



The Trestle Board



The Voice of Franklin's Masonic Bodies

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Brother Dil's Speech From the Bicentennial Celebration Gala

THE MASONIC FAMILY

Since the beginning of time or at least, since the appearance of man upon the earth, the family has been the basic unit of life. Man was meant to have his mate who, forsaking all others, would cleave to him and be a part in rearing offspring for the perpetuation of the race.

Going back in to the early history of the family, the Bible records that Adam and Eve, with their sons, Cain and Abel, were actually our "First Family". Their one time address, you may recall, was the Garden of Eden. Several hundred years later, we had another "First Family" in the navigator, Noah, his wife and sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. It is written in the 19th verse of the ninth chapter of Genesis "and of them was the whole world overspread." Further genealogy is set forth in that seldom-read portion of the Scriptures known as the "The Begets".

Or you may prefer the version of the primitive cave man choosing a woman of the tribe that met his liking and dragging her away to set up housekeeping in their cavern home as an overture to rearing a family. Whatever your conception of the family, you must admit that there have been families since there have been people, each a closed corporation of husband and wife, one male and one female plus their young.

Not long ago I heard reference made to the "MASONIC FAMILY". Since no ritualistic analogy of Masonry and family come to mind, I asked several friends, all more conversant with Masonic Lore than I, just what was meant by the phrase. I believe the idea was worth exploring.

Their answers as to what they considered the Masonic Family to be varied, but the consensus was that a strong tie, I almost might say a family tie, existed between them. Whether or not an exact comparison of a Masonic Lodge and a modern family can be developed, I feel it is a subject well worth looking into.

At the outset, let me give you a few of the definitions I received. One advanced without any hesitation was that "the Masonic Family consisted of a number of Free and Accepted Masons duly assembled with the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses and a Charter empowering them to work."

Another friend, after some thought, gave it as his belief that the Mother Lodge and the Worshipful Master constituted the heads of the Masonic Family, with all Free and Accepted Masons as members of that family.

Another said that since brotherhood is the ground work of all Masonry, and since brothers are members of the same family, then surely the existence of a Masonic Family must be admitted.

Still another, a man of advanced standing in the Craft, accepted the premise of the Masonic Family without question, and without describing it, discussed its effect upon a Mason in his lodge, in his home and as a citizen of the United States. It is his approach to the meaning of a Masonic Family which I shall use as my theme.

The spirit of fraternalism - of brotherly love that prevails in a Masonic Lodge is a source of joy and inspiration to all within its portals. In the ideal family circle, respect and love shut our the world with its cares and sorrows. In the lodge, one is among brothers whose affection and loyalty is a strong bulwark against the troubles and disappointments of life.

Lodge Dates

- Jan 14** 6:00pm Dinner & MM Degree
- Jan 18** 6:00pm Dinner by York Rite
(Proceeds to go to Autism Fund)
7:00pm Stated Meeting
- Jan 26** 6:00pm Dinner & MM Degree
- Feb 11** 6:00pm Dinner & 2 EA Degrees

York Rite Dates

- Jan 11** 6:00pm Stated Meeting

OES Dates

- Jan 12** 6:30pm Refreshments
7:30pm Stated Meeting
- Jan 23** 12:00 pm Friendship Meeting

Not only does the lodge offer a social atmosphere, but it ministers to the spiritual needs of the members. It has been said that to many Masons, Masonry is a religion, a means by which he can worship God without the trappings of secular dogma. While it is not the aim of Masonry to supplant the church in any way, it is nevertheless true that if one follows faithfully the Masonic teachings or morality and brotherly love, he can face the hereafter unafraid. He shall have lived the good life.

To many another Mason, the lodge is literally as well as figuratively his family. His Masonic associates are in many instances his only relatives. He yields to them and to his lodge the same unquestioning devotion that a little child feels for its parents. In return the lodge enfolds him with the tender care that an adoring father or mother might bestow.

To regard Masonry merely as an assembly of certain men periodically for ritualistic work is to overlook entirely the true concept of the order. The lodge in loco parentis seeks to promote the welfare and progress of each individual member. It supports and comforts the member in time of trouble and despair. It rejoices in his successes. It is continuous in its efforts to help him achieve a well-balanced and happier relationship with his fellow men. What family could do more? Sad it is to relate that in this vale of tears, many families do far less.

Masonry is not a garment to be put on only when the member is sitting in lodge or visits his temple to rest and refresh himself. On the contrary, it is a gracious mantle that should be worn proudly at all times and in all places. If it could be so easily taken off and resumed, Masonry would lose its efficacy (capacity for serving to produce effects (effectiveness)) as a force for good.

Masonry continually manifests itself in the home where it affects not only the mother and the children but all who come within the scope of its benign influence. In the Masonic Family, there is respect and obedience without loss of that close comradeship which knits parents and children together.

In the wave of juvenile delinquency which is sweeping the nation and giving great concern to civic officials, law enforcement officers and educators, much of the blame is attributed to a lack of parental training and guidance at the family level. In homes where Masonic principles are taught and followed, we find the children being brought up "in the way they should go". As the twig is bent, the tree inclines.

Throughout America, there are many families that are truly Masonic Families, the sons filing their petitions for the entered apprentice degree as soon as they become of lawful age. There are few things that can gladden a Masonic father's heart more than to have his son express a desire to become a Mason.

Witness the experience of a dear friend of mine who has an only son. This friend, a Past Master and active in Masonry from the Blue Lodge to the Shrine, often deplores the fact that the young man, entering his late twenties, exhibited no interest whatever in Masonry or in fraternalism of any kind. Then the crisis in the Middle East came along and the son was called. He served with distinction and I kept more or less in touch with his military life through his father's proud reports.

One day his father rushed into my office waving a letter. His face was wreathed in smiles and I felt sure that his son had at least been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. "Here, read this," he exclaimed, thrusting the letter into my hands. This is what accounted for his happiness.

I read:

"You know, dad, you have time to do a lot of thinking in the military. In the field, in camp, on patrols, I have been watching the men in my outfit who are Masons. There is something about their outlook on things and their relationship with each other that makes me believe I have been missing a lot. When I get home again, provided there is no sniper bullet with my name on it, I want to petition your lodge." There were tears in his father's eyes as he carefully folded the letter and replaced it in his wallet.

Masonry teaches us that in the sight of God all men are Brothers. Rich or poor, high or low, weak or powerful. They have been created by a loving Father and should be united by fraternal bonds. Thus the Masonic Family in its world classification is a force in advancing truth, temperance, tolerance, fortitude, prudence, justice.

What a priceless boon it would be to mankind if those things for which Masonry stands were to permeate all nations. Distrust, strife, suspicion and hatred would disappear to be replaced by brotherly love. Then indeed would a new age dawn, spears would be beaten into pruning hooks, and the lion would lie down with the lamb.

That the world is a turmoil today is not the fault of Masons or of Masonry. A nation which denies God steadfastly refused to agree on any program of international concord. Peace under such adverse circumstances seems remote though not unattainable. But peace is nevertheless a goal and one all Masons should strive to achieve for the nations of the earth.

Such therefore is my conception of the Masonic Family as it appears in the lodge, in the home and on the world stage. Perhaps some of you are wondering why I do not develop the idea of the Masonic Family in the world to a greater degree for surely there is ample material. I can only say that I have attempted to prepare a talk on Masonry in a lighter vein; and this cannot be done if the subversive forces and other evils that beset our beloved country are to receive their due. For surely I cannot treat any enemy force with tenderness and compassion. Considering this foul topic arouses all your indignation as a Christian, your patriotism as a citizen and your fraternalism as a Mason. No true Mason could feel otherwise.

We have just under two million Masons in the United States, and in their attitude toward political questions they are as American as pumpkin pie or corn on the cob. Our ranks are filled with Republicans, Democrats, Dixiecrats, Laborites. Some favor the middle east conflict while others consider it a serious mistake. Some oppose socialized medicine and health reform. So it goes.

Just as opinions differ in the average family, so do Masons differ in the Masonic Family. It is well for our country that we do have two political parties and that Masons do their political thinking for themselves. But in the matter of world peace, I feel certain that we present a united front. It would be hard to imagine a Mason defending any ideology that would be so openly opposed to truth, justice, brotherly love and reverence for our Heavenly Father. So let us continue to discuss the Masonic Family and leave our denunciation of other thought and attendant treachery and brutality to another time.

The Masonic Family very much like the common family believes that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull fellow". Consequently the ritualistic work incident to the admission of Entered Apprentices, Fellowcraft and Master Masons is far from being the whole of a well-rounded Masonic Life.

In most communities, the Masonic Hall or "Temple" has the facilities and appointments of a first class club. The members use it as such and through pleasant social contact get to know the real worth of their brothers.

As we are told in the lecture on the symbolism of the 24-inch gauge, Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of the gauge for the more noble and glorious purpose of dividing their time. "It (the gauge) being divided into 24 equal part is emblematical of the 24 hours of the day which we are taught to divide into three equal parts whereby we find eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy brother, eight hours for our usual vocations and eight hours for refreshment and sleep."

The division set apart for the service of God and distressed brotherhood may well be spent in the center of local Masonic activity, the lodge hall.

In matters of culinary art, Masons, occupy high place. Occasions when the craft is summoned to the banquet table vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and even from lodge to lodge; but the time when the third degree is bestowed is popular with a majority. So I might observe that the Masonic Family is as well fed as the family in which Mother is an expert cook and father is what is known as "a good provider".

Dinners are a contributing factor to good fellowship in the American scene and Masons recognize the importance of such functions in cementing the bonds of brotherly love and and unity. In addition, the addresses and other entertainment which highlight these Masonic meals contribute to the members' cultural growth and joy of living. Few of us care for the epithet of "knife and fork Masons", yet the attraction of those conclaves at which a banquet or buffet is to be served cannot be denied. But most families have certain members who like their food.

I might continue talking about the good times of the Masonic Family, but if I am truly to draw a comparison with the average American Family, I must admit that families today are much concerned over the high cost of food, possible easing for rent controls and other things that raid the family wallet. We lump these all together and call it "economics".

The truth is that there's no such thing as an economic force. The so-called economic force cannot exist apart from people. Therefore to alter or improve what is called economics means simply to alter or improve people. Jesus knew this truth. So did Moses. There is nothing at all complex or confusing about the Sermon on the Mount or the Ten Commandments. Anyone can understand them. Yet no economist from their times until ours has written a better code of human behavior. Masons are aware of this.

Hiram Lodge No. 7 F. & A.M.
115 2nd Ave. S.
Franklin, TN 37064

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That is one reason why no involved and confusing theories of economics and social science are found in our ritual. Masons know that the key to a better world is not the abstruse theories but in the practical application of good moral precepts to individual lives in everyday living.

A Master Mason who lives up to his obligations will not be far from the Sermon on the Mount or the Ten Commandments. Moreover, he will be a happy man - and what better thing can life offer?

Perhaps you will question the propriety of alluding to the doubts and concerns of the American Family while discussing the happiness of the Masonic Family. Why not? Like all right-thinking and God-Fearing people, we Masons are willing to face facts. Helping a distressed brother is a basic element in the Masonic Code. We do not deny the existence of a situation which causes distress. We recognize it and take steps to relieve it.

Naturalists have disproved the theory that ostriches at the approach of danger thrust their heads into the sand. But many Americans follow a practice closely akin to it. By meeting a problem head on, we frequently discover that it was not problem at all. Somebody once quipped that "to-day is the to-morrow you worried about yesterday."

Living up to Masonic obligations will contribute to the happiness of the Masonic Family; while a courageous, resolute approach to life's problems will dissolve many of the average family's fears.

Friends, let us hope - hope for a bright future for our nation, hope for the passing of war and the return of peace, hope for the eventual brotherhood of all mankind.

As the poet sings:

If to hope overmuch be an error,

It is one that the wise have preferred

When we think how oft hearts have been saddened

By evils which never occurred.

HIRAM LODGE OFFICERS 2010

Worshipful Master	Larry Davis	Senior Deacon	James Amundsen
Senior Warden	Russ Wharton	Junior Deacon	Phillip Phillips
Junior Warden	Dale Pewitt	Senior Steward	James Full
Treasurer	Jesse Riggs, PM	Junior Steward	Jason Rein
Secretary	Dan Welch, PM	Tiler	David Moran, PM