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“Ethics and equity and the principles of justice do not change with the calendar.” D.H. Lawrence

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“A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.” Brother Manly Hall

Dear Masonic Student,

I has been my good fortune to be able to attend a few Masonic gatherings lately and to be able to speak about Freemasonry. At the conclusion of some of my talks there has been time allowed for some Questions and answers. I like to get questions on Masonry for a couple of reasons: One reason is that it's always good for the questioner to get an answer to something that has been on his mind. Another reason is that it gives me the opportunity to do some research to find the answer. Our Education Committee actually not only welcomes and solicits questions, we actually love to get them because, if it weren't for questions there would not be much in the way of Masonic information / education.

Recently a topic has come up on the Internet about ethics in Masonic education. I have read many of the posts on the Internet, and if I understand it right, the question relates to it being ethical to know something about Freemasonry that would be interesting and then not share it. I guess I look at things differently; I think ethics are pretty simple. Rev. John Maxwell maintains that it's pretty simple too: he suggests that if a question on ethics comes up to ask a simple question; "How would I like to be treated in this situation?"

When it comes to Masonic Knowledge, I always wanted to be able to learn from others, by talking with them, hearing their Masonic talks, reading what they had to say on the craft, etc. Every Mason has the right to learn as much as he wants about Freemasonry, and those of us who have information to pass along have an obligation to help our Brothers learn what they want to learn. This idea is spoken of in the Charge of the first degree, and also in the Masonic code of my jurisdiction. No Mason should have information withheld from him that he should or needs to know.

At the end of my talks, and through email - mail - and phone - I get a lot of good questions from Masons and non-Masons alike. (Not all Masonic students have been initiated.) There is a great interest in Freemasonry and all that surrounds it.

Recently I got a question that involved something that I never thought would come up. Not long before that I was reading about Hermann Goering in Denslow's 10,000 famous Freemasons. [This book is on-line at www.phoenixmasonry.org] I think Denslow's 10 thousand is a wonderful book to have for the Masonic student, and I'm very grateful to the Brother that provided me with my copy [actually a set of 4 books], which I use and read in regularly. Anyway in volume 2 Herman Goering is mentioned, not because he was a Mason - he wasn't - but because he was an anti-Mason. (The real anti-Masons will never be happy until and unless the Masonic fraternity ceases to exist.

Here was the question that was asked after one of my talks: The Brother had a photo on an old publication showing a cornerstone ceremony (he didn't have it along, but he did describe it to me) in Germany from 1938 at the laying of the cornerstone at the Volkswagen factory. He said it sure looked like a Masonic Ceremony, and it appeared that the men wearing Tux and Tails, with one of them in a Top Hat were wearing Aprons. The question was whether I thought it was a Masonic ceremony? I should add that Adolph Hitler was in the photo too.

It's no secret that Hitler wanted to wipe out Freemasonry, and so did Hermann Goering. Reading about Goering in the 10,000 one finds out about his rapid rise to power within the Nazi government with increasing responsibility and power. The interesting part of the short bio on Goering in the 10,000 is when he met, and talked with Grand Master Von Heeringen on April 07, 1933. Goering told him, "In a National socialist State ... there is no place for Freemasons." Interesting in his words – not - no place for Freemasonry, but no place for Freemasons. Denslow reports that "Later,

German Masonic heads reported 'if the intention of Minister Goering should find general approval in the Reich cabinet, there would be no question of the continuance of our Grand Lodge of Freemasons.' Next followed the rules under which Freemasonry might carry on – 1. discontinuation of the use of the words 'Freemason' and 'Lodge;' 2. Breaking off of all international relations; 3. Requirement that all members be of German descent; 4. Removal of the requirement of Secrecy; 5. Elimination of those parts of the ritual which were of Old Testament origin. [Numerals added by me or clarification.] As a result the National Grand Lodge changed its name to 'The National Christian Order of Frederick the Great.'

In the book "Freemasonry In Context" by Brothers Morris and De Hoyos there is a chapter titled "In The Eye of the Hurricane" by Rolf Melzer, which goes into this period of history and the event mentioned above in greater detail. An excerpt of this book and chapter is at:

http://books.google.com/books?id=hXq4IJeX_DUC&pg=PA97&lpg=PA97&dq=search:+The+National+Christian+Order+of+Frederick+the+Great.&source=bl&ots=1Wf9dRSqGA&sig=eW2-gytGyujl62mzde5VHPHYv0&hl=en&ei=JHPvS6LeMIO0IQeVw8y1CA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false

As far as the photo of the 1938 Volkswagen corner stone ceremony is concerned there is some interesting information on it: I think I found the photo on line at: <http://auto.howstuffworks.com/1931-1945-volkswagen-beetle3.htm> Now, if you're a bit like me you will need a Magnifying glass to see all there is in the photo. But it appears that man wearing the tux and Top hat is wearing an Apron, although not a white lambskin apron, but rather a brown and larger apron, and it appears he and others are giving the Nazi Salute. Hitler is in the foreground looking at the Volkswagen car (Beetle). The caption is interesting too: "With much fanfare, Adolf Hitler on May 26, 1938, presided over the cornerstone ceremony for the new Volkswagen factory in what would later be called Wolfsburg." The article that follows about the Volkswagen car is interesting for car and history buffs.

My guess is, and it is only a guess since I can't know for certain is that the men in the photo performing the ceremony were members of 'The National Christian Order of Frederick the Great.' No longer Freemasons, they would still know the cornerstone ceremony and would, most likely, be pleased to perform such for a new building. And, if I'm correct, some of the ceremony might resemble a Masonic ceremony, but, with the exception of the symbolism connected with the elements, the cornerstone ceremony would be very similar of any cornerstone ceremony, which I think was performed long before speculative Freemasonry as we know it today. Brother Jim Tresner wrote an excellent book called "From Sacrifice To Symbol," which traces the history of cornerstones and ceremonies from 8000 B.C.E. to 400 C.E. through the Middle Ages to the present day. And he explains how the Masonic Cornerstone ceremony evolved from earlier cornerstone ceremonies. If you want to read a book that answers a lot, if not all, the questions on cornerstone ceremonies read Tresner's book; ISBN: 0-935633-31-6

What is interesting to draw from this episode of history and the formation of The National Christian Order of Frederick the Great after eliminating the National Grand Lodge of Germany is that in order to win favor with the National Socialist Government the Grand Lodge complied with the demands made by Goering. This effectively removed all Jewish Masons from the new organization and from Masonry; it eliminated the ritual, since the Hiram Legend comes from the Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles; it also eliminated anything and everything of a private nature, including how one would vote within a group on things that needed to be voted on. By changing to attempt to gain favor with the new government the Freemasons of that Grand Lodge caused Freemasonry to cease to exist. Irrespective of a cornerstone ceremony it was not a Masonic ceremony.

Ethics – how ethical is it to change an organization to eliminate all non-Christians who had been members – As Rev. Maxwell asks: "How would I like to be treated in this situation?" Being unceremoniously removed from a fraternity you love would be a very unkind cut.

"Live one day at a time emphasizing ethics rather than rules." Dr. Wayne Dyer

Words to live by: "Justice is better than chivalry if we cannot have both." Alice Stone Blackwell

From volumes of Sacred Law:

"You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert [justice;} Exodus 23:2 Tanakh (Old Testament)

"For he has set a day for judging the world with **justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."** Acts 17:31 New Testament

"To those weak of understanding make not over your property, which God hath made a means of support for you, but feed and clothe them therewith, and speak to them words of kindness and justice." Qur'an (sura) 004:005 Yusuf Ali Translation

Please remember: if you would like to participate in the latest Masonic Monday Question, please go to <http://www.lodgebuilder.org> and click on the Lodge Education forum. When you have an answer send it to masonicmonday@gmail.com the Masonic Monday Question for the week of 05/24/10 is: **Name the only Brother to serve as Grand Master to both Grand Lodges of Kentucky & Illinois?**

"Ethics must begin at the top of an organization. It is a leadership issue and the chief executive must set the example." Edward Hennesy

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"In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same." Albert Einstein

The newest Education video from the Grand Lodge of Minnesota can be viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAcUiBn8xI0>.

TFS & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed's Face Book page; <http://www.facebook.com/ed.halpaus> - <http://halpaus.blogspot.com> - <http://www.mn-masons.org>

Please remember – Ed's new email address is erhmasonic@gmail.com the old one is going away.

With "Brotherly Love", Ed Halpaus - Grand Lodge Education Officer

Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:

It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!