

## **Report of the Grand Historian, V.:W.:Dean W. Heinemann 2008 Grand Lodge Communication**

Most Worshipful Grand Master and Brethren all,

### **Symbolism of the Entered Apprentice Degree**

Before our first entrance into a lodge of Masons, we were asked a series of questions. We all pledged a desire for knowledge and a commitment of service; cheerful conformity to all ancient usages and established customs; we freely offered ourselves as a candidate for the mysteries of Freemasonry; we professed a belief in a Supreme Being and in a transition to a future life. We were informed that we would be instructed in morality; that we should seek light; that we were starting a transition from this life to a better life; that material possessions of this life would not follow us to the next life; that we were being left with a friend who would prepare us for initiation. The transition started in the preparation room and we put our trust in that new friend. The garment provided by the Lodge reminds us that we should regard the internal qualities and not the external appearance of those we deal with. The hoodwink represents darkness and its removal suggests that we do not make the great things of life but find them instead. The cable tow is a symbol of the external restraints placed upon the life of man and its removal after the obligation indicates that this is no longer needed.

*We pledged that we had a desire for knowledge but have we passed that knowledge on to the next generation of Masons?*

*We pledged a commitment of service but do we really serve our Lodges or serve our community?*

*Have we really started that transition from this life to a better life?*

*Your answers to these questions will dictate the future of Freemasonry.*

We were given one shoe to wear; that shoe symbolizes humility and that we were about to walk on clean or holy ground. We were walking the same path and being treated in the same way as all Masons before us. They had been judged not by worldly wealth and honors but by humility, faith and sincerity. We were forced to meet several obstructions upon our entrance into the Lodge; questions were asked and answers were given. We were confused, overwhelmed but never alone.

*Do you remember that feeling; that initial feeling of brotherhood?*

The form of a Lodge is an oblong from East to West, North to South. It represents the world and denotes the universality of Masonry. It teaches us that a Mason's charity should be as far-reaching. Circumambulation of the candidate allows the Brethren to see that he has been properly prepared and teaches that Masonic life is a progressive journey, from station to station and that we must continually search for more light, for more knowledge. The obligation we repeat binds us to the Fraternity and to the Brethren of the Lodge. The ceremony of initiation binds the Lodge to the candidate.

The Great Lights of Masonry are the furniture of the Lodge. We are constantly reminded that we must regulate our conduct according to the teachings in the Holy Scriptures; act honestly by the Square; restrain our passions by the line created by the Compasses. In the Rite of Salutation, the candidate salutes each station which is symbolic of his respect for authority. Presentation of the apron or the Rite of Investiture reminds the candidate of the purity of life and that rectitude of conduct he is expected to practice. It's pure and spotless surface provides an ever present reminder. The working tools of an Entered Apprentice Mason represent those moral and spiritual values, habits and forces by means

of which a man is enabled to reshape the crude and often stubborn material of his character, to adjust himself to the needs and requirements of human society. The new Mason discovers he has nothing of value on his person during the Rite of Destitution. It symbolizes the need of every Mason to alleviate the distress of his Masonic Brothers, their families and the general public. This may mean a kind word, a much needed pat on the back, or a smile. The Rite of Destitution symbolizes compassion for all. The newest Mason like the first stone of a building is placed in the Northeast Corner to signify a beginning; the beginning of a new building; the beginning of a new life. The lesson taught is that the new Mason is the cornerstone of the Craft.

*I ask you to rediscover those first Masonic feelings; Make a commitment to your Lodge & to your community; Teach the next generation of Masons what you have been taught and together we will drive complacency out of our Fraternity.*

References:

- a. Standard Work and Freemason's Guide to the Symbolic Degrees of the MWGL F&AM of Washington, First Edition, 2007.
- b. Introduction To Freemasonry, New Candidate Education Program, GL F&AM of Washington, February 1999.