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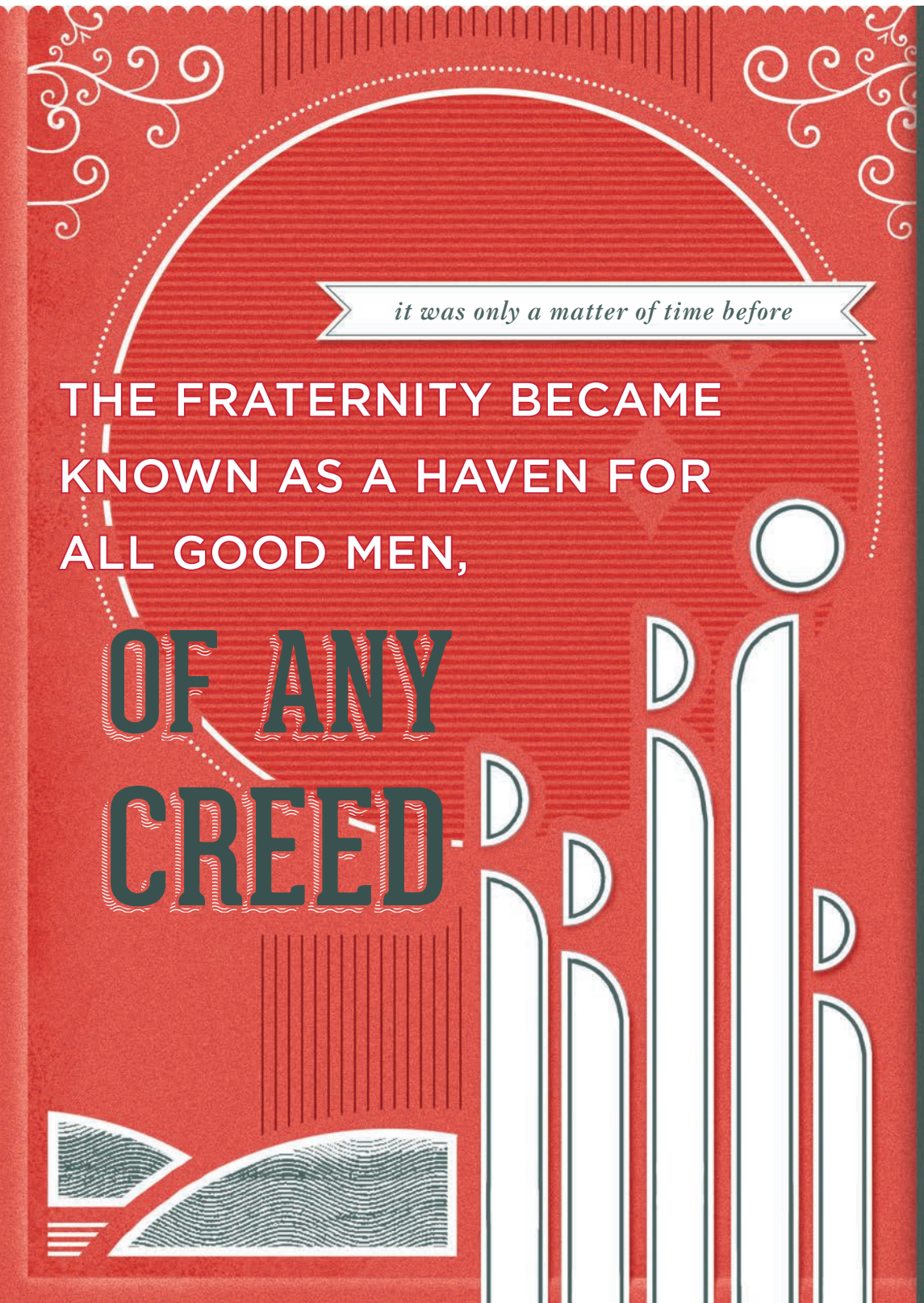
COMMON DENOMINATOR

THE DIVISIVE ISSUE THAT'S UNIFIED A FRATERNITY



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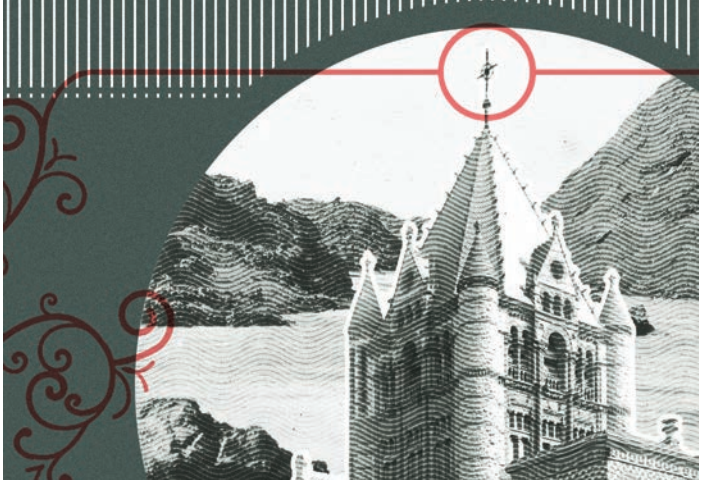

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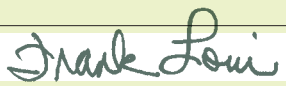


Means to Better Men

Carl J. Sanders, a devoted Mason and a bishop in the United Methodist Church, once wrote, "My Masonic activities have never interfered with my loyalty to and my love for my Church. Quite the contrary, my loyalty to my Church has been strengthened by my Masonic ties."

The topic of Freemasonry and religion is a complicated one; part world history, part Masonic trivia. In this issue, we enlist some notable scholars to help us tackle it. But you don't need to know the history of world religion or be part of a research lodge to understand Sanders' comment.

Sanders doesn't just say that Freemasonry and religion share a rich history. He doesn't just say that his faith and his fraternity coexist. He says that his loyalty to his church has been *strengthened* by Masonry.

If you're a Mason, I hope this statement rings true. For me, it has a simple explanation: Both religion and fraternity make me a better man. Whatever gains I make in one, I'm likely to see in the other.

When we become Masons, we begin evaluating how we conduct ourselves in our day-to-day business and activities. We start the lifelong task of smoothing our rough ashlars. We align ourselves with men who are trying to do the same, and we offer each other the support, guidance, and motivation to be better in every aspect of our lives – from family to community, and even to faith. No matter what your religion is, Masonry offers a space and a framework to deepen your connection to it. It's all part of that journey towards a perfect ashlar.

I think this is what Sanders is talking about. After all, don't our rituals urge us to seek a deeper relationship with God? If I learn right judgment and tolerance in the lodge, won't I carry that with me in my faith? And by the same token, doesn't my religion make me a stronger Mason? A better man is a better man, whether he's at worship in a church or among brothers in a Masonic lodge.

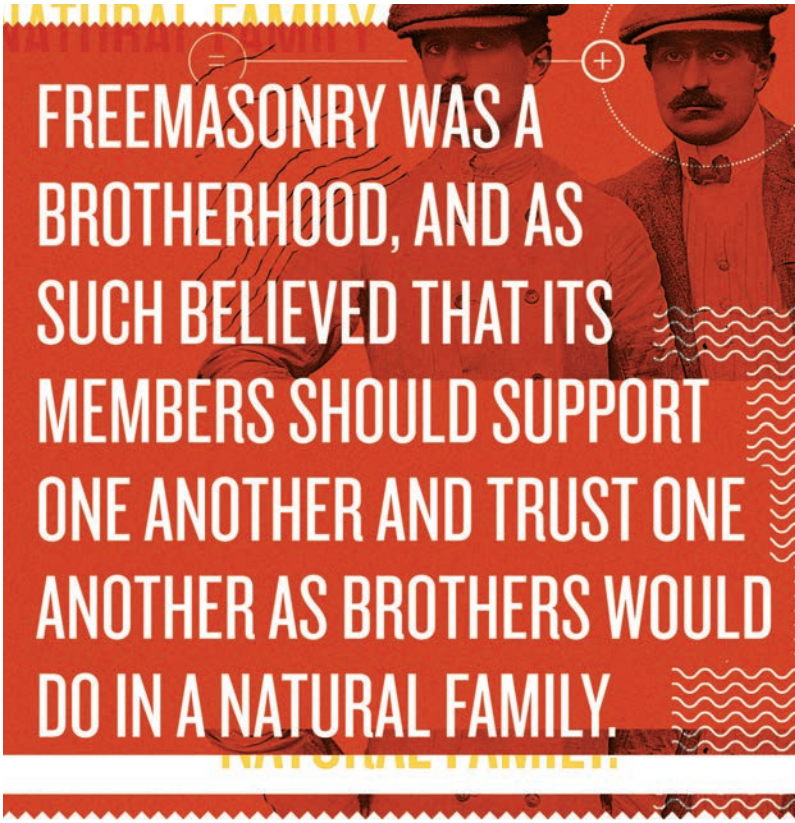
When it comes to the complex topic of religion and Freemasonry, there may always be questions, confusion, and differences of opinion. No matter. The important thing is this: In our religions and in our lodges, we are striving to improve ourselves.

Our lodges and our religions are not at odds with each other. They are both means to help us become better men.

CONCERNING GOD AND RELIGION

FREEMASONRY'S ABILITY TO CREATE "A CENTER OF UNION," TRANSCENDING RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES, HAS BEEN A DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC SINCE THE EARLY 1800S

by John L. Cooper III, Senior Grand Warden



The question of the connection between Freemasonry and religion is not an easy topic to tackle. On the one hand, Freemasons are adamant that Freemasonry is not a religion, and not a substitute for religion. It encourages its members to be active in the faith community to which they belong, but does not favor or promote any particular faith. On the other hand, Freemasonry requires that all its members have a belief in God. It begins and ends its meetings with prayer. Members take their promises as Masons on a book sacred to their religion, and (at least in the United States) a Bible is always prominently displayed in the center of the room whenever a lodge is in session. Its rituals have frequent references to God, and to the meaning that a belief in God has for an individual Mason. Why is this?

It would be easy just to say that requiring a belief in God is a part of our heritage, and a part of the fabric of Freemasonry. It is, but it is also something more. In order to understand why we must return to the formative period of modern Freemasonry (what Masons call "Speculative Freemasonry") in the 17th and 18th centuries in Great Britain. All contemporary Freemasonry comes from lodges in the British Isles, and from the first grand lodges which were formed there beginning in 1717 with the Grand Lodge in London. In those days a belief in God and in a revealed religion was universal. No one questioned whether God existed, nor that a man should be a member of the religion which God had revealed to mankind. The problem was, which religion? Europe had been torn apart by religious wars starting with the Reformation when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to a church door in Wittenberg in 1517. Although the wars started as a conflict between Protestants and Catholics, over the next 200 years it became a conflict between Protestant churches as well. In fact, religion had become the source of murderous conflicts which tore society apart. It was into this situation that Freemasonry emerged.

Freemasonry was a brotherhood, and as such believed that its members should support one another and trust one another as brothers would do in a natural family. But how could this be the case if religious conflicts prevented it? How could a Mason

Continued next page

from one religion consider himself to be a brother with a Mason from a competing religion when those religions were at war with one another? The answer was worked out in the early years Freemasonry, and this is the story.

Just six years after the formation of the first Grand Lodge in 1717, the young Masonic organization adopted one of the foundational documents of our worldwide fraternity. Grand Lodge had asked one of its prominent members, a Presbyterian minister by the name of James Anderson, to write a set of rules to govern the new society, and as a part of the project, he submitted a list of six "charges." Based on a free interpretation of the "Old Charges" of the manuscript constitutions, portions of which had traditionally been read at the "making of a Mason," Anderson may have envisioned that a similar practice would emerge using these six "modernized" statements about Freemasonry. Regardless of the intent, the Six Charges became the standard interpretation of the craft for a generation, and still remain an important source for understanding the fundamental principles of our institution.

The First Charge, with the title of "Concerning God and Religion," was probably the most important. It set forth clearly the position of Freemasonry concerning the relationship of an individual Mason and his loyalty to God as understood within his own religious community. It answered the fundamental question of how a man could be a brother to someone who did not share his religion without diminishing the loyalty he owed to that religion, and to God as he understood Him. The First Charge of 1723 has become the foundation of Freemasonry's position on the issue of religion to this day.

Freemasonry's answer to the bigotry and hatred of the partisans of competing religions was to search for that which the warring parties had in common rather than that which divided them. It assumed that beneath every particular expression of religious opinion was a common thread of goodness and truth which, if properly understood, could draw men together rather than push them apart. Anderson was too astute a student of history to believe that religious differences could be disregarded, or replaced by some sort of an amalgam of all religions. He was instead interested in how men (and women for that matter) could learn to respect the strongly held beliefs of others without engaging in the destructive behavior that caused such murderous activity by human beings toward one another. Freemasonry held the answer for him: Learn to respect and appreciate the religious beliefs that others hold so dear by looking for the good and the true in others. It was this belief that was to transform Freemasonry into the power for good that it has exercised ever since.

Anderson, and Grand Lodge itself, knew that focusing on what is good and what is true in the lives of others puts us on a different footing. Instead of talking about what divides us, it causes us to talk about what unites us. Freemasonry thus becomes a "center of union," to use Anderson's apt phrase, a place where we can become "friends and brothers" without fear of compromising our own convictions.

Sectarian religion and partisan politics are not discussed in a Masonic lodge, or in a Masonic setting. That does not mean that neither is important to a Mason. Far from it. Masons can be deeply religious as well as deeply passionate about political beliefs, and often are. But all Masons share a respect for the beliefs of others that binds them together in a brotherhood which can only occur if they share a commitment to finding that which is good and true in others. This affirmation is at the heart of our respect for one another, and the foundation of that brotherly love and affection which is the envy of the world.

ALL MASONS SHARE A RESPECT FOR THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS THAT BINDS THEM TOGETHER IN A BROTHERHOOD

THE CROSS AND THE CRAFT

CONFLICTS WITH CHRISTIANITY DRAMATICALLY INFLUENCED THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF AMERICAN FREEMASONRY

by Kevin Butterfield

After the American Revolution, Freemasonry faced a series of tense confrontations with Protestant ministers and evangelical Christians. Those moments – especially the Anti-Masonic crusade of the 1820s and 1830s – ultimately produced a whole new way of thinking about the search for fellowship and spiritual meaning in settings outside the church.

A legacy of connections and conflict

The Judeo-Christian tradition was a crucial influence in the early days of modern Freemasonry. Some of its features as described around the time of the organization of the first Grand Lodge in London in 1717 – Solomon's Temple, St. John the Baptist, the Bible as one of the "great lights" of Masonry – make clear that, while Freemasonry was always open to men of all faiths, it was shaped by one religious tradition in particular. And this should neither surprise nor disturb: as historian Margaret Jacob has observed in this magazine, Freemasonry bore the marks of the era in which it was founded.

In the first hundred years of the American Republic, however, the intense connection between Christianity and Masonry is far more complex than shared imagery and a Bible on the altar. Tension between the two was probably the single most profound influence on the course of Masonic history in the young United States.

Masonry in the new world

Freemasonry crossed the Atlantic and appeared in the urban centers of British North America in the 1730s. In these early days, Masonic lodges were primarily places of fellowship and good humor – and enough drink to ensure both. The men who joined were usually the most esteemed that a colonial society on the edge of the British Empire had to offer. But they were not in search of esoteric wisdom: They met in taverns, not temples.

Only with the coming of the Revolution did Freemasonry take on a new, more central and focused role in American society. As it became apparent that a republic demanded more of its citizens than a monarchy ever would, Masonry provided an ideal school for moral instruction.

Membership soared as more middle-class Americans were drawn to the fraternity. In 1806, New York's grand master, DeWitt Clinton, observed that the number of lodges in his state had grown tenfold since the Revolution (from about 10 to 100 – and there would be *five* hundred lodges in New York by 1825). Clinton noted, "Masonry has erected her temples, as well in the most frontier settlements, as in the most populous villages and cities."

But his choice of the word "temples" pointed to a growing question of Masonry's role in American society. The expanding, post-Revolutionary fraternity seemed no longer to be a mere

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WEB EXTRA

Read Margaret Jacob's article on Freemasonry and democracy in the Feb/March 2012 issue of California Freemason.

OVER THE COURSE OF A CENTURY,
FREEMASONRY AND AMERICAN CHURCHES
HAD FOUND A *Modus Vivendi*,
A WAY TO LIVE ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER.

social club. And that left many Christian ministers – who, in the decades after 1776, already found their places as community leaders disintegrating – wondering just what the Freemasons were claiming to be.

The Bavarian Illuminati

The first rumblings of an organized religious opposition to Masonry, however, were a product of politics, not theology. New England minister Jedidiah Morse took to the pulpit in 1798 to warn Americans that a radical sect called the Illuminati were responsible for the French Revolution and that they had set their sights on toppling church and state in America as well. He and others soon implicated Freemasonry in the charge.

The accusation was not that Masonry had always been godless and subversive, but rather that it had become so – that it had been infiltrated and perverted by the Illuminati. More "exposés" and public denouncements began to appear in the last year of the century.

Only the death in 1799 of George Washington – the most famous Freemason in the country – ended this first, highly partisan phase of organized Christian efforts to denounce Masonry. Washington had surely been "a thorough investigator," according to one Masonic orator. How could "Washington, that *Perfect Man*," have lived and died as a Freemason "if it is among *us* that Jesus Christ is daily sacrificed, and all religion scoffed at?" If Masonry was good enough for him, Americans seemed to agree, there was no need to worry.

Masonry in the age of Jefferson

The next two decades saw membership in Masonic lodges grow still more; by the mid-1820s, nearly 100,000 men were Masons. But with these new members came a new belief – that Masonry might be more than virtuous: It might indeed be sacred.

The separation of church and state beginning in 1776 had helped to produce unprecedented religious diversity in America. Protestant Christian denominations, such as Baptists and Methodists, were thriving. But the increasing fragmentation of Christianity left many Americans searching for something more than the narrow parochialism offered by their country's growing religious marketplace. The ecumenical worldview of Masonry had real appeal. And a large number of new, higher degrees with powerful, symbolic content were eagerly embraced. For some members, Masonry began to serve, not merely as a school of republican virtue, but as a site for the worship of God, untainted by divisive sectarianism.

Even as Freemasonry denied any pretensions that it offered a pathway to salvation, there were deliberate moves toward increasing religiosity within American lodges. Christian ministers were often admitted free of charge. More explicitly Christian content came to be emphasized in the rituals: the Royal Arch ceremony, for example, included the reading of more than a dozen passages from the Christian Bible. Burial ceremonies, too – once a traditional task of the church – became more central to American Masonic practice.

The "Blessed Spirit" of Anti-Masonry

To many Christian ministers then, it appeared that the craft was not attempting to *subvert* Christian teachings but to replace

them. And their reaction was often to demand that their parishioners choose between the two.

Even before the disappearance of William Morgan in 1826 – the famous moment that sparked the rise of Anti-Masonry and the first third-party movement in American history – Protestant churches were beginning to fracture over Freemasonry. But it was the suspicious disappearance of a man about to publish a number of Masonic "secrets" that brought matters to a head. As Presbyterian minister and renouncing Mason Lebbeus Armstrong wrote in 1829, "evidence of the abduction and murder of a fellow mortal forced itself upon my conscience as the genuine result of violated Masonic obligations."

Fears that Masonry might be attempting to replace true religion became joined with suspicions that its oaths produced evil deeds. The decade-long crusade to end Masonry had a profound evangelical content: Anti-Masonry came to be known as "the Blessed Spirit."

The results were grave: Within a decade, American Freemasonry lost more than half of its membership. But no secret effort to supplant Christian churches was uncovered. And by the time the conflict ran its course in the mid-1830s, most Americans had directed their focus to other threats to God and country.

Religion and fraternity in the 19th century

Simply put, the failure of the Anti-Masonic movement to reveal anything truly anti-Christian about Freemasonry helped bring about a new attitude toward groups that included religious content in their words and deeds. American contemporaries began to view them as complementary expressions of spiritual pursuits.

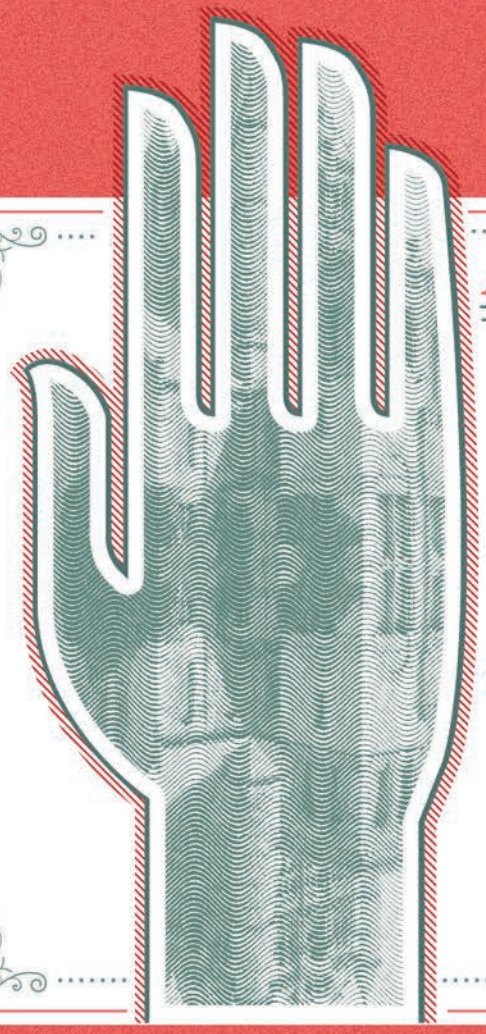
Between the 1830s and the post-Civil War era, societies like the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and Improved Order of Red Men created new, quasi-religious rituals, complete with symbolic deaths and resurrections, powerful patriarchs, and the like. The ritual work of Albert Pike reveals similar trends in American Freemasonry, which rebounded strongly in the 1850s. Yet historian Mark Carnes has noted that the figure of Christ was noticeably absent from nearly all of these rituals.

Conservative ministers did not cease to attack "secretism" in all its forms. In 1867, they formed the National Christian Association to coordinate their assault on the fraternity. But that same year saw a sitting president, Andrew Johnson, lay the cornerstone of the Massachusetts Masonic Temple, and from the 1830s on the organized Christian opposition to secret rituals would never be more than a fringe movement.

Over the course of a century, Freemasonry and American churches had found a modus vivendi, a way to live alongside one another. Long experience – punctuated by moments such as the Illuminati scare and the Anti-Masonic uproar – led most Americans to conclude that Masonry was no real threat. Rather, it was a testament to the idea that Americans could and would pursue diverse paths to find meaning in the world.

Editor's note: Kevin Butterfield, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of Classics and Letters at the University of Oklahoma. His research focuses on the early American republic, including the history of membership and voluntary associations.

COMMON DENOMINATOR



THE DIVISIVE ISSUE THAT'S UNIFIED A FRATERNITY

By
Laura Normand

THE TOPIC OF RELIGION

in Freemasonry is a coin with two sides: On one, open acceptance of differences in worship. On the other, faith-based membership requirements and rituals. In trying to reconcile this yin and yang – the pushing out of religious differences alongside the pulling in of so many faith elements – controversial questions emerge.

This much is certain: Without its policy of religious tolerance, Freemasonry could not have succeeded in creating a new social space. Without its grounding in faith, it would be a different organization altogether.

THE SHIFT FROM CHRISTIANITY

Europe in the 16th century was a predictable place, faith-wise. Unless you were one of a small number of Jews – who, often, hid their heritage for fear of expulsion – your rulers and your neighbors believed in a Christian God, you believed in a Christian God, and it may never have occurred to you that, elsewhere in the world, another person might not.

And so, in the first recorded Charge of an operative Freemason in 1583, with the Church of England as the official religion in that country, it should come as no surprise that God is Christian and that members must swear to worship Him as such.

"That ye shall be true men to God and Holy Church," the Charge reads, "and you shall use no error nor heresy by your understanding or discretion but be ye discreet men or wise men in each thing."

As Robert Peter writes in "Freemasonry and Natural Religion" (published in 2000 in

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Freemasonry Today magazine), "the Old Charges have almost without exception a positively Christian character." All but one of the Charges began with a prayer to the Holy Trinity.

Christian Context

In medieval Europe, when a group of stonemasons decided to form a fraternity, the Catholic Church was a way of life – mandated by monarchs. Even a few centuries later, as operative Masonry gave way to speculative Masonry, Christianity was still the norm in Europe.

It's no wonder that many elements of Masonic ritual have a Christian influence. To demonstrate the seriousness of their commitment to their brothers and their fraternity, early Masons would have relied on what they knew best: the Bible.

Here are a few examples.

- **KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE:** In Masonic ritual, the building of the temple plays an important role. Three different books of the Old Testament refer to the building of the temple.
- **SYMBOLS:** The Ark of the Covenant, the mosaic pavement, Jacob's ladder, the lambskin apron, and many other symbols appear in the Bible.
- **CHARACTERS:** King Solomon, Hiram Abif, Hiram of Tyre, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and Jacob are all biblical characters.
- **RITUAL VERSES:** The three verses spoken in the three Masonic degrees are direct quotes from the Bible.
- **AND 94 PAGES MORE:** Lodges in predominantly Christian communities often present the new Master Mason with a commemorative heirloom Bible, which includes a 94-page glossary of biblical references relating to Masonic ceremonies.

But between 1538 and the printing of Anderson's Constitutions in 1723, a lot had changed. This was the beginning of the Enlightenment, after all, when new ideas were being stoked throughout Europe. Religious wars between Catholics and Protestants had torn apart the Continent.

Freemasonry, meanwhile, had evolved from a labor guild into a speculative fraternity, a brotherhood in contrast with the religious and political turmoil of years past. And when James Anderson was asked to set down rules to govern the new society, he left a man's faith open to interpretation.

As the First Charge, "Concerning God and Religion," goes: "But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, 'tis now thought more expedient to oblige them [Masons] to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving the particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be *good Men and true,* or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd…"

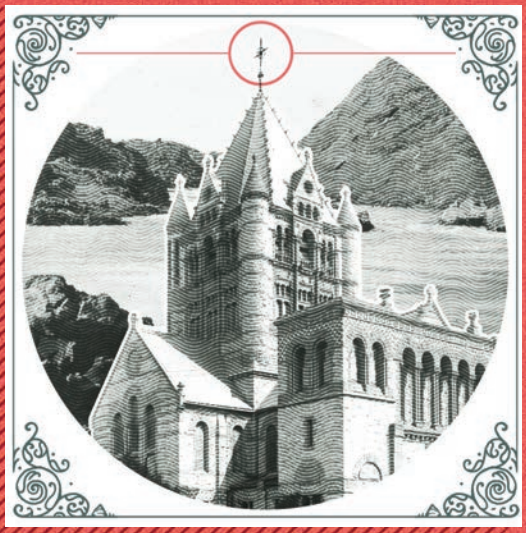
In other words, the fraternity would not be divided by religious differences.

"GOOD MEN AND TRUE, BY WHATEVER DENOMINATIONS"

Anderson's careful language started a new chapter in Freemasonry. It effectively opened the fraternity to men of any faith. It established a culture of religious tolerance that, today, is so ingrained in Masonry that we cannot imagine the fraternity without it. But at the time, it was radical.

In fact, David Hackett, religious historian and author of the upcoming book "Freemasonry and American Religious History" (to be published in summer 2012 by Princeton), proposes that Anderson's First Charge may not have been meant to be so radical – not at first, at least.

"The original idea of Freemasonry was to span Christianity," Hackett says. "Freemasonry was meant to be cross-denominational across Unitarians, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians." (As a Presbyterian minister, Anderson himself was a "Dissenter," separated from the Church of England.)



Whatever the intentions, the expanded membership requirements drew the first Jew to the fraternity by 1732. It was only a matter of time before the fraternity became known as a haven for all good men, of any creed.

And that drew some unwanted attention.

TO CONCILIATE TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Careful readers of *California Freemason* will recall past articles exploring the persecution of Freemasons (see "Freemasonry Confidential," Jun/Jul 2011). Almost every instance of persecution can be traced to the fraternity's policy – or lack thereof – regarding religion.

By openly accepting, and thereby, validating, different religions beliefs, the fraternity placed itself at odds with the dominant religious ethos at the time, the Catholic Church. In 1738, a Papal Bull from Rome announced that attending a Masonic lodge would be punishable by death. A wave of similar denouncements swept across Europe. Switzerland, Poland, and Sweden forbade Freemasonry on penalty of death. Lodges were closed in the Netherlands, and in Spain and Portugal. Masonic libraries in Russia were shuttered, and influential Freemasons were expelled or imprisoned.

Yet even as Freemasonry was driven further underground, new members continued to join – with perhaps greater motivation to guard the secrets of their brothers.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the new colonies were forming, many under the leadership of men who were Masons. Individuals who might otherwise have remained "at a perpetual distance" were bound together. And the colonies reaped the benefits.

"Freemasonry was the first group to form organizations that involved community leaders from different religious backgrounds," says Hackett. "It was foundational to American society."

"In understanding America as a place that brings together people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds to form a new entity," he adds, "Freemasonry led the way."

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH AND LODGE

A lot has changed since then. Wars have been fought; cultures have overlapped; and modern media makes even secret fraternities not so secret any more. But by and large, society has not lost its suspicion about how to characterize the Freemasons. Tough questions remain.

As a former grand chaplain of the Grand Lodge of California, Robert Winterton has heard most of them: Isn't Freemasonry a religion? What about your rituals? Don't Freemasons worship a Great Architect of the Universe?

And looming in the subtext: If you're *not* a religion, why all the pretense?

Winterton has been the pastor of six Baptist churches, and the senior pastor in El Cajon's Trinity Baptist Church for the past 43 years. He's seen many church parishioners join the lodge, and just as many lodge members join the church. He's also seen how divisive the topic of Freemasonry and religion can be.

"Every once in awhile, a couple will come to the church and love it. They'll get involved in everything. Then all of a sudden, they discover that I'm a Mason, and they leave the church." Winterton repeats this softly. "They leave the church."

Continued next page

ANSWERING FOR THE FRATERNITY

Hackett points out that "Although Freemasons rarely claimed that their fraternity was a religion, many – both within and outside the fraternity – recognized the brotherhood's religious character."

"Most religions talk about practices, rituals, some coming together to affirm common beliefs. So if you have a belief in a Supreme Being and you participate in rituals, then on the outside looking in, Freemasonry starts looking like a religion," Hackett says.

Here is where non-members – and occasionally members – conflate the two. In its titles, symbols, and ritual, the fraternity is saturated with religious references (see sidebar, "Christian context"). But upon closer inspection, these are signs of the times in which the fraternity was created. And they're not all that unusual.

"Somebody says, you have to be a religion, you have an altar, you have a Bible, you have a chaplain, you have a funeral service,"" Winterton says. "My answer to that is, so does the Marine Corps.

"Others say, you have deacons, you must be a religion. My answer to that is, *deacon* is from the Greek *diakonos,* meaning laborer, or servant. That's precisely what the deacons are. They serve in a church, and they serve in the lodge," he continues.

"Isn't it true that members put Masonry above their families and their religion and their nation, they ask?" Here, Winterton pauses for emphasis. "The answer is no. Specifically not. Your membership is not supposed to interfere with your family, religion, or nation."

MASONRY AS A RELIGION?

To have a frank discussion on Freemasonry and religion, it is wise to acknowledge straight out: Everyone interprets religion differently. Even the word can mean two different things to two different people; to one, *religion* is a loose spiritual awareness; to another, it is a set of well-defined doctrines. (Hackett confides that even the academic world has yet to agree on its own working definition.) So it's difficult to tackle without a language barrier, of sorts.

Most of the time, because of its cross-denominational underpinnings, Freemasonry actually uses this to its advantage. Members can interpret the fraternity's teachings within the context of their own religious experiences, and more often than not, it enriches these experiences.

But on the question of whether or not Freemasonry is itself a religion, the topic becomes murky. Both Hackett and Winterton acknowledge that, at the very least, it was never *meant* to be. And for his part, Winterton warns Masons against using the fraternity as a substitute for religion. Yet with a membership in the millions, Freemasonry is seen through almost as many prisms.

When I interviewed Hackett, he was insistent on this point. "All Masons are given these beliefs and practices and they interpret them as they wish," he told me. "Over the course of history, you can always find Masons who claim that Freemasonry is a religion; the handmaid of religion; or not a religion at all."

Winterton seconds this observation. "Anything that is practiced with great regularity can be a kind of religious practice," he says. "And some Masons say, well Masonry is my religion; I don't need another one. Those are the members I invite to church," he adds.

"We talk about the hereafter in our ritual," Winterton says firmly, "and we tell a man to seek a relationship with God – but not through Masonry."

This is the undeniable difference between Freemasonry and religions: Freemasonry has no specific religious requirements, nor does it teach specific religious beliefs. In a Masonic lodge, you don't proselytize your religion. You don't even discuss it.

BELIEF IN A SUPREME BEING

Every young initiate in the Boy Scouts of America takes an oath: "On my honor," it begins, "I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law…" The Scout Law requires a scout to be "reverent toward God" and "faithful in his religious duties." Scouts even earn religious emblems by participating in special church programs.

So while Freemasonry may have been the first organization to require belief in a Supreme Being, it wasn't the last. Yet the fraternity's faith requirement still raises eyebrows. As recently as 2009, the subject captivated the masses in Dan Brown's best-selling thriller "The Lost Symbol." For centuries before that, it stoked persecution and conspiracy theories.

The question has always been, if Freemasonry is not a religion – or at any rate, isn't intended to be – why does it require its members to believe in a Supreme Being?

The academic and the spiritual leader offer two versions.

Hackett points to historical context and what looks an awful lot like pragmatism by the fraternity's leaders: "Prior to 1700 people always believed in God because there was no other way to think of it. Belief in God was part of reality," he says. "After that? By emphasizing belief in a Supreme Being but not particular boundaries, it allowed Freemasons to form a unity. That's hugely powerful."

From inside both lodge and church, Winterton sees it a little differently.

"If you do not believe in a Supreme Being and a life hereafter, your promise is not as strong as someone who believes he will answer for his activities in a later life, and to a higher authority," he says.

"You don't have to identify who your God is," Winterton says. "But for those who believe in a Supreme Being and take an obligation on the Holy Writings, it means more."

There's another piece to this. If you believe in a Supreme Being, you recognize a certain code of ethics – one that it is not of mortal mold. Every Mason acknowledges that this code exists, and that it is bigger than his individual beliefs. He strives to conduct himself by its standards, timeless and true. And no matter what iteration of God he worships, he swears his obligations on it.

That's why, whether in the aftermath of a bloody Papal Bull, the shifting terrain of a young United States, or the modern trappings of present-day California, when a Mason sees a square and compass on the wall, he knows the men gathered there share his code. He knows he can trust them.

Wherever in the world, he is among brothers.

A Rose By Any Other Name

Many non-Masons are startled by the fraternity's references to a Great Architect of the Universe; some even point to it as evidence that Freemasonry is a cult.

But Freemasons, coming together across religious denominations, needed to be able to speak about faith in a way that resonated with every member.

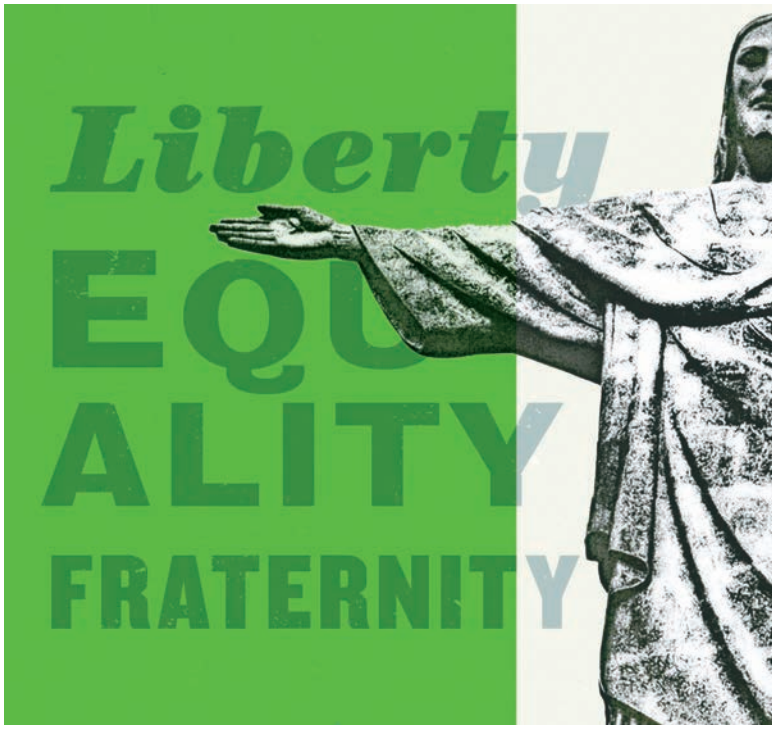
"Jane Russell once said that God is a living doll," says Robert Winterton, a devoted Mason and Baptist pastor. "Whatever you know, you relate to Him."

"If you're a carpenter, you say He's the greatest foreman you ever had. If you're a football player, you may call Him the quarterback," Winterton says. "So it's natural for a group of architects to say he's the Great Architect of the Universe."

CLASHING OF THE FAITHFUL

THE 19TH CENTURY MEXICAN POLITICAL CLIMATE WAS DEEPLY IMPACTED BY THE TUMULTUOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MASONRY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

by María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni



Freemasonry and Catholicism have been at odds since the 18th century, when Masonic groups struggled to retain their practices in spite of the Catholic Church's intolerance. In 19th century Catholic Mexico, this confrontation around defining spirituality was part of a profound political and cultural transformation.

Fears and rejection

Ever since Pope Clement XII decreed the bull *In Eminenti* prohibiting Catholics from becoming Masons under penalty of excommunication, Freemasonry and Catholicism have appeared irreconcilable. For the Vatican, according to a biblical maxim, *Omnis qui male agit odit Lucem* (John 3:20), the secret characterizing the craft represented a danger for the salvation of souls; the religious tolerance implicit in Masonic principles put at risk the Catholic Church's role as the sole path to God; and the mix of sacred and pagan elements in Masonic rituals sullied Catholic purity. These and other fears gave rise to conspiracy theories among Catholics that Freemasonry was trying to destroy the altar and throne.

For three centuries, the territory constituting present-day Mexico – then called New Spain – belonged to the world's most powerful Catholic monarchy: the Spanish. Catholicism was the only permissible religion and both Church and Crown, two powers that were inextricably linked, prohibited Freemasonry. The few Masons that arrived in New Spain during the 18th century had to remain incognito for fear of the Inquisition.

Catholic Masons

After the consummation of Independence in 1821, the situation changed only in part. While Freemasonry could freely flourish in the 1820s, in newly independent Mexico nobody – not even Masons – questioned Catholicism's preeminence. The first

Mexican constitution of 1824, though republican in form, established that the only permissible religion was, and would always be, Catholicism; it maintained all clerical privileges.

The Catholic faithful who became Masons in spite of papal condemnation did not encounter anything in Freemasonry counter to their faith. This was the case with the founders of the three York Rite lodges, which were established in 1825 in Mexico City. Chartered by the Grand Lodge of New York, these lodges were the seed of the important political group known as the "Yorkinos." The majority of Yorkinos were fervent Catholics, including some who were ecclesiastics – from the parish priest of Tabasco to the canon of the Puebla Cathedral. As a result, Yorkinos included the defense of Catholicism in their political platform; none dared to advocate religious tolerance.

But there were some Masons who chose to question the Catholic Church. Deeming the Church despotic, they fought for the separation of church and state in Mexico. This struggle to change current practices did not imply opposition between the Catholic faith and Masonic membership however. In various pamphlets, these Masons assured those outside their fraternity that Masonry was a "holy community" – one that sustained principles of beneficence, love of humanity, and philanthropy. They thought of the fraternity as a "moral school" based on Evangelical principles – a place for the faithful to practice their religion without being subjected to fanaticism. Their interpretation sought a means by which Masons could question Vatican decrees while maintaining their religious faith. Though numerous Catholic writers and some Mexican prelates opposed the development and political power of Freemasonry in their country, Mexican Masons in the 1820s were far from anti-Catholic.

The rupture

The veritable confrontation between Catholicism and Freemasonry occurred toward the second half of the 19th century, when the government began to believe that the economic, juridical, and social privileges of the clergy were impeding the nation's progress. Liberals – led by famous Masons such as Benito Juárez – initiated a series of reforms, which disentailed ecclesiastical property, secularized education, and eliminated privileges such as the *fuero*. In 1860, freedom of religion was established, finally

Continued next page

separating church and state. Though these measures had a clear political origin, conservatives considered them to be an attack on the Church instigated by the Masons: A period of mutual recrimination began.

The Masonic press accused the clergy of wanting to preserve a traditional, anti-democratic order, thereby impeding the development of reason in the citizenry and keeping the public ignorant, fanatic, and intolerant. In these publications, Masons did not actually attack religion, but they did attempt to reduce the political and economic power of the clergy, as well as its influence on the population.

In response, the Catholic press assured the public that the Church did not oppose progress, but was instead merely ensuring that progress was implemented within God-given values and social order. The Church also affirmed that liberal reforms did not reflect the will of the Mexican populace, but rather that of the Masons, who controlled political offices and were trying to destroy Catholic civilization.

The conflict intensified in 1870, with a new papal excommunication of Freemasons. The situation reached such an extreme that in 1871, the anti-Masonic predicates of a friar in Morelia goaded a "fanatic mob" to destroy a Masonic temple in the city, leaving several people dead and injured.

WEB EXTRA

Read Dr. Vazquez's article about Freemasons' role in the establishment of the Mexican republic in the Feb/March issue of California Freemason.

The confrontation escalated when some Masons and government officials – in spite of their recognition of Catholicism – supported the spread of Protestant groups in Mexico, especially in indigenous communities. While rationale behind the Masons' and officials' support was to promote literacy, education, and work, the Catholic Church saw the spread of new religions as its worst fear realized: ceasing to be the only path to God. And it blamed this on Freemasonry.

Vehicle for change

In the course of this conflict, one of the major issues of the 19th century became discernible: the process of secularization that started in Mexico with independence. The Church looked to maintain its preeminence and the role of Catholicism as the foundation of social cohesion. It also tried to prevent Freemasonry from challenging its control of popular consciousness. Late 19th century Mexican Freemasonry, by contrast, tried to become a socially transformational force, one that would liberate the people from fanaticism and allow them to determine their own destiny.

Mexican Masons continued to value the spiritual and philanthropic traditions of the Catholic Church while pressing for needed democratic change. By turning away from the traditional social order as imposed by the Catholic Church, they began to form new cultural and political traditions – those which were based upon the same Masonic values pursued by American revolutionaries, such as reason, equality, and self-governance. In doing so, they developed a new national cultural identity defined by shared values that reflected but were not dominated by their religious heritage.

Editor's note: María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni is a visiting assistant professor and postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research, which is sponsored by the Freemasonry and Civil Society Program created by the Grand Lodge of California, investigates Freemasonry in the Mexican political culture of the 19th century.

WEST MEETS EAST

IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES, FREEMASONRY PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN RUSSIA'S CULTURAL CONFLICT BETWEEN RETAINING EASTERN TRADITION AND EMBRACING WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

by Natalie Bayer

In the second half of the 18th century, the culture of Freemasonry within Russia was transformed, leading to complex philosophical connections and divisive conflicts between the fraternal order, Western Christian mysticism, Orthodox religious culture, and the monarchy.

The bacchanalian years

In the 1750s, a young Russian Freemason, Ivan Elagin, became disillusioned with the craft in his homeland. He felt it contained "no trace of learning or moral advancement" and that lodge meetings had become an excuse for members to indulge in a "worship of Bacchus."

This indictment of the licentious atmosphere within Russian lodges, some two decades after the introduction of Freemasonry into the country, reveals a sense of frustration and unease at the spiritual and cultural vacuum prevalent in the country's lodges at the time. Elagin's disdain illustrates a growing feeling among some Russian Freemasons that it was necessary to remold the order – a Western import in a Westernizing country – in a manner reflective of their Orthodox heritage.

Religious rituals and symbolism

By the mid-1760s one can observe the first attempt in Russia to develop a form of Freemasonry that explicitly sought to base itself on religious rituals. At this time, Peter Melissino – a military officer of Greek descent, introduced a new Masonic rite in St. Petersburg. The most innovative feature of this new rite was the seventh degree of Clerical Knight, which stipulated that, whenever possible, initiation ceremonies should be conducted in a consecrated church with a priest among the conclave.

Continued next page

Furthermore, the assembled "clerics" wore white vestments and displayed crosses around their necks. The ceremony itself borrowed from Russian Orthodox and Catholic rites associated with Chrismation, in which an initiate is consecrated with holy anointing oil. As part of the degree ceremony, the head priest sang the opening line from the Catholic hymn "Veni Sancte Spiritus."

Yet although the emphasis placed on these external rituals was in harmony with the ceremonies of the Orthodox Church, the Melissino system failed to address the increasing desire among many Russian Freemasons for an expression of Christian faith based on self-improvement and inner spirituality.

Orthodoxy and the inner self

Without wishing to disavow what many perceived as similarities between the ceremonies and rituals of Freemasonry and those of the Orthodox Church, many Russian Freemasons in the late 1770s came to view the craft as a school of moral strength in which they were to test their individual faith. Standing explicitly against what they perceived as the Voltairian promotion of atheistic and libertarian philosophy, Russian Freemasons like Elagin, Nikolai Novikov, and Ivan Lopukhin, turned to Christian Theosophy as espoused by contemporary mystics and philosophers, such as Jakob Böhme, John Pordage, and Louis-Claude Saint-Martin.

Indeed, Novikov and Lopukhin increasingly sought to promote and circulate key tenets of Christian Theosophy in the early 1780s via their control of publishing houses in Moscow. But although Novikov, Elagin, and Lopukhin stressed their faithfulness to Orthodoxy, by championing key works of the Christian Theosophical tradition, they placed themselves at odds with the official Church. Many clerics in Russia were highly suspicious of Freemasonry – though unlike the Vatican's 1738 Papal Bull, the Orthodox Church never enacted any official edict against the craft.

The craft, religion, and the monarchy

The ecclesiastic reforms enacted by Peter the Great in 1721 had stripped the Orthodox Church of much of its power; at that time the Church became largely subservient to the whims of the autocracy. In 1775, a local priest in the village of Krasnoe Selo reported that a Masonic gathering had taken place at the home of Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov. By the mid-1780s, however, Catherine the Great – who deliberately positioned herself as a defender of Orthodoxy against the insidious influence of foreign heterodoxy – lost all patience with what she perceived to be the harmful "enthusiasm" of large sections of Russian Freemasonry. In particular, she cast her ire on the activities of Novikov in Moscow.

Using the Orthodox Church as a weapon in her favor, in December 1785, Catherine issued an edict to Metropolitan

Platon of Moscow, calling on the cleric to inspect books owned by Novikov and to report whether they contained "arguments incompatible with the simple and clear rules of our Orthodox faith." Yet, of the 461 books inspected by Platon, he suggested that only six should be banned. Indeed, Platon stated that he wished all Christians in the world were like Novikov.

Despite the cleric's far-from-stinging rebuke of Novikov, Catherine persisted in her attacks on Masonic "enthusiasts." In 1786, she wrote a series of plays that attacked Freemasonry as a conduit for enthusiasm, which she believed had succeeded in tempting the Russian aristocracy away from the true path of Orthodoxy. Catherine's campaign against Novikov and Freemasonry culminated in 1792, when the publicist was arrested and the activities of the order in Russia were curtailed.

An age of acceptance

Restrictions on Masonic activity in Russia were enforced until 1803, when Alexander I ushered in a period of détente between the monarchy and the fraternity. At the height of Russia's epic confrontation with Napoleonic France, between 1812 and 1815, many of Alexander's closest advisers were Freemasons. These officials perceived the monarch in mystical and chiliastic terms as a providential savior, and actively supplied him with Masonic literature and seminal works of Christian Theosophy.

In early 1812, Alexander wrote a tract about mystical societies, which provided a brief history of secret mystical sects dating back to antiquity and summarized theosophical principles, such as those espoused by Swedenborg, Saint-Martin, and Böhme. This document indicates that Alexander's advisors were successful in positively influencing his opinions of Theosophy and Masonic philosophy – a symbiotic relationship that lasted through Napoleon's defeat and the foundation of the Holy Alliance in 1815.

Resurrection of conflict

Following a guards' revolt in 1820 and the involvement of Masons in the 1821 outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, Alexander I became increasingly suspicious of the revolutionary potential of Freemasonry. In 1822, he prohibited the order in Russia. This official condemnation of Freemasonry clarified the Romanov dynasty's disdain for all aspects of the order – both in connection with revolutionary activities and for its followers' conservative preoccupations with Christian Theosophy.

The transformation of the Russian craft from an organization focused almost purely on socialization to one that vigorously pursued religious and social intellectual debates reflects the socio-political atmosphere of the country at the time, as residents struggled to embrace novel Western traditions while maintaining treasured elements of their own heritage. By reshaping the craft to meet social challenges, Russian Masons strengthened the order and ensured its continued social relevance.

Editor's note: Natalie Bayer, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Her research focuses on the transmission of ideas to Russia via Masonic channels in the eighteenth century.

THOMAS STARR KING

THE LIFE AND SERMONS OF ONE OF CALIFORNIA MASONRY'S MOST PROMINENT MINISTERS ARE A LESSON IN HUMILITY AND POWER

by Heather Boerner

Preacher Thomas Starr King passionately believed in the divinity of our connection to one another.

"The Creator does not polish souls like so many pins – each dropping off clean and shiny, with no more organic relation to each other than pins have on a card," he proclaimed as grand orator in 1863. "We are made to be rather like the steel, the iron, and the brass, which are compacted into an engine, where no modest bolt or rivet is placed so that it does not somehow contribute to the motion or increase the efficiency of the organism."

And so it should be no surprise that, as a self-taught man of God, a passionate advocate for progressive causes, and a California Mason, Starr King's character was wrought of pieces that depended on each other wholly to create a man who was greater than his small stature or smooth-skinned, boyish face seemed to imply. Indeed, Starr King joked in 1860, at his first sermon at San Francisco Unitarian Church, "Though I weigh only 120 pounds, when I'm mad, I weigh a ton."

Born in New York City in 1824, Starr King began supporting his family when was 15, after his own father, a Universalist minister, passed away. Soon, Starr King was a teacher and then principal of Bunker Hill Grammar School, and by age 20, he'd become an itinerant preacher at Massachusetts churches. All along, Starr King was a polyglot and a polymath, competent in French, Spanish, Latin, Italian, Greek, and German. He studied religion, philosophy, literature, and science, and applied his spiritual beliefs to the great questions of the age – first to slavery and temperance, and later to the Civil War, natural conservation, and fair treatment of the Union troops.

"[His sermons were] devoted to the inculcation of the principles of practical and spiritual Christianity as they related to the right method of building up Christian character in the individual soul," explained Edwin Whipple, Starr King's biographer and friend.

Perhaps it was because his ethics and the lessons he proclaimed from the pulpit were so closely aligned with Masonic values that Starr King pursued Masonic membership and was raised at Oriental Lodge No. 144 (now Phoenix Lodge No. 144) in 1861. Within two years, he was elected as grand orator – a position he served in for an unprecedented two years. And while the fraternity was a rote stop for many men of means and influence of the age, Starr King treated it with reverence, says Adam Kendall, a Master Mason at Phoenix Lodge No. 144 and collections manager of the Henry W. Coil Library and Museum of Freemasonry.

"A large number of men of Starr King's kind joined Masonry in that era because their fathers were Masons or because it was the thing to do for men of a particular status," Kendall explains. "But he really believed in the fraternity – believed that the efficiency of the entire fraternity was a divine gift."

In his speech at the Annual Communication in 1863, Starr King praised Masonry as a "conscious temple," proposing that "no edifice which our ancient brethren reared was equal to the living structure of which they and we are portions."

Starr King came to California a scant four years before his premature death at age 39 from diphtheria. But in his short years, both on the Earth and as a Mason, he made such an impression that he drew parishioners to his San Francisco church from

as far away as Stockton and Sacramento. President Abraham Lincoln lauded Starr King as the chief reason that California sided with the North in the Civil War. Peaks in Yosemite and the White Hills of New Hampshire were named for him, as well as a school of divinity in Berkeley. A statue of him graces Sacramento's Capital Park.

But to his brothers who followed, Starr King is a shining example of what a Mason should be.

"He's a hero," says Kendall. "And a patriot."

A Pledge, a Prejudice, and a Plea for Rationality

Not all Masons throughout history have held Starr King's tolerant views. In the tense years following World War I, the country was beset by anti-Catholic sentiment – and Masons were not immune.

"Fraternal organizations have a special history in the United States," says Adam Kendall, who has written a forthcoming paper on how California Masons both expressed and fought against anti-Catholic sentiment. "They bring together people of disparate backgrounds, often with lofty aims of universal benevolence. But they are still subject to exclusionary practices, based on the fears of their time."

Masons had long been targets of Catholic anti-Masonic sentiment. But in 1914, antipathy against Catholics by Masons became particularly strong and visible. A rumor emerged that the recently formed Catholic fraternal group Knights of Columbus asked its members to swear to seek out and destroy all Protestant and Masonic influence in the country. The story was that members of the group would "infiltrate and murder" Masons and Protestants under the order of the Pope.

Through correspondence, fraternal magazines, and other documents, Kendall has traced how Masons received this story and the anti-Catholic prejudices behind it. According to Kendall, while many Masons were virulently anti-Catholic – Edwin Sherman, who largely built the Scottish Rite on the West Coast, had his own quasi-military order "dedicated to wiping out Romanism" – not all Masons shared this prejudice.

Indeed, a group of high-ranking Masons, many in the Grand Lodge line, took on the question of the rumored oath's veracity. At the urging of a senior member of the Knights of Columbus, they formed an independent committee, not authorized by Grand Lodge. They discovered what many Masons had already assumed: The so-called oath was based on anti-Catholic propaganda, which dated back as far as the Reformation. The Knights of Columbus was its only new development.

The independent committee – which included then-grand marshal William Kettner, who was also a congressman – recorded their findings in a congressional record and signed it with their Masonic titles.

But what Kendall believes was most likely an ecumenical gesture from one fraternal order to another became a lightning rod for conflict within the brotherhood of Masonry. Lodges made resolutions against the Grand Lodge officers in the committee. They were called slaves to "Roman puppeteers," bankrolled by the Vatican. Members of the committee were accused of having used their influence to bury the controversy, earning them the nickname "the Whitewash Committee."

Because of this eruption of conflict, Grand Lodge chose to institute a rule prohibiting members from signing public documents with their Masonic titles.

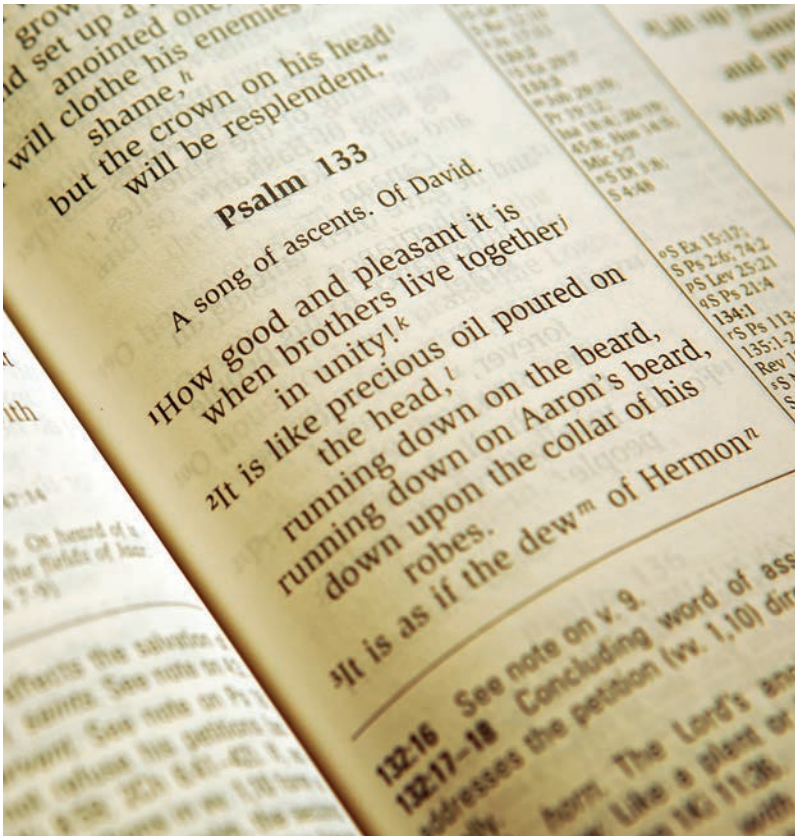
What the story really shows though, says Kendall, is that the image of Masons as universally anti-Catholic and nativist is not accurate.

"The notion that Masons completely succumbed to the rumored oath is false," Kendall says. "It's not as simple as that."

MINISTRY TO MASONRY

CHAPLAINS AT THE MASONIC HOMES PROVIDE SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE BASED ON MASONIC VALUES

by Heather Boerner



In quiet moments, Dr. Bob Orr strolls into the dining room of the Masonic Home of California at Covina and ambles up to a table or two, touching shoulders, smiling, and sometimes sitting for a meal with a resident. These moments, these conversations seem casual. But for Orr, they are the heart of his ministry.

"I'm not simply chaplain to the people who come to Bible study," says Orr. "I'm chaplain to all the residents at the Home. I don't want to be a stranger."

Orr is one of two chaplains at the Masonic Homes of California. He and Joel Ingram, the pastoral care coordinator at the Masonic Home at Union City, are responsible for the spiritual nourishment of residents – a duty they take very seriously.

It's unclear how long chaplains have guided the spiritual lives of Masons and their loved ones at the Homes, but the Homes themselves have been around since before the turn of the 20th century. They started as small endeavors with their own wells, farms, cattle, and chickens. But over the years, they've grown – from serving handfuls of residents to hundreds. Today, the Masonic Homes offer residents everything from computer centers to clubs for ham radio and railroad enthusiasts. In that mix, of course, is care for residents' spiritual lives.

"The chaplain's role is important to any retirement community, but certainly to a Masonic community," says Senior Grand Warden John Cooper, whose mother lived in the Union City Masonic Home until she passed away. "The Homes are there to provide for the needs of residents, and residents' needs include spiritual dimensions."

To that end, Orr and Ingram conduct Bible studies, help residents plan their funerals, and perform Vesper services on Sundays. The Homes also provide transportation for residents to attend the denomination of their choice, as the chaplains take an ecumenical approach to religion. The idea, Cooper says, is to make it possible for people to attend services who otherwise couldn't.

At Union City, for instance, Ingram provides Sunday services at the Home's chapel. But those services are also broadcast on closed-circuit television to residents' rooms.

Continued next page

Ingram spends a great deal of time preparing these sermons – usually about six hours a week – because they reach people who may never approach him one-on-one.

"If this is the only spiritual food I have the opportunity to give them," Ingram says, "I try to make sure it's as nutritious as possible."

The chaplains encourage residents to provide spiritual services to one another, in the model of Masonry, as well. Masonic residents at Covina have formed a Memorial Task Force to assist the chaplain after the death of a resident. They help Orr plan services, notify lodges of the upcoming memorial, and arrange for flowers, programs, and food.

And Orr is heartened that Masonic residents at Covina are organizing their own on-campus lodge (Destiny Lodge is still in the initial stages of development). After all, he says, most Masons form their identity around three things: work, romantic and familial relationships, and their roles as Masons. Since many Covina residents are widowed and all are retired, the moral guideposts of Masonry provide not only ballast but an additional purpose for their retirement years.

"Masonry gives them something meaningful to do that will bless them, bless their community, and make the Home a lot better place," he says.

In Union City – where Siminoff Daylight Lodge No. 850 meets on campus – Ingram often encourages residents to participate in both aspects of service.

"Some people are great care givers but terrible care receivers," he explains. "There's a sense in Masonry that members are there to care for each other – a sense of brotherhood, of caring for people in a community. Sometimes I draw upon that and remind residents that letting someone else help you carry your load helps the other person, too."

Both Homes have chapels on site, but that's not where most spiritual work happens, explain Orr and Ingram. It's in those

BOB ORR (LEFT), CHAPLAIN OF THE MASONIC HOME AT COVINA, VISITS WITH RESIDENT JOHN ABERNETHY.

private moments – those one-on-one conversations in the dining room, sequestered off the Homes' garden paths, or in stolen moments before or after Bible study – that most of the ministry takes place. Such conversations create a "bridge to walk over" if residents fall ill.

"We're here before a crisis," says Ingram, who served as a hospice and hospital chaplain before his position in Union City. When Ingram worked at a hospital, he came in blind, not knowing the families or patients, and unclear on whether they had any kind of faith practice. But because he provides worship and other services early in people's stay at the Home, he now has a chance to know residents before he's called to their bedsides.

Ingram tries not to assume that a Mason believes in a Supreme Being simply because of the fraternity's faith requirement. But knowing residents personally makes his hospital visits more spiritually rich. If residents are in the waning hours of their lives, the chaplains hold vigil, with and without other family members present. Knowing that hearing is often the last sense to go, Orr says he often reads scripture quietly to residents or simply sits with them as they pass away. He's performed this "ministry of presence" for three residents who had no family to visit during their last hours.

"The bottom line," says Ingram, "is that if you're having a need, I make time to see you. I'm here to help residents with their transitions, and they help me to see and understand my own."

JOEL INGRAM, PASTORAL CARE COORDINATOR OF THE MASONIC HOME AT UNION CITY, SPENDS SIX HOURS EACH WEEK PREPARING SUNDAY SERMONS, WHICH ARE BROADCAST TO RESIDENT ROOMS.

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MASONIC SENIOR OUTREACH

Masonic Senior Outreach, a program of the Masonic Homes of California, provides the senior members of our fraternal family access to the services and resources they need to stay healthy and safe in their homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities.

These services include:

* Information and referrals to community-based senior providers throughout California
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* Financial support

Masonic Senior Outreach also provides interim financial and care support to those who are on the waiting list for the Masonic Homes of California. Contact us at 888/466-3642 or **intake@mhcuc.org**.

MASONIC FAMILY OUTREACH

Masonic Family Outreach support services are available to California Masons and their families who need help dealing with today's complex issues, such as the impact of divorce, the stresses of a special needs child, job loss, and other significant life challenges.

Our case management services are broad, flexible, and able to serve families in their own communities throughout the state. If you are in need of support or know of a family in distress, contact us at 888/466-3642 or **intake@mhcuc.org**.

MASONIC CENTER FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

The Masonic Center for Youth and Families provides integrated psychological services to youth ages 4 to 17 struggling with behavioral, academic, emotional, or social difficulties. To learn more about MCYAF, visit mcyaf.org or call 877/488-6293.

ACACIA CREEK

To learn more about Acacia Creek, our new senior living community in Union City, visit acaciacreek.org or call 877/902-7555.

STAY INFORMED

You may request a presentation be made at a lodge meeting about the Masonic Homes and Outreach programs by contacting Masonic Assistance at 888/466-3642 or **intake@mhcuc.org**.

VISIT THE HOMES

Arrange a private or group tour to get a firsthand look at residential services on our two campuses. Be sure to call ahead (even if on the same day) so we can announce your arrival at the front security gate and make proper tour arrangements. Contact the Home at Union City at 510/471-3434 and the Home at Covina at 626/251-2232.

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Annual Communication

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SEPTEMBER 21-23, 2012
San Francisco, California

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Friday, 1 p.m.

For the first time, legislation will begin during the tiled business session on Friday afternoon. Make sure your lodge's opinions are heard by attending both Friday and Saturday business sessions.

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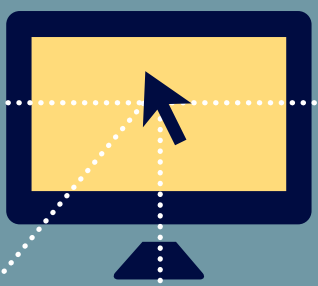

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