

Grand Master's Address  
Especial Communication  
Ottawa – 16 October 2010

To the Officers and Members of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario:

My Brethren,

It is with the greatest personal pleasure that I welcome you to this Especial Communication of Grand Lodge held in the National Capital. I am particularly pleased that so many of the Worshipful Masters and Wardens of the Lodges located in the five Districts in eastern Ontario – Eastern, Frontenac, Ottawa 1 and 2, St. Lawrence – have been able to join us this morning. It has been said that “*learning originated in the East and thence spread its benign influence to the West.*” Therefore Grand Lodge has travelled to the radiant East in search of enlightenment.

It is our hope that, in holding these Especial Communications in addition to the Annual Communication held on the third Wednesday in July, the Brethren in other parts of the Grand Jurisdiction will have an opportunity to see Grand Lodge in action, to learn a little more of what Grand Lodge is, what Grand Lodge does, and what Grand Lodge has to offer for the benefit of the Brethren in the constituent Lodges.

We are acutely aware that the constituent Lodge always has been and always will be the essential unit in Freemasonry. It is on the floor of the Lodges of this Grand Jurisdiction where Freemasonry either flourishes or fails. Grand Lodge exists to serve the brethren and protect the Constitution. I hope you realize that Grand Lodge is more than the occasional piece of ‘corrective correspondence; issued from the Grand Secretary’s Office. Later in this morning’s agenda we will have an informal panel discussion during which you will be invited to pose your questions, and this afternoon a series of topics will be introduced for Discussion in the Round. This is *Participation*. The Preamble to the Constitution puts the purpose and role of Grand Lodge plainly: “*to provide for and promote the general welfare of the Craft.*” During the day, I hope that you will mingle freely with the elected and appointed Grand Lodge Officers here assembled, talk with us, share your thoughts with us, and feel free to question us on any topic that our experience and expertise as Members of the Board of General

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Purposes, Chairmen of Committees or Team Leaders may assist in enhancing and enriching your practise of Freemasonry in your Lodge. We are here to Learn to Listen and Listen to Learn.

Masonry is the science of service, and I assure you that every Grand Lodge Officer is at your service.

Last weekend we celebrated the National Day of Thanksgiving. As Freemasons in Canada we have much for which we ought to be thankful. In “the true north strong and free” we have the freedom to meet in our Lodges and disclose our membership in the Craft without fear of interference or obstruction by subversive dictatorships in totalitarian regimes. This is a privilege that we take for granted, but it is one that many of our Brethren in other parts of the world do not enjoy. In some countries, they must meet in secret, and any disclosure or admission of Masonic membership could lead to imprisonment or execution.

Our freedom has been won and protected by the personal sacrifices of those men and women that have gone abroad to defend their fellow man fighting against the forces of avarice, evil and despotism. As Canadians we remember with gratitude the valiant men and women, especially our Masonic Brethren in the Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan to defend and protect us here at home by fighting terrorism at its source. We pray for their safe return.

October is of special significance to our Grand Lodge. Our Grand Lodge came into existence when delegates representing 41 of the 83 Lodges that then existed in Canada East and Canada West met on October 10, 1855, and passed a resolution stating: “*it is expedient, right, and our bounden duty to form a Grand Lodge of Canada.*” This year we celebrate the 155<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that bold, courageous and historic decision. The Minutes record that it was then declared that: “*the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Canada, be, and is hereby formed upon the ancient charges and constitution of Masonry.*” The new Grand Lodge of Canada was consecrated on November 2, 1855, with M.W. Bro. William Mercer Wilson installed as the first Grand

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Master. The qualification, "*in the Province of Ontario*" was added to the style and title of Grand Lodge in 1887 after Confederation when other provinces formed their own Grand Lodges.

We must be ever grateful for vision, determination, perseverance, and bold leadership that the founding members of this Grand Lodge provided in the establishment of the Masonic heritage we enjoy today. We must admire the great wisdom and foresight evident in the Constitution they forged as the first item of business in 1855. It remains to this day as the foundation, the rule and guide of our fraternity.

Meeting here in the Nation's Capital where our federal parliament has its seat, we are reminded that our democratic rights and the enfranchisement of all originated in the principle of equality that prevailed in the European Masonic Lodges during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. That spirit of democracy then crossed the Atlantic to infuse the constitutions of the New World. We are reminded that as Masons, we are obligated to fulfill our duties as good citizens. From Macdonald to the present, our Masonic brethren have served and continue to serve in public office. Since Confederation in 1867, beginning with R.W. Bro. Sir John A. Macdonald, six Prime Ministers have been Freemasons, the last being the Right Honourable Bro. John George Diefenbaker.

### **Necrology**

At every Communication of Grand Lodge we pause to remember those Brethren that have completed their work and laid down their working tools for the last time. "*Time like an ever rolling stream bears all its sons away.*" There are vacant chairs in every Lodge where once a respected and much-loved Brother sat. *They lived respected and died regretted.* As a tribute to the memory of all those faithful Brethren that have gone before and rejoice with us on another shore in a greater light, I will mention two representatives.

R.W. Bro. James Robert Gilpin, Past Grand Senior Warden (1987), and an elected Member of the Board of General Purposes 1991-1992. As a member of the Royal Canadian Airforce, he flew Halifax heavy bombers on pathfinder and leaflet dropping

missions over Germany during World War II. R.W. Bro. Gilpin was an active member of True Britons Lodge No. 14, in Perth, St. Lawrence District. He passed to the Grand lodge above on September 23, 2010.

Bro. Marc Cyr, a member of Civil Service Lodge No. 148 was serving as a member of the supply corps in Afghanistan. When Canada Lodge was opened there last April, Bro. Cyr became an active member and capably took the chair of Senior Warden. His enthusiasm for the ritual of the lodge contributed in large part to extending the Dispensation to allow Initiations to be conferred. Bro. Cyr passed to the Grand Lodge Above suddenly in September.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH BROCK UNIVERSITY**

The Grand Master's Project to establish a Centre for Masonic Studies at Brock University is progressing according to plan. Guided by a Special Committee chaired by R.W. Bro. Gareth Taylor, the Dr. Charles Sankey Lecture Series will continue with Dr. Jessica Harland Jacobs, professor at the University of Florida and author of the book, Builders of Empire: Freemasonry and British Imperialism 1717-1929 (2007), as guest lecturer at Brock on Sunday, 20 March 2011. Plans are now being made for the lecture in 2012.

### **CANADA LODGE UD, Afghanistan**

I am delighted to report that Canada Lodge UD established last April at the Kandahar Air Field to provide a supportive fraternal environment for our Brethren serving in the armed forces in Afghanistan has been an immense success. We have received many e-mails and reports from those military personnel attending the meetings held twice monthly expressing their thanks for this "retreat of friendship and brotherly love" in the midst of combat. As I reported in July, with the approval of the Past Grand Masters, I extended the Dispensation to the Worshipful Master designate, V.W. Bro. Rick Fulford, Assistant Grand Chaplain, to accept petitions for membership and to confer the Entered Apprentice Degree on approved and accepted applicants. The first initiations took place at Kandahar Air Field on October 7, when Major Robert Kelley and Corporal Satraj Toor

were admitted to 'the mysteries and privileges of Ancient Freemasonry.' One of our Brethren wrote: "*Our evening ended with a truly Afghan flavour. As we were posing for photographs we came under rocket attack and had to hit the floor.*"

### **COMMENDATION**

I commend the efforts of V.W. Michael Jenkyns, the Grand Historian, for completing the thirty-year updated history of the Grand Lodge from 1980 to 2010, continuing from where Whence Come We? Freemasonry in Ontario 1764-1980 published to mark the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Grand Lodge, left off. The work is now undergoing final editorial revision and will shortly go to press.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Since I last addressed Grand Lodge it has been my privilege as Grand Master to attend and convey fraternal greetings to the Grand Imperial Conclave of North America, Red Cross of Constantine, the Sovereign Priory of Canada, Knights Templar, the Grand Chapter of Ontario, Order of the Eastern Star. In all cases, I was received with the utmost courtesy and respect. During September and October I presided over the Ceremony of Amalgamation when Liberty No. 419 and St. Paul No. 601 merged to become Liberty No. 419, Sarnia District, and Porcupine No. 506 and Aurum No. 704 became Porcupine No. 506 in Timmins, Temiskaming District. The Grand Lodge has dedicated two new lodge buildings, one housing Percy Lodge No. 161 in Warkworth, Peterborough District, and yesterday, Glengarry Highlands Lodge 418 in Maxville, Eastern District.

I have been Guest of Honour at several celebrations of lodge anniversaries: 50<sup>th</sup> for Lodge of Fellowship No. 702, Aurora; 100<sup>th</sup> for University Lodge No. 496, King George V No. 498, Cobocconck; Toronto; 125<sup>th</sup> for Golden Rule No. 409, Gravenhurst; 150<sup>th</sup> for Union No. 118, Schomberg, Pembroke No. 128, Pembroke, Lebanon Forest No. 133, Exeter, St. Clair No. 135, Milton. This evening many of us will enjoy the gala banquet hosted by Civil Service Lodge no. 148 marking the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Institution. More than simple longevity in the community, these anniversaries prove the stability and

constancy of purpose of Freemasonry. In case of the sesquicentennials, the lodge was instituted soon after the settlement was established. On these occasions my theme is always, Honour the Past but Embrace the Future.

### **APPRECIATION**

The local Committee on Arrangements chaired jointly by R.W. Bro. Samuel Kalinowsky and R.W. Bro. Paul Todd has worked diligently over the past year to make this a worthwhile, informative and stimulating experience for all participants. I express my personal thanks to all members of the committee for providing the facility, arranging the luncheon and organizing the agenda for us. We are indeed most grateful.

I must also thank the Grand Secretary, M.W. Bro. Terence Shand, and the office staff for attending to all the details, the additional paperwork required and making the arrangements for this Especial Communication of Grand Lodge.

I also thank the many Grand Lodge Officers that have given up yet another weekend to be with us here in Ottawa. As someone once said, "Why do we do it?" And the answer came, "Because we want to."

### **CONCLUSION**

There has been a cultural evolution in Freemasonry, particularly in the past few years. Freemasonry that was, but now is what is! We have learned that we can be more open about what Freemasons do, how Freemasons act, and what we may tell the public about the great and glorious history of Freemasonry.

Based on extensive travels throughout the Grand Jurisdiction, and the evidence of many fraternal visits to lodges and official functions, I have every reason to be optimistic about the future of Freemasonry in Ontario.

What does Freemasonry have to offer to men in the twenty-first century? What is it that men are seeking in Freemasonry that they have not found elsewhere in society? First and foremost, ours is an Initiatory Order, in the business of changing men's lives

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through a life-long process of self-discipline. It has been said that every man that kneels at the Altar of Freemasonry arises a different man, and once one has walked on the Mosaic Pavement, the great chequer board of life, he plays the game by different rules. We offer guidance in a five-part graded curriculum in self-examination, self-discovery, self-analysis, self-realization, and self-fulfillment. Guided by the principles and precepts and core values of our ancient Craft this process of self-development is personal, a journey of discovery unique to each individual who dedicates himself to the ideals we as Freemasons strive to emulate.

These are exciting times for Freemasonry. Public awareness of the Craft has been heightened by several best-selling novels and block-buster movies that derive their story line from popular conceptions of Freemasonry. Of greater importance from our perspective as an Initiatory Order is the serious interest being taken by a new generation of young men in becoming members. This new breed of applicant is well-read, well-educated, well-informed, and well-intentioned. In a chaotic world and unstable society, they are seeking order and stability, consistency and constancy. They are knocking on our doors, seeking something, perhaps undefined, that they have not yet found elsewhere. As those entrusted with leadership roles as rulers in the Craft, ours is the challenge to guide them on the path of self-discovery. Opportunity knocks. Are we prepared to capitalize on this unique opportunity?

We must invest our future, the future of this great fraternity, in these young men that will take our place in the years ahead. It was Yousef Karsh, the great Canadian photographer, who reminded us: *"The past has no claim on greatness, for such arresting personalities are always among us. Nor can we yet judge what lessons remain to be learned from the young."*

The General Charge reminds us that *"the chief point in Freemasonry is to endeavour to be happy ourselves and to communicate that happiness to others."* I feel that the greatest benefit derived from these Communications comes from the renewal of old friendships and the gaining of new friends. This is best expressed in the words contained in The Ancient Charges: *Masonry is the centre of union between good men*

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*and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship amongst those who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.”*

Enjoy the day with us, and I hope that you will return home safely with renewed interest to celebrate Freemasonry with enthusiasm and excitement.

M.W. Bro. Raymond S.J. Daniels

Grand Master

Grand Lodge of Canada A.F.& A.M. in the Province of Ontario

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