**  
**12 noon to 2:00 p.m. on January 1, 1991.**

All Masons, wives, family and friends in the area are invited to attend and join the Lodge members and the Grand Master in celebrating another New Year.

## Innisfail Mason Honoured



In the latter part of August, 1990, a group of friends and Brothers gathered at the home of W.Bro. Lewis John "Lou" Llewellyn, Past Master of Innisfail Lodge No. 8, when R.W.Bro. Dick Percy, P.D.D.G.M. of District No. 4, presented him with not only a 60 year bar to his 50 year Master Mason's jewel but also his well-deserved Past Masters 50 year jewel. It should be noted that W.Bro. Llewellyn received his Entered Apprentice Degree on his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Shown in the photo with W.Bro. Llewellyn are (l. to r.): R.W.Bro. Harold Johnston, P.D.D.G.M.; V.W.Bro. Jack Jackson, P.G.S.; W.Bro. Lou Llewellyn, P.M.; R.W.Bro. Dick Percy, P.D.D.G.M.; W.Bro. Ed Jackson, P.M.; W.Bro. Fred Ible, P.M, not shown is W.Bro. Gordon Sparks, P.M., who was taking the picture.

From Innisfail Lodge No. 8

## "Hands Across The Border" An Overwhelming Success

The first Hands-Across-the-Border "Speak-Off" involving Masons from Districts 10 and 17 in Alberta, and Districts 7 and 13 in Saskatchewan emerged as a highly successful and popular event. Held in Lloydminster on the weekend of April 7-8, this friendship-oriented function involved some 140 Masons, wives, and guests.

The weekend commenced with a welcome luncheon, followed by the Speak-Off for the men and entertainment for the ladies. Nine speakers treated the Brethren present to an intensely interesting variety of Masonic subjects. The official winner, W.Bro. Ernie Ostrum of Lonach Lodge, Saskatchewan District No. 7 in Marsden, was presented with a handsome trophy by Past Grand Masters M.W.Bro. Jack Calvert and M.W.Bro. Stan Harbin. Really, all speakers must be considered as winners, for the quality of material was exceptional.

Guest speaker for the evening banquet was M.W.Bro. Dave Bruce who gave an outstanding address on what the powers of positive thinking can mean in our lives. Most participants stayed for a Sunday morning church service and the weekend concluded with a farewell brunch.

The 1990-91 Planning Committee is already at work

organizing next year's event. It is slated for April 13-14, 1991 at Buffalo Park Lodge, Wainwright. The success realized this year strongly indicates that Brethren should make early reservations if they wish to be in attendance next April.

A word of praise is due to a hard working committee who received stellar support from the Brethren of Britannia Lodge in Lloydminster. Thanks are extended on behalf of both Jurisdictions for the devotion of this committee to the cause of the Craft. They certainly have provided wind for the sails of our Masonic ship and we wish them every success in their planning for the 1991 Speak-Off.

M.W.Bro. Stan Harbin

## Bassano Lodge No. 55



In the photo, taken at the entrance of the G.M. Armstrong Memorial outdoor lodge, are: (L to R) Arnold Armstrong, son of G.M.A.; Grant Armstrong, one of 2 candidates raised to the sublime degree, grandson of G.M.A. and son of Arnold; Bob Anderson, son of G.M.A.; and Peter Anderson, a 3<sup>rd</sup> son of G.M.A. The memorial is on land that was ranched by the Armstrongs and has been donated to Bassano Lodge in perpetuity.

## Constitutional Amendment

(As Adopted by the 1990 Annual Communication)

Section 82: amended to read as follows;

82. a) Each Lodge, other than a Lodge Under Dispensation, shall pay for every member thereof to Grand Lodge for its purposes and undertaking a sum determined as follows:

- 1) \$15.00 per annum being the base Per Capita Fee as of January 1, 1989, plus
- 2) an increase determined by the Annual Percentage Rate of Inflation for the Province of Alberta plus or minus the percentage rate of the decline or increase (respectively) in



membership of this Grand Lodge within the preceding 12 month period; such figures to be determined as of January 1 each year and rounded to the nearest half dollar;

3) the new rates as defined by this calculation shall serve as the base Per Capita Fee for the calculation of the subsequent year.

b) Each Lodge shall be advised by the Grand Secretary, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March each year, of the amount of the Per Capita Fee as results from the above calculation and that Per Capita Fee shall be applicable to the June 30<sup>th</sup> Semi Annual Return following that advisement.

c) Honorary Life Members shall be exempt from paying Per Capita Fees only as defined by Section 573 of this constitution.

## From The Notices

### *Mosaic Lodge No. 176*

They say that music is an international language. But after visiting Loyalty Lodge No. 197 on the occasion of their visit from our Brothers from Austria, it was easy to conclude that Masonry also goes beyond all language barriers. In giving his closing remarks, the Brother who was an officer in their Grand Lodge spoke in German. Yet everyone in that Lodge hall was able to understand the sentiments he expressed.

On the other side of the coin, there were sixteen visiting Austrian Brethren, not all of whom spoke English but [all] were able to follow the degree work being performed that evening. That evening served to drive home the point that visiting other Lodges is still the best way to learn the highest aspects of Freemasonry. If you can, set aside one evening and visit a Lodge you haven't been to before and let them teach you a new dialect of a familiar language.

### *Jasper Park Lodge No. 143*

W.Bro. Alf Sherriff was unable to attend one of the meetings so that we could present his 70 year bar to him. His son, Scott, was in Jasper during the summer and took the certificate and bar back to W.Bro. Sherriff. We have since received a note from him along with a nice picture of him wearing the jewel with the new 70 year bar. Congratulations once again to W.Bro. Sherriff on reaching that milestone. He also celebrated his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday July 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Editor's Note: Alf Sherriff was initiated Hawick Lodge, St. James B.U.R.A. No. 424 Scotland in 1919 and is a life member of that Lodge. He became a Charter Member of Jasper Park Lodge in 1926, served as its Master in 1933, and has been made an Honorary Life Member.*

### *Griesbach Lodge No. 191*

I wonder how many of us have given serious consideration to the significance of the Cabletow of Freemasonry, which has both physical and spiritual symbolism. Its derivation and definition are uncertain and the word probably comes from either a Hebrew or German word meaning 'a pledge of the body'. This definition becomes significant as one obligation follows another.

It is symbolic of the lifecord by which the embryo receives life from the mother. It is the Masonic cord by

which the Masonic infant is attached to his Mother Lodge. As soon as the infant is born the physical cord is severed, but never the knife was ground which can cut the spiritual cord which ties us to our mother.

In Masonry, the physical restraint of the Cabletow is removed as soon as the spiritual bond of the obligation has been assumed, but never the means has been made by which to cut the obligation which binds a man spiritually to his Mother Lodge and to the Craft. Expulsion does not relieve from the obligation; unaffiliation does not dissolve the tie; demitting to another lodge cannot make of the new Lodge a Mother Lodge. What is the length of a Cabletow? Thousands have asked, but few have attempted to answer. Who can define the length of a Spiritual tie? Each Brother must decide the length of his Cabletow.

### *Empire Lodge No. 63*

I recently came across a poem in *The Craft* and its Symbols that for me symbolizes so succinctly the Craft.

**ECCE SIGNUM\***

By Conrad Mahn

Men toil along the road of life  
But each one looks with different eyes.  
Some note but dross or mud or gloom;  
Some see bright logos in the skies.

A gavel strikes; the trowel spreads  
Cement to join the ashlar's tight.  
Freemasons know they're more than tools;  
They point the way to truth and light.

Wise Plato taught the worlds; unreal;  
A thing eternal in the mind.  
Life's candle brief is but a symbol,  
By God's immortal love defined.

\*Behold the Symbol

### *Cascade Lodge No. 5*



M.W.Bro. Don Millar, V.W.Bro. John James, and W.Bro. Roy Brooks, Master Cascade Lodge No. 5, Banff. M.W.Bro. Millar presented V.W.Bro. James with his 60 year bar.