

Sunday Masonic Paper No. 773

New Candidate

by R.W. Bro. Chris Reid, DDGM, Prince Edward District, GRC

(Delivered at the Official Visit to Lake Lodge No 215, GRC)

Brethren tonight we are pleased to be here to participate in the next regular step of a new mason. Freemasonry welcomes applications from men who seek harmony with their fellow man and who wish to participate in making the world a better place in which to live. This is accomplished by promoting Masonic ideals of morality, kindness, honesty, dependability and compassion. In short, masonry claims to accept good men and to make them better men. One of the first lessons we learn is our responsibility to care for others. Freemasonry recognizes that we have obligations to our families, our work, our religious beliefs, our community and ourselves. These must take priority and Freemasonry does not interfere with our ability to meet these obligations. It simply attempts to share brotherly love and fellowship.

Our Grand Master Most Worshipful Bro. John C. Green spoke these words at G/L.

“Be proud of who you are, Be proud of what you do and Be Proud to be a Mason.”

I sometimes wonder if we are as proud to be Freemasons as we ought to be. It is one of the most wonderful and ancient institutions in the world. Since it first came into existence, dynasties have disappeared, and empires vanished yet our order lives on more powerful and more influential than ever. It is a fine thing to belong to an order with such a great historic past. But if masonry had only a great past, that would be no reason for pride. Our faith in Masonry rests on the fact that we have a great mission to fulfill to the present age and a great contribution to make to the future of humanity. We live in a time when terrorism is prevalent and close to home, yet through Masonry men differing in language, modes of thought and habits of life are able to meet, share in a common hope and seek a common ideal. If every member of our craft brought the spirit of Freemasonry into his daily life the world would gradually become a better place to live. New members come before us as candidates – a word derived from the Latin meaning – clothed in white – a symbol of purity. This should remind the Freemason of the purity of conduct and character which should distinguish all those who are candidates for admission into the order.

We as Freemasons and particularly the Brethren of Lake Lodge will have great hopes and expectations of our newly initiated brothers. We hope that the ceremony of their initiation was meaningful and memorable for them. We hope that they will appreciate the values which Freemasonry has to offer and enjoy our fellowship. We expect that they will be in regular attendance at our meetings and make every effort to advance through the degrees which will ensure they have the opportunity to increase in Masonic knowledge and develop true and lasting friendships. We expect that they will be loyal to our Fraternity and its Laws and use the teachings which Masonry has to offer as a moral compass to guide them through life. Finally we hope - That they will be proud to be a Mason and share those feelings with their family and friends. That they will one day aspire to be an officer of the lodge, progress through the chairs and one day become a leader in our Fraternity so that the benefits of masonry as we know it today will be available to men in the future.

Brethren, these are a few of our hopes and expectations. Now what should our new members expect of us? Tonight our Brother will take the Second Regular Step in Masonry - It leads to greater interest and satisfaction. It refers to Brotherly Love and Friendship - a more solid bond between men and especially masons. He should expect that we will make him feel not only welcome but an important member of our craft. We should assure him that the ceremony which he is about to experience is a continuation of a journey we have all taken - it is performed with dignity and that he should relax and enjoy it. He has every right to expect we will be well prepared so that the ceremonies he experiences are performed with dignity, and to the utmost of our ability so that they will be instructive and inspiring ensuring his impression is indeed favourable to our craft and will lead him to seek further light in masonry. He should expect that we will assign him a mentor or mentors to answer questions he will have regarding the ceremony he has experienced and prepare him for the next step in Masonry. To assist him in learning and more importantly understanding the required ritual and to encourage him to seek further light.

Because Masonry is spread over the whole world the ritual is fundamentally the same wherever you go. If you learn the ritual you can prove to others that you are a mason and so you will be able to visit in any lodge in the world that is recognized by our Grand Lodge. But ultimately he should expect us to practise the principles of Masonry not only in lodge but in our daily lives so that he may be proud to be counted among us. The General Charge at Installation states “ May the genuine tenets of our time honoured institution be transmitted through your lodge, pure and unimpaired from generation to generation” These words not only wish that our Masonic values be passed on, but that they also retain their purity. This cannot be left to chance alone. It can only be accomplished by letting our example and conduct be the light for the new generation. Only by a conscious effort to train, to teach, to educate the future Mason can we accomplish this. It is to each one of us that Masonry looks to its future continuance. Tonight we have an opportunity to ensure that future by assisting our brother in his next step in Masonry and by continuing to assist him to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge, ensuring that our legacy to the next generation retains its purity.

Brethren I leave you with a story of the bridge. An old Past Master walking along life's highway with a friend, crossed over a raging river and upon reaching the other side stopped and built a bridge to open the banks. The friend questioned “ Why do you build this bridge? You will never pass this way again.” To which the old past master replied “Behind us come young masons. – They must pass this way, I build the bridge for them.” While our Past Masters did not build the bridge of Masonry, they are constantly maintaining it. Can we honestly be true and faithful craftsmen if we do not in some way assist them?