



Do We Matter? Wayne De Vlieghe - WM

Tolstoy once wrote: Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself. This should not apply to Masons because we are in the business of self improvement, which necessarily involves change - for the better. With the time we have allotted to us in this world, we make good men better men - ourselves and others. Another quote (from Leo Rosten this time) illuminates what a Freemason should be doing with that time. He said, "The purpose of life is not to be happy - but to matter, to be productive, to be useful and to have it make some difference that you have lived at all."

What have you done in your life that matters? It's a loaded question - isn't it? Or is it?

We, as Masons, are productive and useful and our lives make the world a better place, one Mason at a time. The difference is subtle, but by becoming a Mason and putting into practice the moral values and lessons that Masonry teaches, we make a difference, not only in ourselves, but in the world of darkness that surrounds us. When we shine like a lamp post with the electric energy of virtue and integrity, the illuminated world becomes a better place in which to live. Virtues that make us better men (acting upon the square, speaking truth, caring and dispensing justice) make a difference in the lives we touch.

Masons make lodges better places as well. We all strive to be honorable, especially among our own. If a brother has fallen, we extend a helping hand to aid and assist. If a young Entered Apprentice needs to have questions answered on their journey through Freemasonry, we are there to offer support. We guide, aid and protect each other with brotherly love, relief and truth - the three principal tenets of our order. By keeping ourselves thus circumscribed, we can never err. At the same time, we create a place where men become productive members of society, a place

where they come to learn to make a difference that we have ever lived at all. There are very few places on this planet where this can be achieved anymore. Freemasonry is that place.

In our own lodge here at Peoria #31, we have embarked on a project to contact all the brothers of our lodge to see if all is well, to find out who among our ranks are sick and in need of prayer, to invite those who have not attended lodge recently to come and be a part of those who make a difference, those who matter. The brother in charge of this committee is Joe Terrell. It is a huge time consuming project, but Brother Joe has taken the bull by the horns. He could use some help. If you could see your way to offer your time to aid and assist your Masonic brothers at Peoria #31, then please contact Brother Joe at 602-616-3707 to get involved.

Among the many reasons a man becomes a Mason, the most important is that you will make a difference, not only in your own life but in the lives of others as well.



WHAT CAN WE BE?

Ed Barron – SW

For centuries, being a Freemason has enjoyed the connotation of being a good, honorable and decent man. A man, possibly a stranger, yet deemed trustworthy, loyal and kind; an educated man, with the moral fiber to set aside his mercenary motives to do right by all people; a man who seeks accomplishment rather than acknowledgement; a man who leads by example. All Mason's should strive to be that Man.

Neither Rome nor the Pyramids nor *your* stately edifice were built in a day. The legacy of any endeavor is not measured by the defects discovered in its remnants, but by the share of good that remains, despite the defects. We must choose our materials with care, assemble them with keen attention and maintain them with diligence, for we know not when the building will cease. All Mason's should strive to be that Man.

It seems the quote, "*It ain't braggin' if you can do it,*" is most frequently attributed to baseball pitcher Dizzy Dean, from 1934. Others contend this, or some derivation of it, was borne long before, by playwright Oscar Wilde. The sentiment forever holds true, whatever its source. It is our obligation to assist and inspire more people to grow from being those that *could* "do it", into those that *will* "do it", into those that *can* "do it." All Mason's should strive to be that Man.

If you ask the average person to define "tolerance", they might equate it to being permissive or lenient or discreet. Yet if you ask a machinist to define "tolerance" he would say it expresses the variation which is allowed. Are the parts of which you are made a sloppy pile or a tight fit? Is good enough, ever good enough? As a Mason you should challenge yourself to improve what you do at every opportunity. All Mason's should strive to be that Man.

We all come into this world with a clean slate. Over time we accumulate baggage, skeletons and proclivities many of which burden us and result in undesirable behavior. Through Freemasonry we seek to repair ourselves and emulate the men we want to be. All Mason's should strive to be that Man.

Instead of contentedly remaining what we are. Let us strive to be what we CAN be.

May God bless us and forgive us.



Nothing from the South



From the desk of your Secretary:

There are a number of topics I would like to discuss with you as we enter into the third month of the 2011:

- 1. One of the questions which was asked of you when you first became a Mason: What did you come here to do? Answer; to improve myself in Masonry. If you truly want to improve yourself, the Grand Lodge 2011 version of the Candidate Education book is the way to go. I guarantee you, after you complete the book, you will have a better understanding of what is to be a Mason and our history. Come see me, I can get you a copy for only \$15.00.**
- 2. Masonic Memorabilia: We have many items for sale in our showcase and if there is anything that you would like, please let me know and I will make it happen. Our newest items are Masonic Shirts with Lodge Logo - 6 styles for \$27.00 and Peoria Lodge Hats: we have 2 colors, Red and Blue. Masonic Bolos for \$15.00.**
- 3. Dues: If you haven't paid your 2011 dues, you are late. If you need assistance, please let me know. This is always handled in the strictest of confidence. Yes, the dues went up this year but so have all of the Lodge expenses. I try to think of this in a way that makes sense to me - the annual cost of our Lodge dues are less than a cup of coffee a day. You can contact me at 623-878-1256 or janorsam@cox.net**

Fraternally,
Samuel Graziano Jr., Secretary



Open? Close? Confer!

Masonic Education March 2011

Repeatedly cited as a statement of fact, *“A Master must be able to open, confer and close.”* I’m not exactly sure what that means. Neither the Ritual or the AMC state or define this loose term in whole, as a sum of some of its’ parts or as independent terms, and consequently it has no codified Masonic legal definition. Trying to get anyone to establish a concrete answer on this topic is like dipping your hands in motor oil, then attempting to pick up ball bearings.

In Arizona there is no point that establishes exactly when a Lodge is being “opened” or “closed.” But, if we limit it to only dialog that specifically alludes to that action, ignoring the superfluous “Proceed to, About to, Before we...” leaves only the following:

On every Degree the Master says to the Senior Warden, *“Brother Senior Warden, It is my will and pleasure that a Lodge of EA/FC/M Masons be now opened in this place. This you will communicate to...”* Some stuff in between, then the Master again speaks and says, *“I now declare a Lodge of EA/FC/M Masons to be duly opened”*

in this place..." This section is the only dialog where it is being done as opposed to hinting at it.

So is the eight to ten minutes of interaction preceding this and everything after it just ceremony? Suppose the Master or Acting Master only knew what is in the above paragraph, is he satisfactorily proficient in the Ritual or is he just part of a group of Brothers that may be necessary to parade through the Masters chair to do the work expected of one?

The Close technically begins with the similar, "*Brother Senior Warden, It is my will and pleasure that this Lodge of EA/FC/M Masons be now closed. This you will communicate to...*" up till "*I now declare this Lodge of EA/FC/M Masons to be closed."*

All that discussion will now be rendered moot by the final subject in the title of this piece. CONFER?

It stands to reason, if we are incapable/unwilling to defining exactly what constitutes "opening and closing," how then can we possibly define "conferring?" If this isn't frustrating enough, there is wide disagreement on what constitutes conferring. Some define it as "*conferring the Degree*," a totally vague assertion where they usually pick and choose only the parts they like doing. While others limit it to the "obligation", proper at the altar, which would be properly stated as "*conferring the obligation*", exclusive of everything else.

Either interpretation, while clear as mud begs, the question: If not the WM, then who does all the stuff in between? Confused? Rather than leave you hanging in ritualistic limbo, I offer these considerations;

(1) The Arizona Masonic Ritual clearly itemizes who is responsible for every piece of spoken work and floorwork, this intelligence is located in the left hand column of every page. The Ritual is Masonic law of the highest magnitude as well as the definitive source of Masonic teachings, and therefore without question, resolves what lawfully constitutes acceptable proficiency in the Masters work on each Degree. If the Ritual says WM then the WM must be able to do it. Pretty simple.

(2) To seek sources outside the Fraternity, I recommend any dictionary. Most will define "confer" as a ceremony bestowing an honor, favor or privilege. So by definition, the act of *conferring a Degree* is all inclusive of every part, from first gavel rap # to the last #, and is not limited to any capriciously chosen bits and pieces. Therefore, "open & close" are redundant.

This leaves only one question, after agreeing on what must be done, how accurately must the Ritual be done?

I personally shoot for >99.5%.

Fraternally,

Ed Barron, SW, Master Ritualist



At the Right of the Senior Warden...

Fred Cheek, Junior Deacon, Webmaster

We have a problem in which I must solicit your help. Brother Joe Terrell has taken on the task of trying to contact ALL of the Brothers in the Lodge to check in on them. (As *the WM spoke of in his article.*) He has come across dozens of names that have phone numbers no longer in order. Addresses that are no longer any good. Some Brothers have moved out of state and we show them still in AZ. Or maybe you have changed your E-mail address.

If you are reading this and you think *"MAYBE I'm one of those Brothers he is speaking about"*, P L E A S E... contact us so we can update our Lodge records. It is an easy task, simply do any of the following...

Call Joe at 602-616-3707, E-mail the secretary at janorsam@cox.net.
or me at webmaster@peorialodge31.org.

If we have your current information, that's great. If we do not have your current info, it will only take a minute to update our records. If you live out-of-state part of the year, please let us know both sets of addresses and phone numbers, along with the dates you are here and away.

Thank you for your continued support and help,