

# Freemasonry and Religion



THE SUPREME COUNCIL, 33°  
ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE  
OF FREEMASONRY  
MOTHER JURISDICTION OF THE WORLD

Published by

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# Some Words of Introduction

**F**REEMASONRY CONFIRMS AND COMPLEMENTS religious faith and church participation. The principles of our Fraternity are based on the same moral absolutes that form the foundation of all true faith. Every Mason must believe in a Supreme Being. He must strive to live morally in accordance with the highest standards of individual character and social conduct. Consequently, every Mason abides by the "Golden Rule," however stated, and labors in all aspects of his life to fulfill Freemasonry's goals of charity in both senses of the word—philanthropy to those in need and loving brotherhood for all the members of humankind.

Freemasonry has always welcomed men of all faiths and religious beliefs to enter its doors. The only requirement is for good men to believe in the Supreme Architect and the immortality of the soul. This faith we take to be the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. And it is from this internal moral foundation that Freemasonry labors to make good men better by building within each Brother of the Craft a Temple of good works and ethical achievements.

Unfortunately, our purpose as well as our very existence is questioned by the uninformed. They fail to see that Masons are invariably churchgoing men who extend the precepts of their faith beyond their sabbath to every day of their lives. They work within their churches and in their communities for the betterment of their fellowmen. Masons, in fact, go beyond narrow sectarianism and limiting dogma. They agree with the statement of the famous statesman and writer Edmund Burke: "The body of all true religion consists, to be sure, in obedience to the will of the Sovereign of the world, in a confidence in His declarations, and in imitation of His perfection."

But what are "His declarations"? They are not, Masons believe, the passing credos of religious sects or cults. Rather, they are the inspired wisdom contained in the Bible, the Talmud, the Koran, the Bhagavad-Gita or any of the other Great Books of Faith that have been universally recognized as man's best guides to happiness on this world and reward in the next. Freemasonry, therefore, welcomes to its ranks Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and all good men of whatever religion who truly aspire to live accordingly to the Creator's will.

Because it is universal in scope and inclusive in membership, Masonry provides a philosophy and a Fraternity where good men can "meet on the Level and part on the Square." It binds all men in a mystic tie of sincere brotherhood and mutual love. Faith and work, soul and body, heart and hand are united as Masons everywhere labor through Freemasonry in peace and harmony to honor the Creator and serve mankind.

Such are the objectives of Freemasonry. Obviously, they complement, not contradict, sound religious beliefs.

This pamphlet presents the ideas of several men of the Cloth as to why they are proud to be Freemasons. The articles, originally printed in *The New Age* magazine, offer convincing proof that Freemasonry is a powerful, universal force for the spiritual improvement of the individual and of society.



C. Fred Klingensmith



*Sovereign Grand Commander*

# What Freemasonry



## Means To Me

THE REVEREND  
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I RECENTLY RECEIVED a letter in which the writer asked: "Why are you a Freemason?" The question caused me to think and reaffirm my feelings about Masonry.

At first I thought about my own forebears. My grandfather was a Mason for 50 years, my father for 50 years, and I have been a Mason for 60 years. This means that my tie with Freemasonry extends back to 1869 when my grandfather joined the Masons.

My feelings on my first entrance into a Masonic Lodge are very clear in memory. I was a young man and it was a great thrill to kneel before the altar of the Lodge to become a Freemason. This must have been the same feeling my father and grandfather experienced before me. And it must also have been identical to the one that many great leaders of America and the world felt as they became Masons. Prominent among this select group are George Washington, Harry Truman and 12 other Presidents as well as countless statesmen and benefactors of humanity.

So I found myself thinking: "What does Freemasonry mean to me?" Of course Masons say that Freemasonry actually begins in each individual Mason's heart. I take this to mean a response to brotherhood and the highest ideals. I recall the story of a man who came to me once and said: "I see that you are a Freemason. So am I." As we talked, he told me of an experience he had years ago. It seems that he joined the Masonic Fraternity shortly after he became 21 years old. When he was stationed in the military, he decided to attend various Lodge meetings. On his first visit to a Lodge in a strange city, he was a bit nervous.

One thought was constantly in his mind; could he pass the examination to show that he was a Mason? As the committee was carefully examining his credentials, one of the members looked him squarely in the eye and said: "Obviously you know the Ritual, so you can enter our Lodge as a Brother Mason. But I have one more question. Where were you made a Mason?" With that he told the young visitor to think about it because when he knew the answer the examiner would not have to hear it. He would see it in his eyes. My friend told me that after a couple of minutes a big smile came to his face and he looked at the examiner, who said: "That's right, in your heart."

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Through Masonic teachings, good men practice love and charity. As a Fraternity they spend millions of dollars...

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Freemasonry is not a religion though, in my experience, Masons have predominantly been religious men and, for the most part, of the Christian faith. Through Freemasonry, however, I have had opportunity to break bread with good men of other than my own Christian faith. Freemasonry does not promote any one religious creed. All Masons believe in the Deity without reservation. However, Masonry makes no demands as to how a member thinks of the Great Architect of the Universe. Freemasonry is, for all its members, a supplement to good living which has enhanced the lives of millions who have entered its doors. Though it is not a religion, as such, it supplements faith in God the Creator. It is supporting of morality and virtue.

Freemasonry has no dogma or theology. It offers no sacraments. It teaches that it is important for every man to have a religion of his own choice and to be faithful to it in thought and action. As a result, men of different religions meet in fellowship and brotherhood under the fatherhood of God. I think that a good Mason is made even more faithful to the tenets of his faith by his membership in the Lodge.

Freemasonry is much more than a social organization. Through Masonic teachings, good men practice love and charity. As a Fraternity they spend millions of dollars to support hospitals, childhood language disorders clinics and research into problems that plague man's physical and mental being. Whenever I visit a Masonic hospital, of which there are many, my eyes fill with tears. As I see a youngster, who could not walk, now able to get from one end of the corridor to the other with the aid of an artificial leg, I am thrilled. For a young person to have the opportunity to become whole and productive is to me exciting and wonderful. And this opportunity is given at no cost to his or her family or the state. Living is beautiful, but sometimes life can be harsh and cruel. Whenever or wherever people are in need Masons are there to help. From large undertakings to the smallest of needs, Masons are always there, caring and serving.

I have always been interested as to why Masons devote so much time to their Fraternity. A good answer to this question came from a Grand Master who once told me that he enjoys his involvement because it gives him another dimension to living. The same answer is echoed by Brethren as they meet in Lodge rooms from one end of our Country to the other and around the world. Many of my best friends, associates and fellow Christians are Freemasons and good churchmen as well.

In my travels at home and abroad a goodly number of Freemasons notice my Masonic ring, which I always wear. With pride they say: "I, too, am a Freemason."

To me, Freemasonry is one form of dedication to God and service to humanity. I too was a Freemason in my heart and so I will remain. I am proud of my involvement. I am proud to walk in fraternal fellowship with my Brethren. Why am I a Freemason? Simply because I am proud to be a man who wants to keep the moral standards of life at high level and leave something behind so others will benefit. Only as I, personally, become better, can I help others to do the same.



## A Mason Without Apology

BISHOP CARL J. SANDERS, 32°, K.:C.:C.:H.:  
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**I** AM A MASON! This plain and simple statement is said with pride, not apology! But to make such a statement is not enough. Reasons are expected and I give them briefly and almost in outline form.

### **Because of the Friendships The Fraternity Has Offered Me**

These friendships reach back 50 years to a rural community in Virginia where I was raised a Master Mason. Those plain, simple men took me into their circle of friendship and sustained me through many of the difficulties a young minister will find in his first year out of the seminary. Across half a century my life has been blessed by friends from all walks of life and many denominational groups. Freemasonry is truly ecumenical in its membership.

In a day of mistrust, suspicion, discrimination, separation and even hatred Freemasonry removes the distance between men. Friendship, morality, and brotherly love are the hallmarks of our relationships. There is a basic integrity in the Fraternity so often lacking in many of life's relationships.

### **Because of the Beautiful Ritual Rooted in Biblical History**

These rituals relating to each Masonic degree are not forms without substance. Out of the ancient landmarks they come with honored words that plumb the depths of human emotion.

As one who loves the beauty and meaning of words, I never tire of watching and listen-



ing to the granting of any degree, the opening and the closing of Lodge meetings.

Ancient Biblical history comes alive in the drama and language of Freemasonry. The beauty and order of a Masonic Lodge added to the symbols so familiar to the Fraternity have meant so much to so many.

### **Because of the Practice of Brotherhood And the Charitable Endeavors**

Masons are not interested in shallow social activity, although they need and enjoy good fellowship. They are not interested only in a community service club, although they want to be proud of the service record and community image of the Fraternity to which they belong.

Masonic homes, hospitals and institutions are rendering a service to "the least of these" in such a manner that underscores the care and the devotion of the people called "Mason." No hospital offers quite the care for crippled children or burned children as do those that bear the name of "Mason." At no cost to the families, these hospitals open their doors and lives are restored and made whole again.

### **Because of the Deep Religious Tone**

Let me quickly and emphatically say that Freemasonry is not and has never been a religion; however, Freemasonry has always been a friend and ally of religion. In 50 years as a minister and as a Mason, I have found no conflict between my Masonic beliefs and my Christian faith. I have not found and do not now find that Freemasonry is "incompatible with Christian faith and practice."

Freemasonry has never asked me to choose between my Lodge and my Church. Masonry has never and will never usurp the place of God. Never has anyone dared to say: "Thou shalt love Masonry with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

There can be only one ultimate loyalty, and the Living God is the only worthy object of such loyalty.

Possibly there are those who have made a god out of Masonry. You can make a god out of anything—your business, your labor union, your civic club, your Lodge and even your Church. You can even make a god out of left-overs (Isaiah 44).

My Masonic activities have never interfered with my loyalty to and my love for my Church. Quite to the contrary, my loyalty to my Church has been strengthened by my Masonic ties. Good Masons are good Churchmen.

The Grand Master of Pennsylvania Masonry says:

Freemasonry is having a faith to live by;  
Freemasonry is being a self to live with;  
Freemasonry is having worthy causes to live for;  
Freemasonry is a never-ending pursuit of excellence.

This, then, is my testimony. I am a Mason without apology!



## I Am Proud To Be A Mason

RABBI SEYMOUR ATLAS, 32°, K.:C.:C.:H.:  
*Beth Judah Synagogue*  
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**A**S A YOUNGSTER, one of my favorite dreams and aspirations lingered with me for many years, until my petition was approved for Initiation into Freemasonry.

Looking back over the years, I realize this desire came from a photograph that I admired and wanted to emulate.

This photograph was one of my father, may he rest in peace, standing with other Masons on the steps of the Masonic Temple in Greenville, Mississippi. As he stood with his Masonic

Brothers, it was as if a feeling of pride and joy was emanating from them; as if there were no equals to them. How proud I was of my father, and from that moment on, I knew I wanted to be a Mason and follow the Masonic teachings as he had.

I was brought up in a religious home, a son of a Rabbi with seven generations of Rabbis preceding me; and yet with this religious background, I felt I could still derive much from and give much to this Fraternity, for the good and welfare of mankind.

When I reached my 21st birthday, one of my first thoughts was to submit my petition to become a Mason! There was no hesitation or second thought, for this was the beginning of fulfilling a lifelong dream.

With prayer and trepidation I awaited the call that my petition was approved.

Having been so informed over 40 years ago, I was filled with pride and anticipation that soon I would be welcomed into the Masonic Bodies. I walked on air and thanked God that I would be able to follow in the footsteps of my father and bring him the joy and pleasure of knowing his son was accepted into the ranks of men of integrity and righteousness.

I shall never forget my first thought as I made my initial entrance into the Masonic Lodge that conferred the Entered Apprentice Degree on me, and followed with the Fellow-Craft and Master Masons Degrees. I was immediately made to feel that I was surrounded by Brothers and felt there were no strangers present. This was one big family that seemed to have adopted me, and I, in turn, was elated to adopt them as my family.

Having completed my Symbolic Lodge degrees and passed all examinations with perfection, I immediately became an instructor for others and became active in Masonry, never failing to attend the meetings and partake of the fellowship as often as my profession would permit, and I must say it was quite frequently on a regular basis.

My cup was running over with pride, and I looked forward to my advancement into higher degrees. I soon advanced through the Scottish Rite Degrees, being a candidate in

several and offered the honor and privilege to speak for the class as to my true feelings and impressions of the particular degrees for which I was the candidate.

My horizon of Masonry expanded and my pride and joy were bubbling and effervescent. I couldn't wait to be able to confer the degrees on others as there was so much I wanted to explain and elaborate about each degree.

I was offered this opportunity and immediately began to study and memorize many parts, and over the years I became very active, holding office, lecturing, and taking an active part in every phase of Masonry where my talents and abilities could be used.

One aspect of Masonry that has made a great impression on me was the ability of all Brothers, regardless of religion, to ask me why did I need Masonry as a Rabbi, because my profession was one of integrity, kindness, honesty, and all the attributes expounded in Masonry. It was difficult for many to grasp my need for this addition and supplement to religion. I worked with men of different religions, as well as of the Hebrew faith, and they were all impressed when I would say that Masonry is not a religion, but to be a Mason we had to believe in God, and if this was the only aspect of our religion and we had no other formal religion, yet we adhered to all the moral teachings of Masonry; this too would have put us in the category of men of integrity and honor. However, Masonry is not a substitute for religion, nor is it a religion.

My experience has shown that Masons are of the most part religious men. I am proud to be a Mason and proud to be a part of an organization that is devoted to helping widows and orphans primarily, and also those who are in need without question or embarrassment.

I am proud to be a Mason and to be a part of a Fraternity dedicated to the upholding of the Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights.

I am proud to be a Mason who believes in the freedom of mankind and the sanctity of human life.

I am proud to be a Mason who believes in the dignity of God's children and opposes

hatred and bigotry, and stands for truth, justice, kindness, integrity and righteousness for all.

I am proud to be a Mason and shall always be happy to number myself among those who uphold those cardinal principles and moral standards of life that are so needed if our organization is to continue on the high level that has been its foundation from its inception. May God grant it continued strength to go, to grow, and to glow so that I and all Masons can exclaim: "I am proud to be a Mason."



## ***It Is No Secret!***

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**I**T IS A GREAT HONOR to pay tribute to Freemasonry. Its amazing, astonishing story is well recorded in the annals of mankind. Masonry has served to make this a better world in which to live. With its roots deeply embedded in antiquity it is one of the world's largest, if not the largest, and most influential Fraternal Orders.

I joined the Masonic Order at the age of 21 and have enjoyed the rights and privileges for almost 60 years. I have had the privilege of being a member of many organizations, but none outside of my church has meant more to me than Masonry. I owe Masonry a debt I can never repay. I thank God for my Masonic Brethren.

It is no secret that many of Masonry's noblest and beautiful teachings are from both the

Old and New Testaments. It is no secret that the Bible holds the central position as the great light of Masonry. It is no secret that Masons love and revere the Bible nor is it a secret that Masonry helped to preserve it in the darkest age of the church when infidelity sought to destroy it. The Bible meets Masons with its sacred message at every step of progress in its various degrees.

It is no secret that high above Masonry's steeple is the ever-watchful and all-seeing eye of Almighty God. Every part of its foundation walls are beautifully built and artistically fashioned by the Supreme Architect of the Universe with the plumb, level and square. The hope of eternal life and assurance of the resurrection to new existence beam from the light of the altar. Its wall is a refuge from the tears and cares of life, and its roof a shelter from the pitiless storms of diversity and grief. Its treasury is opened to the destitute, and relief stands ever ready for the poor. Its cornerstone rests upon the four quarters of the Earth and its doors are never closed to a worthy man. Every man comes of his own free will and accord. This is Masonry!

Besides Masonry's great respect for God and reverence for the Holy Book there are other great doctrines and principles that contribute to the greatness and the important influence of Ancient Freemasonry.

From King Solomon's Temple the great Masonic Fraternity came forth, and its footsteps may be traced through the ages to the present day. Masonry has played an important part in the molding and making of America and in fashioning its fundamental laws and life.

While the true secrets of Masonry are lodged safely in the repository of faithful breasts, there are many things Masonry teaches that are not secret.

It is certainly no secret that the principal purpose of Masonry is first, last and always to produce the finest, noblest type of character through fellowship and mutual helpfulness. Masonry is a progressive discipline. Its members are "seekers" and "strivers" after light and truth by which to live wisely and harmo-

niously. Ever striving toward a higher standard of conduct, Masonry is always a moral discipline. In the struggle for moral excellence, as in the building of King Solomon's Temple, the Supreme Architect is both indispensable and invaluable.

The whole superstructure of Masonry rests upon the Supreme Architect. There are no atheists in Masonry. The universe is viewed as one vast structure which owes its existence to the Supreme Architect. Man, too, is a builder engaged in constructing a Temple of character with which he is supplied materials, patterns and instruments to build.

The purity and innocence symbolized by the Lamb's Skin which he is required to keep unsoiled represent the Mason's highest honor. There is scarcely a page of Masonic Ritual that does not urge the cultivation of the virtue of purity. Necessity is thus laid on Masons to subdue their passions and to acquire the art of self-control. Masonry seeks to build a better world by building better individuals.

It is no secret that with the mournful movement of spade and coffin the Mason is reminded of his end. Death terminates his journey! Death ends man's earthly labors and seals his account for the Supreme Architect to judge.

It is no secret that Masonry teaches the immortality of the soul. The resurrection of the body from the grave is indelibly stamped upon the Mason's mind. While memory holds her seat among the faculties of his soul the Mason can never forget this sacred lesson.

And crowning it all with beautiful lily work, Masons put into practice what they say about brotherly love. "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Masons favor no man for his wealth and frown on no man because of his poverty. Freemasonry shows no deference to learning or nobility. The ground is wondrously level at its altar.

At its altar the oily tongue of slander is silenced. Hatred, envy and malice are buried in oblivion, and faults are forgotten. Masons stand by each other. They uphold each other both in life and in death.

Charity is indeed one of the most beautiful

columns in the Temple of Masonry. Masonry never wearies of stressing the need for charity. To sympathize with each other in misfortune, to be compassionate for another's miseries and to return peace to troubled minds are among the great aims of Masonry.

All Masons obligate themselves to help, aid and assist the poor, the distressed, the widows and orphans. Nor is charity restricted to fellow Masons only, but extended to all. It shares the common bonds of race as children of one great Creator, and seeks to unite men of every race, color, sect and opinion. Masonry practices the Golden Rule and seeks always to eliminate divisive forces which build walls between people.

The compass enables the Mason to draw a perfect circle, to work to the end that harmony and peace may eventually encircle the world. It offers relief to the helpless, wraps the drapery of charity over homes darkened by sorrow, wipes tears away, soothes sorrows, feeds the hungry, heals the sick, and ministers to the burned and crippled.

Where in all the annals of time is such an organization to be found outside of the church? Yet it is no secret that Masonry is not a religion, nor a church. A good Mason keeps his priorities in order. Masonry respects every man's right to the religion of his choice and never claims or desires to be any man's religion or a substitute for it. Masons believe in tolerance. Masonry helps and encourages a man to be a better church member, and a good church member usually makes a good Mason. Some of the most religious persons I have ever known have been Masons. For any person to allow Masonry to become his religion or to take the place of his church is a mistake and not due to Masonic teaching but to someone's misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

It is no secret that Masonry helps men to be better men and to build a better world. Masonry is a living epistle, known and read of all men, declaring to the world that it is a true and tried organization, a great and wonderful fraternity of fellowship, charity and benevolence.



Many years ago when a theological student in Boston I heard the great poet Edwin Markham quote these beautiful words which seem to me to summarize the meaning of Freemasonry:

We are blind until we see  
That in the human plan  
Nothing is worth the making  
That does not make the man.

Why build these cities glorious  
If Man unbuilted goes?  
In vain we build the work  
Unless the builder grows.

## WHY I AM A MASON



THE REVEREND LOUIS R. GANT, 33°  
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“ARE YOU A MASON?” The question was asked by the Master of the local Lodge. We were about to do a funeral service together. The answer was easy: “Yes.” That same question has been asked, and the same answer given many times in my ministry. Until recently no one ever asked, “Why?” That is a bit harder to answer. But let me try....

It was in a little East Texas town that I first encountered a man who called himself a “Freemason.” As I observed his behavior in the community, it was evident to me that he had something and knew something that I wanted to have and know. There was a behavior that seemed to supplement his religious faith. As we talked, it was soon clear that I wanted to become a part of that group of men who called themselves “Masons.”

There are some things that I don't remember about that night I took that first step toward a rich and rewarding experience that has enhanced my life. But there are some things that I will never forget. There was a foundation of trust...trust in God as the One to whom I could look for support and counsel...trust in a Brother who could lead me in my blindness to the light of understanding. I discovered the reality of prayer as the place to begin before undertaking any task.

So I began the journey that through the years was to lead me to a new understanding of myself, my fellow human beings and God. On that journey I discovered that I was not searching for some particular religious creed that would set me apart from other people. I was in fact discovering some great principles that would enable me to live life at its very best. Principles like faith...hope...charity...wisdom...beauty...truth. I would discover that there is a universal love and respect for all persons of all religious creeds and beliefs. My Masonry would let me stand with my Brothers as an equal no matter what their theology or religious beliefs.

While Masonry has never been a religion for me, it has set before me some very high moral and ethical standards that have supported my religious beliefs. It has also confirmed my duty to "feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and support the widows and orphans." While it is impressive to know the extent of Masonry's charitable organizations and agencies that work for healing and health (some say we spend over \$1 million a day), it is much more impressive to see a child walk, or a child see, or a child be nursed back to health from a severe burn. Most would not have been able to receive such help had it not been for the benevolent concern of some Mason. So I saw duty acted out in deeds.

As I remember those early days working in the Lodge, I remember the care and support of those fellow Lodge members. They made me feel that I was someone special about whom they really cared. Across the years as I have moved to different churches (some United Methodist ministers move a lot), and

visited in different Lodges in different places, that same feeling of support and Brotherhood has been there. Because of my position in the Church and membership in the Lodge, I have always felt wanted and accepted. That's a very special feeling!

While this great Country of ours has felt the impact of leaders who have been Masons, much of what Masonry represents is seen in those men who have lived the principles of Freemasonry in their respective communities. On my journey I have met some of them. One of them was Ben LeNorman, whose honesty was known and respected. He was an example to the youth of the little town where he lived. That example brought many a young man to knock on Masonry's door. Another was Don Davis, whose compassion for those who were hurting was unsurpassed. He would give of his time and money so that a crippled child might have dignity and health. He was willing to reach out to help anyone who might be hurting. No time was too valuable to give. No distance was too far to fly or drive. No effort was too great to make. When he heard the cry for help, he was ready to respond. These were good men who were better men because they were Masons. Neither of them will have their names in the books of history, but they will always be remembered by those whose lives they touched. And the best thing is that you know these men. Their names may be different, but they are a part of every Lodge and live in every corner of this great land of ours. They are those who believe that Masonry is not something to commit to memory, it is something to live. You never hear it in their boasting...you see it in their living.

So the question "Why are you a Mason?" can be answered. It has allowed me to grow personally...to serve my God...and to reach out in concern to my fellow human beings. It has supported my personal faith and work as a churchman. Let no one say you cannot be a Christian and a Mason at the same time. I know too many who are both and proud to be both. Ben was...Don was...I am.

I will always be glad that one day in a little East Texas town....

# Freemasonry

and

# Religion



THE REVEREND DR. W. KENNETH LYONS, JR.,  
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**I**T has come to light that there are those who label Masonry as a religion. Even among British Methodists there has been an outcry as to the use of Masonry as a means of getting in some professions where only Brothers advance Brothers, and where British Masons have neglected the church for their Lodges. Sad to say some of these criticisms do have a basis of truth in the way that "certain" Masons apply what they believe to be Freemasonry. Application, however, is often a far cry from the true spirit and actual teaching of the Fraternity. I have found in my limited knowledge that the Scottish Rite and the Symbolic Lodge espouse the belief of no *one* religion, but are a respecter of all major moral religions of the world. Scottish Rite and Symbolic Lodge Masonry have never inferred nor stated that their edifices were to be houses of worship, but places where every good man's religion would be equally respected and persecution for one's religious beliefs would not be tolerated. Democracy is taught by all major Masonic Fraternities as opposed to totalitarian forms of government. A government, or Lodge, which states that one religion must be practiced in order for one to exist peaceably in that society is an infringement upon the freedoms that we hold dear in American society.

As a Christian minister, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I also believe that any Lodge

prohibiting me from holding that belief or berating me for being a Christian is not a Lodge of "Brothers" but a stronghold of bigotry. This same belief, however, should hold true in a Lodge of "Brothers" for a Jewish Mason.

Facing squarely the misconceptions and criticisms concerning our Fraternity is the only constructive way of dealing with this issue. Much of the ritual of our Fraternity does in fact come from Old and New Testament Scriptures. It is the most solemn of all responsibilities to administer God's Word. It is also believed by most theologians that in Old and New Testament Scriptures the Jewish and Christian communities are stated as the primary caretakers of the faith. Masonry has indeed recognized this great Scriptural resource and incorporated a belief in a Supreme Being as its foundation. Masonry, however, is not the primary caretaker of the faith but a respecter of faith practice.

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**I have found...that the Scottish Rite and the Symbolic Lodge espouse the belief of no *one* religion, but are a respecter of all major moral religions of the world.**

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Practicing faith in one's God is appropriately ritualized and sacramentalized in the synagogue, church, mosque, etc. The major part of the lives we exhibit, as God-believing Masons, should be learned within these houses of worship. Regular attendance at Lodge is no faith substitute for regular attendance at church or synagogue. We are also learning that the scheduling of Masonic activities during worship hours only enhances justifiable criticism of our Fraternity by responsible religious leaders.

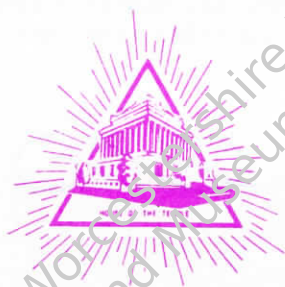
Certainly there will continue to be bona fide Masonic teachings which run contrary to some religious denominational practices. Masonic

Brethren who fashion our rituals, practices and found Masonic Orders will fall prey to human error when dealing with theological and secular issues. We must be aware of this and be willing to change for the better. I do believe, however, that Masonry is represented more by the way we of the contemporary Lodge live, than just by what ancient Masonry teaches. The teachings of Masonry *and* the lives you and I live as Jewish and Christian Masons will combine with others of the Fraternity to represent what Masonry is in this century. Our Jewish Brothers will espouse Moses, Abraham and David while Christian Masons will also speak of Saint Paul and Jesus Christ. Together, hopefully, we will exhibit unity and "Brotherhood" to those who hate on the basis of race, creed, color and religion.



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