

Freemasonry: A Conflict of Interests by Bro. Jeff Peace

In the beginning of speculative Freemasonry a type of mission statement was put forth by the founders. It appears in a couple of different wordings but they all focus on the same thing.

1. Freemasonry is an ancient order dedicated to the brotherhood of all mankind under the All-Seeing Eye of God (Deity).
2. The brotherhood of man under God.

If the “mission” of Freemasonry was the brotherhood of all mankind under God, then how much more important was the brotherhood of Freemasons? I can only speculate that it was essential to the accomplishment of the broader overall mission of the Craft. I think this carries with it certain implications of how Freemasonry was meant to operate, and contains the core ideology of the peculiar system of morality that is, by definition, Freemasonry.

The mission of Freemasonry is very idealistic indeed and was most likely developed with the assumption that the brotherhood itself would never become divided. Unfortunately, thirty-six years later the fraternity was torn apart by a schism. Over the past three hundred years there have been many schisms and countless new Masonic bodies created. One of the results of these schisms is the growing division among Freemasons today.

This creates more than just Masonic political issues, it questions the very core of Masonic philosophy: our system of morality that was designed to forge a brotherhood of all mankind. If we, as Freemasons, cannot reconcile our own petty differences then of what real value to humanity is our system of morality and supposed brotherhood? This creates a major credibility issue for us and Masonic philosophy overall. At best the public must think our claims of brotherly love and tolerance are just so much sophistry, if not a complete fabrication. It seems we can talk the talk but are incapable of walking the walk.

Today we have countless Grand Lodges. Some are labeled “regular,” others “clandestine” and yet others “irregular.” We have Grand Masters expelling, suspending and erasing brothers without charges, trials or justifiable cause. We have female Freemasons, esoteric groups, party groups, and countless others who seem to be in a perpetual state of conflict. All of these issues are building up yet no one seems to be willing to address them in a constructive manner. Instead we just put on blinders and pretend they don’t exist in hopes they will just magically go away.

My brethren, I think we have a bitter pill to swallow. The problems Freemasonry faces today are of our own making. Somewhere, somehow, we lost sight of what Freemasonry is really about and replaced the lofty ideal of a brotherhood of man with a political hierarchy dedicated to self-aggrandizement and title-chasing. The Craft has become a hollow shell of what it once was and every day we continue down this path the fragile walls of that shell crack a little more. It is only a matter of time before we reach a critical juncture brought about by form and substance. We still have the form but lack any real substance.

I can already hear the howls of how perfect this or that lodge is and how good things are in my jurisdiction. While things may be rosy in isolated lodges here and there, the overall state of Freemasonry in America is deplorable. We have lost sight of our mission and replaced moral substance with politics. Unless we begin to turn things around very soon it may be too late to take the corrective actions that are already long over-due.

We need to restore our own brotherhood and cement it with virtue, tolerance and universal morality. It must start with each individual brother and then progress through the lodges until finally it forces its way through the Grand Lodges. Only then can we begin to address the many real issues that face us as a brotherhood and resolve the differences between all Masons throughout the world. Once we have done this then we will once again be looked up to by people around the world as a guiding light into a better future for all mankind.