



Mediocrity in Masonry

Mediocrity is something which tends to result from conformity. It also tends to result from trying to please all of the people all of the time. Masonry is quite emphatic in exhorting its members to be obedient to *those in power*, but clearly we are also encouraged to think for ourselves. The existence of clandestine lodges in POW camps during WWII is an example of a moral judgment having been made with respect to the principle of obedience to *those in power*.

Personally, I find it faintly ridiculous that we profess to prize *honor and virtue* above the external advantages of rank and fortune, and then proceed to have our own internal system of rank, often awarding the most senior rank to those who already possess a considerable amount of fortune.

Could Freemasonry operate without leaders? As a collaborative route to moral self-improvement of the exploration of the meaning and purpose of our lives, a principal approach to all our thoughts and actions, then perhaps we need only to have the constitutions, the tenets, the ritual and our Brethren never losing sight of the fact that we are all sprung from the same stock. Should we have a *First among equals*?

I have an untested hypothesis that people enter Freemasonry and leave soon thereafter because it does not give them the promised *something more than all this* which characterizes life in general. Some do join in the mistaken belief that we are a self-centered bunch of co-conspirators, engaged in a plot to give a *leg-up* to our members so that we can secretly run everything else in civilization. As soon as they discover that we are often incapable of agreeing how to run our own temples and lodges, never mind the master plan of taking over the world, they leave. And this does not sadden me in the least.

What does sadden me is that I have met young Brethren who have hoped to find men who are seriously interested in the spiritual mysteries of life, with which they can discuss the business of how humanity can live in greater harmony with one another, how we can become better creatures under the unknowable purpose of TGATU. Finding few, or none, to satisfy this genuine desire to become more extensively useful, they have left. This saddens me a great deal.

There are lots of things which we should discuss. Some of them can be heavily contentious, and we might find ourselves getting closer to disturbing the peace and good order of society, but if we genuinely hold the principles and tenets of the Craft as paramount, and ever keep in mind the laws of TGATU, then we ought to be able to do this work peaceably and productively. Our founding Brethren were not noted for their desire not to *rock the boat, shake the tree, or frighten the horses*. Indeed, they held it as their duty to challenge human behavior when they saw it as *wrong*. William Wilberforce's largest audience during his campaign to abolish slavery was that which filled Freemasons' Hall in London and left many turned away for lack of space.

Adolf Hitler feared Masons. So apparently does Austin Mitchell. But we are so careful to avoid justifying the fear, and inciting the anger of those who would seize power without any moral basis, that we have lost the passionate sense of collaborative purpose which inspired our founding Brethren. Too often, younger Brethren leave us soon after joining us because they find us to be boring, self aggrandizing and devoid of any particular moral worth special to the Craft. And, if that is what they find, I am sadder still.

The above paper was written by **Brother Grame Bruce Fletcher**, a Past Master of Phoenix Lodge No. 94 in Sunderland England under the United Grand Lodge of England. This paper was published in the United States in **Arizona Masonry** in November of 2009 and in the **Southern California Research Lodge Fraternal Review** in January of 2010.

Sign seen posted in a church hall:
"FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND
DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY
CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR"

CHARITY

by
Cliff Ladman

In the E.A. lecture, we are told that the covering of a Lodge is no less than that clouded canopy or starry-decked heaven, where all good Masons hope at last to arrive by the aid of that typical ladder which Jacob, in his vision, saw extended from earth to heaven, the three principal rounds of which have been denominated-- Faith, Hope and Charity.

This, of course, is a reference to St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians; namely 1st Corinthians, Chapter 13. The charity of which Paul speaks, and which is alluded to in the lecture is not the giving of aid to some less fortunate person or alms giving, as it is known in the Bible. The word "charity" comes from the Greek "charitas", which is properly translated "love". This is not the passionate kind of love of a man for a woman, but rather the love which makes us concerned for our Brother's well-being and happiness. St. Paul goes into great detail to explain just what it means.

1."Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

In the time when this was written, the very learned men of Israel took great pride in speaking several different languages. To become a member of the High Court, known as the "Sanhedrin", a Rabbi had to be proficient in all the various languages and dialects of the people of that region. There was also a belief among them that certain very holy men could speak with angels, and thus have a direct connection with God Himself. So, Paul is saying that if he had all these great abilities, but did not have love for his fellow man, he would be no more than the sound of a noisy trumpet or the cacophony of a dropped cymbal.

2." And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all things, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Here Paul is saying that if he knew all the learning of man-combined, and understood all the mysteries, and had the gift of being able to foretell the future and faith enough to do the impossible but still did not love his neighbor, then none of this matters, he is nothing.

3."And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing."

The first line of verse 3 proves that Paul was not speaking of alms giving, but rather of love. The next line alludes to having "my body burned". This speaks to a common practice of the time, which was that when a man was indentured into slavery he was branded with a hot iron, just as western cattlemen branded their cattle.

4."Charity suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

"Suffer" in this context means to patiently allow something to occur; as when Jesus said, "Suffer the little

children to come unto me." Love teaches patience. We are admonished to whisper good council in our Brother's ear when he has made a mistake. If we love our brother we will not ridicule him, but will try to help him to improve his behavior by carefully and kindly advising him. Also if we love our fellow men, we will not envy them but rather promote each other's welfare and rejoice in each other's prosperity. Love does not promote itself or brag about its own importance.

5. Does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."

Love never acts out of place or character. It always observes good manners and is never rude. This does not mean we should lavish flattery on someone, but simply be civil in our relations with one another. It also means that we should remove negative thoughts about our Brethren from our minds and not let small things bother us.

6. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth."

That is to say, if we have love we will not be happy about someone else's difficulties, even though they may have done us wrong. The second line refers to truth. Love rejoices in truth because it is a "Divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue." Paul ends this verse by admonishing us not to look for some questionable circumstance in others, which we might construe to be the basis for some evil or wrongdoing. In other words, give your Brother the "benefit of the doubt."

7. "Now abideth faith, hope and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Love is the manifestation of that immortal part of The Great Creator, implanted in mankind. Only by the practice of this virtue can we fulfill the two companions which Paul placed with it. If we do not understand that love represents the true will of our Maker, then we can not have faith and there is no hope for us. We are told in the E.A.⁰ that these virtues admonish us to "have faith in God, hope in immortality and charity for all mankind. The greatest of these is charity, for hope ends when lost in sight, hope ends in fruition; but charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity".

The Bible also says, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy strength, and all thy might; and thy neighbor as thy self".

All these things are true because of one other eternal verity taught in scripture -- GOD IS LOVE! Since God is love, love does indeed extend beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity,

References: *The Bible (King James Version) Clark's Commentaries (Adam Clark)*

ED NOTE: Worshipful Brother George Clifford Ladman is a member and Past Master of Englewood Lodge No. 743 in Englewood, Ohio. He has been in Lodge Education Officer (LEO) for 30 years and this article was recently submitted through our MLR Secretary for consideration in our Quarterly Newsletter. I "think" we need *many more* articles like this!

2010 MISSOURI DDGMs Solution 14 Letters

R S I E G F R I E D Y R I A K
 R I G H E N S E N O S N H O J
 E E C N C L I F T O N A R H A
 L Y S H I O D O M G R I M U T
 E T X W A N O N T L A L I M T
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 K D T N E K T T E K C U D H L
 S D L O N Y E R T U R N E R W

<u>DIST</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DIST</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DIST</u>	<u>NAME</u>
1	Jack KAIRY	18	Joseph DOWELL	32	Larry WHITE
2	Robert HUBBLE	19	Stanton BROWN II	34	Phillip KENT
3	Thomas YUNICK	20	Clarence JENNINGS	35	David NORMAN
4	Larry ODOM	21	John CECILIA	36	James JOHNSON
5	Mike COOK	22	Mitchell WEINSTING	37	Terry DUCKETT
6	Rex BARNETT	23	Stephen LIEBI	38	Otis LONG
7	William BOWSER	26	Thomas HAMLETT	39	Gary KITCHEN
8	Ralph RAY	27A	Ronald REYNOLDS	41	Bill HUMBLE
9	Paul RICHARDSON	27C	Karl BEKE	42	Royce WHEELER
11	David COX	28	Francis JETT	43	Johnnie ESSARY
15	William SIEGFRIED	29	John BAYLESS	44	Donald LA RUE
16	Porter HENSEN	30	Michael DAY	45	Stephen ALLGOOD
17	Larry DAVIS	31	David TURNER	46	Glenn CLIFTON

RULES TO FOLLOW:

You will notice there are eight districts missing. Correct answer will be one of those DDGMs. Go to URL: www.momason.org/lists.asp then click on **DDGM** and you can see the whole list of DDGMs. On the puzzle above, **individually** circle the letters in each of the (**bold-CAPS**) last NAME of each DDGM listed. Then check off or line out the name found in the list. **Do NOT BLACK or BLOT out** the letters in the puzzle as each letter may be used in a different last name also. When all the DDGMs above have been lined through, you should then have those 14 letters left which have not been circled. Write down **these letters only**, from upper left to lower right and this will spell out the first and last name of one of the DDGMs missing. In which DISTRICT is he the DDGM??

Oh, by the way. The answer to our last puzzle was: INDIANAPOLIS

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RP 10-02

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MAY 22nd

That will be this year's Semi-Annual Meeting of the Missouri Lodge of Research will be held at the Masonic Complex at 5:00PM shortly after the completion of the Grand Masters Chance to Advance Class conducted by the Officer's of the Grand Lodge. A **Dinner/Meeting**. Advance ticket sales ONLY! **Order your tickets NOW!**

Our honored guest speaker at this Semi-annual Meeting will be Brother Michael A. Halleran, a member of Emporia Lodge No. 12 and Mount Zion Lodge No. 266, A.F & A.M. of Kansas. Brother Halleran is a freelance writer and a practicing attorney in the Flint Hills of East-Central Kansas.



He has recently had a paper published in the April-March edition of the Scottish Rite Journal of The Southern Jurisdiction of the USA. A humorous article called "Brother Brother's Journal" and an enjoyable read. If you do not receive the SR Journal, maybe a friend who has it can send you a copy of the 1½ page article. I think we will have a particularly evening of very good fellowship at our Semi-annual MLR meeting.

Brother Halleran is a member of Quatuor Cornati Correspondence Circle and the Scottish Rite Research Society (SRRS) where he studies American military Masonry and the traditions of military Lodges worldwide. He received the Mackey Award for Excellence in Masonic Scholarship by the SRRS for his article on Civil War Freemasonry in that society's journal, Heredom, Volume 14 (2006). In addition, he is the author of a regular column for the Scottish Rite Journal. His newest book, "The Better Angels of Our Nature", a story about Freemasonry in the American Civil War to be released in March 2010. It is available to be ordered through his website:

[Http://michaelhalleran.com](http://michaelhalleran.com)