

Sunday Masonic Paper No. 745  
**MASONIC MYTHS AND OUTRIGHT FALSEHOODS**

By Nelson King, FPS, G.R.C.

Masonic myths and outright falsehoods are continually spread concerning Freemasonry. Throughout the centuries Freemasonry has taught its valuable lessons through allegory and symbols. The man from Galilee used parables extensively and well. Many historians and better speakers constantly employ anecdotes to illustrate the points they want to make. These methods emphasize the search for truth in an interesting and factual manner. Myths, on the other hand, can be innocent or dangerous. They can be outright lies or the perpetuation of distortions handed down through the generations. Many of these were invented by Masonic writers and speakers to enhance the image of Freemasonry. Some of these corruptions have caused the Craft problems with creditable historians because they were outrageous lies. Freemasonry, actually, requires no exaggeration to magnify its greatness. The simple truth is all that is required to tell its story. This is the reason for this speech is to attempt to destroy the myths that have been prevalent, often for centuries, by telling the truth.

**Myth:** Freemasonry is a religion.

**Fact:** Absolutely false.

This is one of several arguments employed by certain religious fanatics in an attempt to discredit Freemasonry. They quote Albert Pike and Henry Wilson Coil, among others, neither of whom was a man of the cloth, to "prove" their statements. Pike was not a researcher. Most of the hundreds of thousands of words he wrote came from his own mind, or the minds of others whom he never mentioned but with whom he agreed. Coil wrote millions of words about Freemasonry, and he was a lawyer and an excellent Masonic researcher. Most of the time the words of these and other writers are taken out of context to "prove" the thesis of the anti-Masons. Freemasonry's enemies conveniently ignore the thousands of Christian ministers, and Rabbis, who prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Freemasonry, although religious, is far from being a religion. Here are just three of these Doctors of Divinity who have proven the critics in error: Joseph Fort Newton, Norman Vincent Peale and Forrest D. Haggard.

**Myth:** Freemasons are satanists, because in their Lodges they do not pray to Jesus Christ, but to a generic God such as TGAOTU or TGG or TMH.

**What rubbish!**

Freemasonry encompasses all religions. Just because we do not pray to one specific being does not make us satanic. If you follow their logic that we Masons are satanist because we do not pray to Jesus, then all Canadians must be satanist, because our National Anthem, which in itself is a prayer, has the line: "God keep our Land," not Jesus keep our Land. All Americans who sing "God Bless America" which also in itself is a prayer, must be satanic because they do not sing Jesus Bless America. Every American who Pledges Allegiance to The Flag, "One Country under God" not One Country under Jesus, must also be a satanist. Why even all Englishmen, must be satanic because they sing "God Save the Queen," not Jesus save the Queen. Anyone who has been a witness in court and who has sworn to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth, "So help me God", must also be satanic, because they do not say So help me Jesus. To say we Masons are satanic is pure rubbish.

**Myth:** Freemasonry is a secret society.

**Fact:** Unequivocally false.

This is widely stated and believed, even by Freemasons. Many Masons believe this so strongly they won't even talk to their wives and families about the Craft. Many writers of yesteryear helped promote this error. Our ritualists have added to the belief. The critics of Freemasonry want the world to believe in this secrecy, because they have little else on which to stand. Yet by no stretch of the imagination can Masonry be termed a secret organization. If it was, no outsiders would even know it exists. Anything that is known is not secret. Without question there are many secret organizations throughout the world, but only men and women within those circles are familiar with them. Most, if not all, ritualistic religions have conclaves (literally: rooms locked with a key from outsiders). Should these be condemned along with Freemasonry? Secret means: "*Kept from general knowledge or view; kept hidden; operating in a clandestine manner*"; and on and on. Secret groups meet in places known only to the few. Freemasons meet in places clearly marked for the public to see. Secret outfits never record anything that might become public property. All Masonic functions are fully recorded; proceedings can be read by the general public; thousands of books have been written and published about Freemasonry; millions of words about the Craft come off printing presses every year. Members of secret organizations never advertise their affiliation; Freemasons proudly wear the Square and Compasses and other emblems. The complete Emulation Ritual, [which is what our Work is based on, can be found in the Scarborough Public Library. Just get the book "Unlocked Secrets". Why, it even has pictures of a BBC TV broadcast in 1967, which showed all of the three Craft Degrees! So let us dispel the myth that Freemasonry is a "secret organization." It isn't. It never has been.

How many here we re given or have a "Masonic Bible"? Show of hands. **Well this is a myth.** There is not such thing as an Masonic Bible. The Bibles, sometimes called "Masonic Bibles", are just Bibles (usually the King James Version), to which a concordance, giving the Biblical citations on which the Masonic Ritual is based, has been added. Sometimes reference material on Masonic history is included.

**Myth.** The story of Hiram as we portray it in our Lodges is based on truth.

**Fact.** It isn't.

It has been called an "allegory," but factually it isn't. An allegory is a story within a story. What we portray is actually a fable, but it's a fable that teaches valuable and unforgettable lessons. The Temple Solomon had built to the glory of God was a fact. The story as told in the third, or Master Masons degree, is not meant to be factual. In a broad sense it can be called a legend. The "Hiram Legend" is an important part of the teachings graphically imprinted on the mind of the candidate. Allen Roberts said, The lessons found in the Legend of Hiram Abif reach to the roots of the soul and spirit; they are instilled in the heart forever. You were an active participant, so that these lessons would be deeply implanted, never to be lost.... The ultimate triumph of good over evil, and life over death, has been depicted throughout the ages in drama, song and story. Legends depicting a central figure being killed and then returned to life were common to many religions and rites. These undoubtedly had a bearing on the development of the lessons the ritualists of Freemasonry believed had to be taught. But the Hiram Legend is more intense, moralistic, and meaningful than any that preceded it. "Hiram Abif did exist. He was a skillful worker in brass and other metals. He was sent to assist King Solomon.... [But] the Hiram Abif who actually worked at beautifying the Temple of Solomon lived to an old age! He died of natural causes!"

**Myth.** Pythagoras was Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

**Fact.** False.

So say the ritualists of yesteryear, and their successors have compounded the fabrication. Pythagoras was indeed a great man. Although he left behind no writings of his own, his students did. His influence has extended to the present day. It is little wonder his teachings have reached into Freemasonry, even if only fragmentarily. But, even if a form of Freemasonry was known while he lived (582-507 B.C.), he could not have been made a Master Mason. This degree wasn't invented (nor had it evolved) until the late 1720s. Actually, there are those who believe that the Freemasonry that did mature into what we have today was influenced by the Pythagoreans.

**Myth:** Much of our Masonic ritual was written by William Shakespeare.

**Fact:** There is no evidence to indicate Shakespeare even knew there was an organization of stone masons that would eventually become Speculative Freemasonry.

The old Gothic Constitutions are the basis for The Constitutions of the Free-Masons compiled by Dr. James Anderson in 1722 and adopted in 1723. There is nothing in the Gothic tomes that remotely resembles the writing of the Bard. Many of Shakespeare's phrases have found their way into the rituals of the Craft, but they certainly were not written especially for this purpose. It would be nice to claim William as an early accepted member, but we can't. Let's stop trying.

**Myth:** All, or most, of the Freemasons in Germany were murdered during the Nazi regime.

**Fact:** The truth about the horrors of Nazism will never be known.

The number of German Freemasons sent to concentration camps, the gas chambers, prisons, tortured or murdered in their homes will never be known. Unscientific research, the only kind possible in this case, seem to indicate that about two-thirds of the then 85,000 Masons in Germany were injured in some manner; this left one-third untouched. The number actually murdered or tortured is open to conjecture. It must be remembered that the Nazi horror reached into other countries and the Freemasons in them.

We do know without question that Freemasonry is the first organization proscribed by dictators. An organization that believes in and teaches the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God, that believes in the search for truth, cannot be allowed to exist under a dictatorship.

**Myth:** Adolf Hitler hated and feared Freemasonry.

**Fact:** Not exactly.

Oral histories (or accounts) can easily be fabricated, this is especially true when publication comes after the subject's death. With this in mind, I will tell you of such conversation recorded from *Gesprache Mit Hitler* was reported to say. "*Freemasonry has always been harmless in Germany.*" *It achieves the fruition of fantasy through the use of symbols, rites and magic influence of emblems of worship. Herein lies the great danger which I have taken in hand. Don't you see that our party must be something very similar, and order, an hierarchic organization of secular priesthood? This naturally means that something similar opposing us may not exist. It is either us, the Freemasons, or the Church, but never two side by side. The Catholic Church has made its position clear, at least in regard to the Freemasons. Now we are the strongest and, there, we shall eliminate both the Church and the Freemasons.*"

**Myth: Freemasonry did not operate during World War II in the countries controlled by the Nazis.**

**Fact:** It did, but not openly. (Even today there are countries in which Freemasons must meet in secret.)

In the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp, the Masonic population reached close to 100 in October 1944. According to M. Jattefaux, a French Freemason, the known Masons met daily. By occupying the minds of these men with Masonic ritual and lessons helped relieve them of their anxieties. Masonic subjects were selected and, by word of mouth, transmitted from one prison block to the next prison block. There, quiet discussions would take place. Then, block by block, the results of their debate returned.

Our American Brothers have been saddled with many myths. Such as:

**Myth:** Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry were Freemasons.

**Fact:** Neither Thomas Jefferson or Patrick Henry were members of the Craft.

An exhaustive search of Masonic records in Virginia, and elsewhere, offers no iota of evidence to make them Freemasons. Jefferson participated in the cornerstone laying of his University at Charlottesville, which was done Masonically. He praised Freemasonry and his own words proved he had never been a member of the Craft.

**Myth:** All of George Washington's generals during the War for American Independence were Masons.

**Fact:** Thirty-three of the generals serving under Washington were members of the Craft, a long way from "all."

The late James R. Case and Ronald E. Heaton made comprehensive studies of the Revolutionary period and debunked many of the claims considered here.

**Myth:** Washington insisted that the Marquis de Lafayette be made a Mason before he would promote him to general, and the same claim has been made about the Baron von Steuben.

**Fact:** Both Lafayette and von Steuben were Freemasons before they arrived to help fight the British. This was true of Lafayette even though he wasn't 21 years of age when he arrived in America. It's highly likely that Washington never did know they were Masons. The stories of both of these men are highly interesting, but space prohibits the telling of them here.

**Myth:** The Boston Tea Party was organized in St. Andrew's Lodge in Boston and its member participated in tossing the tea into Boston Harbor.

**Fact:** So well has the secrecy surrounding the Boston Tea Party been kept that to this day not a single participant can be truthfully named!

It's true that St. Andrew's Lodge didn't meet on the night of the "party." This proves nothing. The "T" that has been claimed is part of the minutes of the Lodge is actually an indistinguishable scroll. By no stretch of the imagination can it be called a "T" or any other letter.

**Myth:** There is no such thing as a woman freemason:

**Fact,** Feminine Freemasonry and Co-Masonry do exist, in fact there are many many Feminine Grand Lodges, the largest concentration of women masons is in England with some 60,000 members. Just because mainstream Grand Lodges do not recognize them does not mean that they do not exist.

**Myth:** Prince Hall Grand Lodges only accept Christian, black men as members.

**Fact:** All 44 Prince Hall Grand Lodges accept men of all faiths and color.

In fact at one time there were Prince Hall Lodges composed of mainly white Jewish members. Prince Hall Grand Lodges use what we would call the American Ritual, either Duncan's or Webb's, which is very similar to what the two St. Johns Lodges of London use. By June of 1996 the only two Canadian Grand Lodges not extending full recognition to Prince Hall, will be the Grand Lodge of Alberta, and the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

**Myth:** Pope Clement XII condemned Freemasonry in 1738.

**Fact.** THE POPE DIDN'T DO IT

There are many sources to prove Clement XII was not mentally or physically able to preside over his religious kingdom. What follows is based on information from several of these sources, particularly *Papes, Rois, Franc-Maçons: L'histoire de la*

*franc-maçonnerie des origines a nos jours* (Popes, Kings, Freemasons: The History of Freemasonry from its origins to the present) by Charles V. Boker, 1977. For the whole term of his papacy, Pope Clement XII was blind and sick. He didn't sign the Bull condemning Freemasonry that bore his name. His church has been living under false assumptions as far as it concerns this organization of friends and brothers. Clement, 78 when he assumed the papal throne on July 30, 1730, shortly after became seriously ill. His health continued to rapidly deteriorate. Within two years after assuming the papal throne he became completely blind. His hand had to be guided to the place where his signature was required on documents. The pope reportedly said, when he heard about something his nephew and others did that made him unhappy: "Well, let them do as they wish, since they are the bosses anyway." The suffering of the pope was graphically described by Boker, whose information from many authentic sources was carefully documented. Clement's gout was particularly severe, causing him to practically lose his memory. Until his death he was, without question, senile. But it served the purposes of those surrounding him to keep him on the throne.

With the continual deterioration of Pope Clement, Cardinal Nero Corsini ran the Holy See with tyrannical power. It was he who called together his cohorts to produce the condemnation of Freemasonry. Among these conspirators was the Chief Inquisitor of Florence. The dastardly deed was done on June 25, 1738. Boker proves that none of these participants were theologians; none were knowledgeable about what they were asked to rubber stamp. "You don't have to be very clever to see that a man who had been completely blind for six years, who had taken no part in Church business for even longer, who had been suffering from senile debility for two years, could not have been the one who drew up the Bull," writes Boker. "The fact is, he didn't even sign the Bull that was proclaimed in his name." In an accompanying photocopy of the document, only one name appears. And it's written in the calligraphic style of the balance of the document! Not a single name of those taking part in the atrocity appears anywhere on it! Freemasonry, if Pope Clement knew anything about it, was never condemned by him.

In my opinion and I stress that this is only my opinion, the reason the Catholic Church banned Freemasonry was because there was a power struggle in Church between the Jesuits and those who were the rulers of the Holy See. The Jesuits who, as we all know, were and are, the intelligencia of the Church. (They) were, and in some cases still are, Freemasons. For example, Freemasonry was brought to Costa Rica by the Jesuits. Some 25 years ago, when cleaning out the Basilica in San Jose, a Bishop's Miter was found and given the Grand Lodge of Costa Rica. So what? Well, this Miter is adorned on the front with an embroidery of the 18th degree Rose Croix, the piligan pecking at her breast to feed her young. Yes, this is a Christian symbol; however, on the tails of the Miter is embroidered the Square and Compasses. But I digress. Lodges were formed and held in the Vatican. Because they met in secret, Cardinal Nero Corsini was afraid that the Jesuits might take over the Holy See. Again, can I prove it. No, but it makes an interesting story.

My Brethren, the hour grows late, and there are many, many more myths, but these will have to keep for an other time. Thank you for your attention and thank you for once again inviting me to address you. Thank you.

Author's Note-- My thanks to Allen E. Roberts, and Wallace E. McLeod for allowing me to use some of their material in this speech.

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Alle Menschen werden Brueder  
2B1 ASK1

Comments on the above paper as subsequently received by Wayne Anderson:

*"Some of Nelson King's comments on the Nazis are outrageous and highly offensive. Some of his comments on falsehoods are falsehoods themselves. His comments on the Nazis are egregious and an attempt, in my opinion, to rewrite factual history. Perhaps one day you may have an opportunity to visit a holocaust museum or personally go visit a Concentration Camp to directly see the atrocities which were committed.*

*The actual facts of the situation is that in Mein Kampf, Adolf Hitler wrote "...wrote that Freemasonry has succumbed to the Jews and has become an excellent instrument to fight for their aims and to use their strings to pull the upper strata of society into their designs." Freemasons were forced to wear an inverted red triangle on their clothing in the Concentration Camps. It is estimated that the Nazis exterminated between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons across Europe.*

*The Enabling Act (Ermächtigungsgesetz in German) was passed by Germany's parliament (the Reichstag) on March 23, 1933. Using the Act, on January 8, 1934, the German Ministry of the Interior ordered the disbandment of Freemasonry, and confiscation of the property of all Lodges;*

*In 1934 there were approximately 85,000 Masons affiliated with the Grand Lodge in Germany. When Masonry was reformed in Germany after the war, the Grand Lodge had registered less than 8,500 members. Over 11 million people were exterminated by the Nazi, six million were Polish (including three million Polish Jews). The total was 6 million Jews and 5 million non-Jews. The numbers to me are staggering and revolting."*