

LEADERSHIP AND THE SURVIVAL OF FREEMASONRY

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Brother President, Most Worshipful Grand Masters of Freemasonry in Canada, Grand Lodge Officers, Guests and observers.

Thank you very much Most Worshipful Brother Lusk for your kind introduction. You kept it reasonably short and I will see to it that the penalty is not inflicted. That is a little bit of a private joke.

Brethren, I certainly consider it an honour and a privilege to have been invited here tonight to talk to this august body, to this very important conference perhaps one of the most important conferences for Freemasonry in our great country and I thank you very much for the very kind invitation.

Brethren during the past several years, both in my profession and in Freemasonry I have had the opportunity of listening to many outstanding, inspirational, and dynamic, speakers. But there is one who has had a most significant impact on my life. Some of you may have heard him, at the Conference of Grand Masters in 1988 at Cedar Rapids Iowa. I talk about a Freemason, I talk about a man of the cloth, the man of positive thinking, the late Dr. Norman Vincent Peale who passed away very quietly on Christmas Eve 1993. He had a very strong impact on my life. I believe that I have changed its direction, because of reading the books that he wrote, The Power of Positive Thinking, the Power of Positive Living, Enthusiasm Makes the Difference, The Power of Ethical Management, You Can if you Think You Can and many others. It had always been my dream that I could bring Dr. Peale to Calgary. We almost made it; but unfortunately he's now in the Grand Lodge above and he certainly will have an impact wherever he is. Now Brethren, I don't pretend to think that I am going to have the same impact on your lives as he had upon mine. But if I can get one person here tonight to reflect about and act upon what I might say then I will not have laboured in vain or spent my strength for naught.

Leadership! It is loyalty, it's energy, it's attitude, a positive attitude, it's dynamic, it's enthusiasm, risktaking, it's strategy, honesty, it's inspiration and it's prestige. Certainly if you pull all those words together you will come up with the word leadership. Granted that is an acronym, which kind of reminds me of a little story about the guest speaker. The after dinner speaker got up and he said, "Ladies and gentlemen I graduated from Yale Y A L E Yale." He began and took 40 minutes and talked about Y for youth then he went on and he talked about another 30 minutes about A for attitude, the positive one, and then L for being a good listener and the audience listened for another 45 minutes, and finally he finished with E for example about 1 1 /2 to 2 hours later. There were two gentlemen sitting beside him discussing the speech. One said "well I'm certainly pleased he wasn't a graduate of the Ryerson Institute of Science and Technology and the other one said yes, he was certainly full of sincerity, honesty, integrity and trust; wasn't he.

Brethren, I submit to you tonight that never before in the history of mankind has there been a greater need for leadership. Never before in the history of churches, of schools, of service clubs has there been a greater need for leadership. A few years ago a University of Michigan researcher, did studies in terms of the greatest fears and the greatest problems in society. He had ten of them but let me just mention the first three. The first one was the fear of a nuclear war. Now granted, with the reduction in world tension, the nuclear war fear is somewhat subsided, but I was listening to a radio broadcast last night and it was mentioned that the fear is still present. The second problem or the second fear was that of a world wide famine and as we see the problems in the third world countries, that fear is still present. But the third fear or problem that was recognized by this researcher was the lack of leadership in today's society. If I was to ask each one of you here tonight to identify the greatest leaders of our times what names would you come up with. Think about it. If we surveyed the literature on leadership we will probably identify 3,4, or 5; Sir Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt; Mahatma Gandhi; two of those of course were Freemasons; Schweitzer, Einstein, and some of the literature even states the late John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King who were both slain in their prime, may have made their mark on leadership. It really is a sad commentary in this world that we can only identify 5 or 6 great leaders.

I also submit Brethren, that never before in the history of Freemasonry has there been a greater need for effective, dynamic, prestigious leadership; particularly at a time when we have Freemasons staying away in droves from our Lodge meetings. I have not always been convinced that we have a membership problem. We have 156,000 Freemasons in this country that not even the Skydome in Toronto could accommodate. Yes, never before in the history of Freemasonry has there been a greater need, particularly when we have more Freemasons going out the back door than we have coming in the front door; and we have to ask ourselves why? and also particularly at a time when the average age in Freemasonry is increasing at an alarming rate. Yes Brethren, leadership, is so desperately needed for the survival of Freemasonry. That is why I have chosen as my topic for tonight: Leadership, and the survival of Freemasonry.

Let me pose one or two questions, before I begin and go off in various tangents. Can Freemasonry, as we know it, survive well into the twentieth century? I recall Dr. Peale, standing on that platform and I believe these were his words "As long as there are God fearing, moral man, Freemasonry will exist well into the twenty first century". -- I fear not. Can Freemasonry under its present form and structure exist well into the twentieth century? --- I fear not. How can Freemasonry survive well into the twenty first century. Yes, with God fearing and moral man, --- and leadership,

Leadership! What do we mean by the term leadership? If you look at the literature again on the topic of leadership you will find many definitions. I've come up with two more common ones, the long and the short of it. Leadership is the exploitation of every opportunity to take people forward towards the common goal, although known by all, often grows dim or gets lost in the challenges and the problems of our day to day operations. Taking people forward!! The short of it; Leadership is the art of causing others to want to do what the leader thinks needs to be done; causing others to want. Causing and want; terms that go together.

Leadership and management, is there a difference? Yes Brethren, I think that there is a significant difference; they are not synonymous terms; they are not interchangeable. The leader inspires, the manager maintains. The leader is the original, the manager is the copy. The leader does right things, the manager does things right. The leader looks at the horizon, the manager looks at the bottom line. The leader is concerned with people, the manager with form and structure. The leader paints creatively, the manager paints by numbers. What are you? Are you a leader or are you a manager? Do you paint by numbers or do you paint creatively. Do you inspire or do you maintain? Do you challenge the status quo or do you accept it. As a Grand Lodge Officer, have you caused others to want to do what you think is necessary for Freemasonry. Are you causing others to want to do what you believe is necessary for the survival of Freemasonry. How do you cause others to want to do; to take people forward toward that common goal which often grows dim or even lost in our day to day operations. I submit Brethren that there are five crucial ingredients of effective, dynamic, enthusiastic leadership; - challenging, inspiring, enabling, modelling and encouraging.

Challenging the process! Challenging the status quo; examining carefully the very form and very structure of an organization. John F. Kennedy once said that there are risks and there are costs in a program of action, but they are far less than the long range risks and costs of a program of inaction. Great leaders cause things to happen, they don't wait for things to happen. Some may compare a leader with an orchestra conductor; sometimes you have to turn your back to the audience and face the music. We too, in Freemasonry require that same kind of leadership. Leaders that are prepared to challenge the status quo; keeping in mind and building upon the strengths; -- moral truth and virtue; the four cardinal virtues and the theological values, -- they have been the strengths of our organization.-- I think it is important for leaders to shake up those in the comfortable pews; to make changes; not to accept the status quo. I know there are a number of things that I would like to do particularly in Freemasonry and I will tell you what they are. Certainly they would disturb a few people, but there are risks and there are costs in that program of action. I would see the formal structure of Freemasonry being divided into three separate branches: the ceremonial, the administrative and the fraternal or what I call the leadership.

Let's take a minute and talk about the ceremonial; or the ritual work. Brethren during the past few years I have been somewhat concerned about the quality of the ritual work in lodges. Just three or four weeks ago I was in a Lodge meeting where the North East Angle Charge was given (it is the same in both rites). It, to me, is the most important charge in all of Freemasonry. The man giving that charge was prompted every third word; the Worshipful Master was squirming; the Director of Ceremonies was squirming; I was becoming very embarrassed as was everyone else, but the man was doing his level best. Brethren, we need to concentrate on the ceremonial part of Freemasonry by having those Brethren who do ritual well do it all the time, because they can do it best. Let those who do ritual do it because they strive for excellence; and they succeed in portraying excellence. Too often we are forcing brethren to participate in ritual work, that neither have the ability nor the talent, nor the energy, and sometimes not the time, to do that work well. I once heard someone say, you give him a piece of work and if he does it enough times he will get it right eventually. But what kind of message are we leaving with the candidate. You know I saw a little picture sometime ago and there was a man with a baton directing a pig and the caption underneath stated; Don't try to teach a pig to sing it wastes your time and annoys the pig. I submit that we want to have excellence in our rituals and our ceremonial work. Let those who do it well, continue to do it well and not belabor those who neither have the talent nor the ability to do it.

Let's look at administration. Now we are very fortunate in our Craft. We have many talented, expert, and knowledgeable Brethren, who could do great service to the Craft; in the administration of the Craft. But we don't always get the right people doing it. Sometimes we hang onto prerequisites; they must have a rank or a title in order to serve on a Grand Lodge committee or some other committee. I'm not sure that prerequisites make them any better a person when it comes to administering. We have that talent out there and we need to use it. Talent is just like muscle either you use it or you lose it. We have driven away many outstanding Masons because we have not given them the opportunity; a rank and title should not be necessary before they can do that. I could go on with that topic for days.

Fraternal leadership! As I said before it is the most crucial need of Freemasonry. We have some very capable leaders in our Craft and they are well represented tonight. If they are going to be leaders they should be out there leading not being in the Grand Lodge offices administrating. Let those who lead, lead and those who can administer, administer. I often wonder if we should have a little sign for every Grand Secretary's door. "Italiano Granda Secretarya - Keepa youra handsa offa. Yes, let those who can administer, administer, and allow those Grand Lodge officers to get out into the Craft leading, directing, causing the lodges to develop what we want for Freemasonry. I am going propose one other thing that some of you may not like; but I'm going to say it anyway. For years it has been traditional in Grand Lodges to have appointed officers. They are usually appointed because of the contribution they have made to their Grand Lodge. I think that has been wonderful but in today's society when leadership is so necessary, out in our craft, I think we should be selecting the best possible leaders for the appointed Grand Lodge officers and let them go out and do the fraternal work; the leadership work which they are capable of doing. There may be other ways to recognize the contributions of the older Brethren who have contributed so much to their craft.

We seem to look down upon animals, don't we. Those dumb old animals. But have you ever seen a fish walk, or an squirrel fly at great heights, or a rabbit swim? No. You've seen fish swim, you've seen rabbits hop and run, and you've seen squirrels climb trees, and you've seen eagles soar at great heights. That's what we should be doing in Freemasonry; Building upon our strengths; looking at the form and the structure; and let the fish swim, and the rabbits hop and run and the squirrels climb trees, and the eagles soar to great heights. Soar with our strengths, let those who can administer, administer well and let those leaders lead who can lead well because strong leaders are so necessary. We must challenge the process not only within our own organization, but throughout mankind if we hope to succeed.

Not only must we challenge, but we must inspire. We must inspire what is called the shared vision. But before we can inspire that shared vision we must have a vision. We must have a plan of action; a long term plan. Organizations don't succeed because they plan to fail, they don't succeed because they fail to plan. Every organization needs a long term plan. I was so pleased in conversations with a brother last night to hear what is happening with the Masonic Renewal committee. I was also pleased in reading your agenda that you do in fact, at this conference, have on the agenda, three and five year plans. I think it is about time, because plans and visions are so necessary for the success of any organization. Not one of you would build a house without having some idea in mind what it would look like when it is finished, nor would you go on a trip unless you knew where you were going. The same thing must apply to Freemasonry.

That plan must be a shared plan. It can't be one man's idea. It can't last for one year; the theme or mission of one Grand Master. All Grand Masters must work together on that plan or that vision. I believe it is quite possible that we can have every Freemason in this great country of ours, participate in the establishment of that vision. It can't be a committee vision, you can't have a group of five or six sitting down then saying 'This is the Vision,' because right away you will get the we\they syndrome. The 'We' may not want to be part of THEIR mission - vision. One of the tragedies of Freemasonry in terms of membership for the future is that we are still suffering from the yuppy syndrome. Those who grew up in the 60's and 70's. What are they really looking for? What are they looking for in Freemasonry? I think there are about five things. Friendship, fellowship, enjoyable activities, community involvement, leadership opportunities and perhaps the ability to network with their peers in a prestigious organization. If we don't meet those particular needs; that 'me first philosophy'; 'what's in it for me?' ' what do I get out of it?' If we don't meet their needs I'm not sure how long we will survive. Keeping in mind of course brotherly love, relief and truth and those other virtues; the strengths of our institution.

Once we have, that shared vision, one that reflects the entire organization, and people feel part of it, by using the COMELY program; Calling on Masons in Every Lodge Yearly; finding out how they are first, then asking what they want to see for Freemasonry in the future; --- I believe we can do it. Once we have the shared vision; leaders, it is then up to you. You've got to go out there and share it. Gandhi, was a great man of inspiration. He took people beyond their limit, he took them to a point that they would be where they wished to be and that my Brethren is your task; to inspire, get to the heart of the people; reach inside of them, help them to realize that this is their vision that they are part of that vision that we are one great group, we are not a we/they,

it is our vision, it is everybody's vision. That, my Brethren is your responsibility; to go out there and inspire the craft; that is why your leadership is so necessary. It will not succeed without your leadership; Inspiring that shared vision.

Enabling. Enabling others to act; to give them the tools and the power and the authority to work up the action plan for the vision. Some organizations develop such a sterile environment that the people never have a chance for failure; it always has to be based upon success. People have to learn to feel failure before they can feel success. We need to rid ourselves of that mushroom effect. You keep them in the dark, you feed them 'you know what' and you expect them to grow. When people accept things, they are better prepared to act upon them. A research experiment was done a few years ago where that involved two groups of people. They were each given the same task. One group used the tool of brainstorming. A chart was put on the wall and people came up with ideas, one after the other for the implementation of the plan of action. There was no judging, there was no evaluation of any of the ideas that came up. This brought out the meek and the mild and the timid. Each person had the opportunity to offer something because it was not to be judged or evaluated. At the end of the session all the ideas were prioritized; they had an action plan because the leader enabled the group to act; by getting everyone involved in the process. But what did the second group do? Well they just had the task in front of them. It was just wide open discussion. with evaluation and judgement, etc. The leader did one more thing. He planted someone in the audience. The leader said "I want you to record every negative word that comes out during the session". There were several negatives. We can't do that; we can't change the constitution; we've never done that before; it will never work; and onwards and onwards. You've heard those words haven't you? In the final analysis, the second group never reached a consensus and they never came up with a plan of action because the group was not enabled effectively to act upon the vision. Lee Iaccoco, you have all heard of him. He was the one who really brought Chrysler up from the ground. He used to go into the trenches. He would talk to the men. He would give them the authority, he would give them power, he would give them the tools, They would come up with plans of action; and see what happened. Chrysler came up and how well they succeeded, Brethren as Grand Lodge officer and leaders, you must get into those trenches and give the members of the craft, who want to be part of that vision, the tools and the authority to act.

Modelling the way. What do we mean by modelling the way? Modelling the way means to me that the leader, the great leader is the true and living example of the vision. He lives it, he breathes it, he talks about it, he inspires it. Gandhi once said, My life is My message. We cannot praise in public and condemn in private. We as Freemasons must be the living example of what we mean. If we are going to talk moral conduct, we must be seen to be practising moral conduct. Brethren I have been somewhat saddened in the last couple of days. I read in the newspaper a report of a Freemason being charged with fraud. Perhaps defrauding not only, the welfare department, but possibly, also his own Grand Lodge. And there it appears in the press, a mason convicted of fraud; if that isn't a double standard for the public to see. Sometime ago at a little gathering where there were both masons and non-masons present, there was a mason who had the floor. He was using language that was totally unacceptable. He probably swore steadily for two minutes and didn't use the same word twice. Sometime later he stood on the floor of a lodge and he talked about the charge from the book of constitution in the E.A. Degree. He talked about

temperance and he talked about prudence and he talked about using the Lord God's name in vain. If that wasn't a double standard, I don't know what is. Brethren, I'm saddened by the fact that we are having more and more and more of this in the craft. As leaders it is your duty, and your responsibility to model the way for others because, after all each of us joined Freemasonry, no doubt, because of an outstanding model in our lives; someone you wanted to be like. That's the reason I joined Freemasonry; because I had both a father and grandfather who were exemplary models of what Freemasonry should be all about. Yes, we must practice what we preach. I have a little poem; a lot of you may have heard it before; I believe that it best summarizes everything about the concept of modelling the way for others; of being the best possible example for the conduct of others. It was written by a Freemason, Edgar Guest:

I'd rather watch a winner, than hear one any day
I'd rather have him walk with me, than merely show the way
The eye's a better pupil, more willing than the ear
Find counsel is confusing but example's always clear
The best of all the coaches, are the ones who live their creeds
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs
I can soon learn how to do it, if you show me how it's done
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run
The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do
For I may misunderstand you, and the high advice you give,
But there is no misunderstanding how you act and how you live,
Yes, I'd rather watch a winner, than hear one any day
I'd rather watch a leader, modelling the way.

Encouraging. Encouraging the heart, I believe it was James Barrie who once said. The first secret, to total success is self esteem; --- feeling good about oneself---. That is the role of Leaders; to help people to feel good about themselves; to know that they are part of the process; that they are part of the organization; that they count; that they are appreciated. I must relate a little story that took place in a restaurant. A man went up to the cashier and said "Can I use your telephone?". "Oh, certainly by all means," so the conversation went a lot like this, "I understand that you are looking for an executive assistant. Oh, have you, I'm glad to hear that. Are you satisfied with his performance? Oh, I'm pleased that you are satisfied with his performance. Oh, thank you for your time." The cashier overheard the conversation and he said "I'm sorry you didn't get the job". The young fellow said "Oh, that's alright I got the job I was just phoning my boss to see how well I was doing". Isn't it sad that a person has to resort to such tactics to find out how well he is doing. Where was the leader, was he encouraging the heart to tell that person how great he was.

A number of years ago at an opera house in Paris, there was great excitement for a particular performer to come. They had sold out the audience. On the night of the performance, everything was sold, they were standing up, great excitement prevailed. The manager of the opera house came on and said "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry to inform you but the performer is unable to be with us tonight." Immediately that feeling of excitement changed to groans of disappointment and those groans did not allow the audience to hear the name of the substitute. The substitute

came on and gave a great performance; the best performance he ever had. He finished and there was no applause. All of a sudden up in the balcony of the opera house a little boy jumped up and he said "Daddy I think you are wonderful". Immediately the applause burst forth. Isn't it important and isn't it great when someone in our life will stand up and say I think you're wonderful. It encourages the heart. During the past two or three weeks I've had the opportunity to be involved in two separate and distinct cases. Being chairman of the COMELY committee, I was informed of a particular lodge doing an excellent job with the COMELY program. I had the opportunity to speak at a district meeting and I said how pleased I was about the work on the COMELY program from a Lodge in the district. You could see the man who was responsible for that COMELY program. His eyes just lit up; he had a smile; he felt good with himself; somebody recognized him. Nothing sounds as sweet to a person's ear than the sound of his own name and secondly the sound that someone is saying you're wonderful; you're great; we appreciate what you have done. On the other hand, again with the COMELY committee, the coordinator sent me a report of a visit made by a member of the Grand lodge of Alberta to a member who is from the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. It stated that the brother from Manitoba was very disenchanted with Alberta Masons; was very discouraged with what was happening; very disenchanted with Freemasonry in Alberta. So I immediately dispatched the coordinator of our program to call the brother. He talked with him at length and one of the reasons he was disenchanted was when he moved to Alberta he called the Master of a lodge close to his home and said "I would like to come to lodge" and the Worshipful Master said 'I'll get back to you.' 'It's just like it's in the mail,' 'I'll see you tomorrow. Well that Worshipful Master never got back to that brother and I think we've lost that brother as a result of it. A lot of work has to be done. Leaders, there's a job for you. A few years ago I sat at a conference, with an excellent guest speaker present. His theme address was 'Give them the flowers now.' He began with a short four line poem:

What to closed eyes are kind sayings?
What to hushed heart is deep vow
Naught can avail after parting,
So give them the flowers now.

He went on and talked about how important it was for leaders to encourage people; to tell them they are wonderful; how much they are appreciated. I carry around these little drops for buckets that I give to people to encourage them. We need to be a bucket filling organization; that when someone does something great we let them know; we fill their buckets; because when you're filling somebody else's bucket you are also filling your own. We need to encourage the heart.

The speaker finished with another poem;

If you have a tender message,
Or a loving word to say,
Don't wait until you forget it,
Just whisper it today.

Those tender words unspoken,
That letter never sent,
Those long awaited messages
That wealth of love unspent.

For these some hearts are breaking,
For these some loved ones wait.
So give them what they are needing
Before it is too late.

Yes, give them that encouragement; that they are important; that they are appreciated; before it is too late; before we lose too many Brethren in Freemasonry.

Brethren, any business that is short on capital can borrow, any business that has a poor location can move, but any business that is short on leadership will not survive in the long term. Leadership, is necessary to establish the vision and it is necessary to translate that vision into action. Great leaders do not go where there is a path and lead. They go where there is no path and leave a trail.

Will Freemasonry survive well into the twentieth century? I believe it will, as long as, as Peale said, "there are God fearing and moral men;" -- and there are leaders. Leaders who challenge, who inspire, who enable, who model, who encourage. And so I say to you my Brethren in closing, what are you? Are you a follower, or are you leaving a trail? Do you challenge, do you inspire, do you enable, do you model, do you encourage. Do you cause others to want to do for Freemasonry what you think is necessary to be done. Can you provide that leadership of loyalty, of energy, a positive attitude, being dynamic, enthusiastic, risk-taking, strategist, honest, inspirational, and prestigious. Can you provide that kind of leadership; so that our Freemasonry will continue to be the most dynamic, the most powerful, the most prestigious and the greatest organization in the world. I leave it with you. Thank you!

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