



## Charlie's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party

RWBro Charlie Dyson was born in Calgary on 23 November 1915, raised in the Hillhurst district and attended Western Canada High. There he became very active in track and field, travelling around the country and setting many records. He apprenticed with the City of Calgary Electric System and became a power lineman, working 39 years with the City. He married Carolyn Burkhart and they had three children.

Charlie joined the Masonic Order in Ashlar Lodge No. 28 on 22 September 1949 and was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on 24 November 1949. He became Master of his Lodge in 1957, was District Deputy Grand Master of District No. 1 in 1972 and was appointed Representative of the Grand Lodge of Peru. He joined Scottish Rite in 1987, advancing to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree, and joined the Shrine in 2004. Charlie helped raise both sons in the Masonic Order: Paul in Balmoral Lodge No. 158 and David in Calgary Lodge No. 23. He then helped raise Paul to the Master's Chair in Canada Lodge No. 3527, London, England, and David to the Master's Chair in Calgary Lodge No. 23, later helping to raise grandson Kevin in Calgary Lodge.

On November 1<sup>st</sup> a celebration of Charlie's life was held at the Al Azhar Shrine Centre, with 130 people in attendance. Presentations and good wishes came from the Grand Lodge of Alberta, Ashlar Lodge, the Shrine, the



Left to Right: RWBro James Ratchford, Deputy Grand Master; WBro Dave Dyson; RWBro Charlie Dyson; RWBro Kenn Culbertson, Junior Grand Warden; RWBro Gordon Berard, Senior Grand Warden

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Premier's Office, the Prime Minister, the Governor General and the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede.

## Master's Wages

Donald M. Severson, *The Short Talk Bulletin*, Vol. 93 No. 11, November 2015

*The author is a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, serving in 1978-79. He is a Past Master of Arcana Lodge, and a dual member of Phoenix Daylight Lodge. He continues his service as Lodge Education Officer, in which role he wrote this article in response to a question from his Senior Warden.*

In most jurisdictions the Senior Warden, during meetings, repeats the phrase, "In order that I might receive Master's Wages..." Such wages help a Mason to be "better enabled to support myself and family, and contribute to the relief of poor distressed Master Masons, their widows and orphans." But what, really, are Master's Wages?

If, as a candidate for the degrees of Masonry, you were looking for a material or financial reward or gain, then your

time and treasure were surely wasted. At the time of your first entrance into the Lodge it may not have been easily discernible, but you were being offered an opportunity for spiritual and personal growth — Master's Wages.

The wages of a Master Mason could be divided into three categories: Spiritual, Temporal, and Personal.

### **Spiritual Wages**

Do you recall the first words spoken by you in a Masonic Lodge? Those two words were a crucial insight into the very personal and spiritual part of your make up. Because it was a spontaneous and honest response, it was a significant examination of self, and verified and confirmed your sincere belief and trust in God — Master's Wages in their most

unalloyed form.

Do you also recall at the time of your "raising" when you were informed by the Master that "heretofore, you have had a Brother to pray for you, now you must pray for yourself"? Do you remember the spiritual aura and the almost mystical, somewhat frightening feeling of being alone with your Creator as you knelt and prayed? Did it leave you with a profound feeling of belief and trust in your personal Deity? If so, once again, you received Master's Wages.

### **Temporal Wages**

There is a very dedicated group of members in one Lodge I know, who have spent many hours on much needed repairs and cleanup work on the Lodge building. Most of these Brothers are recent additions to the membership of the Lodge. These members did not spend time away from their families and

other commitments for personal gain. They did it for the good of the Lodge, its members and Masonry in general.

What was it that prompted these good Brothers to give of their time and talent, and what was their reward? Master's Wages. It was Master's Wages, earned through the satisfaction and pride in a job well done, and done for a good and beneficent purpose.

And Brothers, these temporal wages are in no way limited to the work of the Lodge. Youth groups such as the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts. Church groups, and many other civic organizations, all offer opportunities for earning Master's Wages.

### **Personal Wages**

Master Masons, during their personal journeys through a lifetime of Masonic labours, have received Master's wages in many ways — an appointment to the Lodge line, an exciting and energizing event; or election and installation as the Lodge Master, an even more exciting and awesome event, with all the apprehension and hope for a successful

year.

How about the appointment to a Grand Lodge office, and the possible election and installation as Grand Master? Among the many other events are 25-year membership or 50-year membership recognition or other Masonic service awards.

There is the gratification felt when you are complimented on good ritual work or a well thought out presentation.

All of the foregoing are accompanied by the payment of Master's Wages.

But the most important aspect of personal Master's Wages, are the warm and altruistic feelings you get when you have been instrumental in helping another human being feel better about themselves, by encouraging and helping them in time of spiritual or physical need, thus making the world a better place for them and others.

Another and important form of personal Master's Wages are earned when new friendships are made and old ones renewed at the many traditional Lodge functions. Past Master's night, Old-timers night, father's and son's

banquets, installations of officers, Lodge picnics, and inter-Lodge visits. Most of these functions take place at a less formal venue than Stated or Special Communications — but all offering opportunities for the garnering of Master's Wages.

There is a commonly quoted saying that you "get out of Masonry what you put into it." Not so! The rewards far exceed what the sum total of your efforts in Masonry may have been, or will be. My Masonic life has been blessed with Master's Wages of many kinds, far beyond any time or effort I have put into it.

But there is so much more, Brothers — much, much, more. Master's Wages — the very essence of Masonry that becomes a part of our lives, and changes us in many ways — is an ineffable, abstract, unexplainable spiritual reward that pervades the human soul and cannot be expressed in words alone, but can only be felt at the deepest and most transcendent level.

Master's Wages: a metaphor for a way of life.

## **The Cable**

By VVBro Garth Cochran.

*This paper is based on one first presented by the author at Calgary Lodge No. 23 in 1986 and at several Lodges since then.*

What is the difference between a cable and a cable-tow? Is the burial in the sands of the sea a cable's length or a cable-tow's length from shore? I propose to explain why such a burial is a cable's length from shore, and to further explore the analogy of the cable and cable-tow in Masonic allegory.

Our Freemasonry started in Britain, and it is important to bear that in mind when researching questions such as this. What were the traditions that would have affected the early development of the Craft? Clearly, the naval tradition — which made Britain a major power — would have been paramount. In fact, the symbolic burial in our first degree comes directly from that naval tradition.

First, what is a cable? We start with

hemp fibres — short pieces of hemp without direction or form. If we twist these fibres together, we can make them into a yarn. We twist several yarns together to make a strand. A number of strands are "laid-up" to form a rope. Three such ropes laid up together constitute a cable.

All the cables on board a ship are the same length: a function of the length of the ropewalk where they were made. Some are 100 fathoms, some as long as 130 fathoms. In the British Navy, the standard length of a cable is one hundred fathoms, or about six hundred feet — chosen because it is one-tenth of a nautical mile. Thus, the cable can also be used as a measure of distance.

Second, the burial. From the time

of Elizabeth 1 to this century, life in the British Navy was governed by the Articles of War. Each Sunday these 35 Articles were read to the men so that they were constantly reminded of their duty and of the penalties for shirking it. Included in these articles is the penalty for treason. A man found guilty of treason would be hanged from the yardarm and, after being left there for a suitable period of time (usually midnight), would be taken down and buried.

To ensure there was no honour to the traitor, the burial was traditionally on a tidal flat, a cable's length or 100 fathoms (600 feet) from the shore. Burial on the tidal flats is neither an honourable burial at sea nor one on land but is where the

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**The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.**

330 – 12 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2R 0H2  
Tel 403-262-1140 — Fax 403-290-0671  
[www.freemasons.ab.ca](http://www.freemasons.ab.ca)

Grand Master	MWBro Chris Batty
Deputy Grand Master	RWBro James Ratchford
Senior Grand Warden	RWBro Gordon Berard
Junior Grand Warden	RWBro Kenn Culbertson
Grand Secretary	RWBro Jerry W. Kopp



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**Editor: RWBro George Tapley**

339 Whitefield Dr NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 5S2  
Tel 403-280-6776 — Fax 403-290-0671  
e-mail: [editor@freemasons.ab.ca](mailto:editor@freemasons.ab.ca)

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garbage of land and sea gathers to rot. In fact, both main anchorages at the time of sail — Spithead at Portsmouth and the Nore at the mouth of the Thames — had such extensive tidal flats. They were, incidentally, also the only places where enough Captains could be regularly brought together to hold a Court Martial.

Third, what about the cable-tow? The cable-tow is generally accepted to be a symbol of a man's tie to his fraternity. It is somewhat analogous to a "tow" between two ships although, in naval parlance, that is *never* called a cable-tow.

In naval usage, tow can refer to both the cable connecting the ships and to the ship being towed. I mentioned that a cable was a rope of 600 feet. But when a tug is towing a ship, they are almost always more than six hundred feet apart. That's because a cable and a tow aren't the same thing. The cable is a rope of a specific length. When we make up a tow, we might tie or "bend" several cables together. The number of cables needed to make up a tow depends on two factors.

One, how heavy is the tow? A light object isn't hard to move, but a heavy one is. A short rope has very little stretch in it. If you attach it to a light object, it will pull it. But if you tie it to something heavy, it will break before it starts to move the tow through the water.

A longer rope with a deeper sag in the middle has more give in it. The tug's force is applied more slowly, giving enough time to overcome the inertia of the disabled ship and get it moving before the cable snaps.

Two, the burden of the ship is not the only factor that determines the length of the tow. The condition of the sea is also important. If the sea is calm, a shorter tow is enough. Once you get the tow moving, it will follow smoothly. However, if the sea is rough, then a much longer cable will be needed. The tow may be trying to climb the back of one wave while the tug is surging down the front of another. If the tow is too short, then there isn't enough give in it to allow the tug and the tow to scend apart and the cable will snap. So the heavier the burden and/or the rougher the conditions, the longer the tow.

Brethren, I have now explained the construction of a cable and how it may be used as both a unit of measure and as a tow. But what, you might ask, has this to do with Freemasonry?

The point is that the terms we use

in Masonry today have their basis in real terms and in real penalties. That gives them both strength and a sense of purpose to anyone who comes to understand their origins.

First, and most obvious, is what is said in our first degree. Is it a cable's length or a cable-tow's length from shore? A cable's length, I submit, is more correct, not only because it is closer to a real penalty for treason but also for the symbolism. The cable-tow signifies the *tie* of the Brother to the fraternity and vice-versa. If a man violates his obligations and, thus, deserves the symbolic penalty, why then retain that tie in the statement of separation. Surely, what we are mandating is a breaking of the cable-tow. Hence, the penalty is symbolically and more pointedly final by using the term "cable's length."

Second is the depth of meaning available to us in the use of the cable itself as a metaphor in Masonry. As the cable is made of many parts put together for a common purpose, so might we look at Freemasonry.

The cable consists of individual fibres, worked together to form strands. These strands are laid together to make up ropes and the ropes to form a cable. As separate entities, the fibres have little strength. However, when organized into a cable, as we have shown, their strength is immense.

So it is with Freemasonry. A Masonic Cable is made from individuals who form a Lodge. Lodges organize into Districts. Districts unite in a Grand Lodge.

Further, a cable gains its strength from three equal ropes, laid together. Each rope is as important to the whole as the other. So it is with the three degrees of Freemasonry. One should not be tempted to forget the lessons of the Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft just because he has been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

As a strong cable is made of three ropes entwined, the strength of a Lodge comes from the Three Great Lights, the Three Lesser Lights, the three principal officers and the three pillars denoting Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.



*Twenty-five ships of the Royal Navy give George III a 21-gun salute when he reviewed the Fleet at Spithead, 2 June 1773. Watercolour by John Cleveley, the younger; centre is HMS Royal Oak. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.*

As three ropes entwined produce the strong cable, so too does Virtue, Morality and Brotherly Love give strength to Masonry.

A cable's great strength is only apparent when it is put to use. So it is with Freemasonry. The strength of our Craft remains hidden until it is put to use.

We can also think of the cable-tow as the bond connecting the individual Brother to his Lodge and to Grand Lodge, those venerable institutions that give direction to a Brother in his journey through life.

Consider what we have just learned. The tow, which connects the tug to the barge at sea, is not of a specific length. In fact, the amount of cable let out by the tug as it attempts to direct the course and speed of the tow depends on the condition of the sea and the burden of the tow. Strange as it may seem, in stormy seas, a tug actually gives more secure guidance and direction with the longer tow.

So, too, with our Masonic cable-tow: that bond that binds a Brother to his Lodge and to the Craft. What about the Brother who finds himself encountering stormy seas or who finds the burdens of his responsibilities bear heavily on him? Undue pressure from the Lodge or from his Brothers to attend meetings, participate in degree work or to "be a good Mason" may cause his cable-tow to snap and sever his bond to the Craft.

Finally, once the nautical cable is severed, the state of the seas or the poor condition of the disabled ship may make recovery of the tow impossible. The ship is therefore lost while the tug stands by — helpless.

So might a Brother be lost to the Craft. And Masonry would be thus impoverished.

# Wisdom, Strength and Beauty

George Allan, Chair of the Education Pillar, Grand Lodge of New Zealand

Freemasons will be familiar with the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty and their representations of King Solomon for his Wisdom as told in the VSL, Hyrum [sic] King of Tyre for his Strength in supporting King Solomon with materials for the building of God's house and Hyrum the Widow's son for the beautiful workmanship he introduced into the construction of the building. Did you know that it takes a minimum of three pillars to support a structure and prevent it from falling down? Try it for yourself

Every one of our Masonic Lodges is supported by the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty: the Wisdom of the Master and Past Masters, the Strength of our younger Brethren, and the Beauty in our ceremonies and practice of Brotherly Love. Imagine a Lodge with a wise Master and Past Masters who make really good decisions on financial matters, communications within the Lodge and with other Lodges, future ceremonies and educational events, membership and every other topic — this would be a good Lodge to belong to.

Now, if that same Lodge was really active and every member was having a really good time at every meeting — would this attract new men to become Freemasons? And if in that same Lodge every member was eager to learn about Masonry and the ceremonies, and play his part in every degree ritual, study groups, quiz nights and other social events — would this be a good Lodge to belong to?

On the other hand, imagine a Lodge in which no one makes wise decisions, all decisions are poor for whatever reason. What is going to happen to this Lodge eventually? What if this Lodge never had any new younger members — what is going to happen to this Lodge eventually? And what is going to happen if the ceremonies are poorly performed, members don't learn the correct actions and words, timing is poor and no one really bothers to get it right. What is going to happen to this Lodge eventually?

If you don't have all three pillars of Wisdom in our Past Masters, Strength in our newer members and Beauty in performing our ceremonies it is likely that the Lodge will fall down eventually.

In the Opening ceremony the WM turns to the IPM and asks him the Master's place and why he is placed there. The reply is, "to open the Lodge and employ and instruct the Brethren in Freemasonry." So I ask, does your Master do this? Yes, he will open the Lodge, but does he instruct you in Freemasonry? There are probably many Past Masters who will read this and think that because they have already been in the Master's chair that they know enough about Freemasonry and don't want to be "instructed" any further.

The greatly respected German philosopher Goethe (who lived from 1749 to 1832) made a powerful point when he said that, "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." We need the Past Masters to use the wisdom gained

through their years of experience (in professional business as well as Masonic) to lead our Lodges into a living future. There will be some tough calls to make for the good of their Lodges future in particular and for Freemasonry in New Zealand in general.

One of the difficulties with using our experience is that we do use the same thinking over and over again. One of the greatest wise thinkers of our time, Albert Einstein, said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." So, we need our Past Masters to think outside the box that contains our financial and membership problems and that isn't easy at all. We may need a fresh look at the strength of our newer Masons and how we sometimes don't listen to their needs and requirements for newer approaches Masonic evenings instead of repeatedly simulating degree ceremonies. Einstein went on to describe insanity as "Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." The beauty of our ceremonies would be greatly enhanced in some Lodges with members taking their Freemasonry more seriously in generating a greater personal ability to learn the work and understand the spirit behind our ceremonies.

Is the problem that Freemasonry doesn't mean much to some men, that it is only a veneer, exists only in some actions and not others? Is Brotherly Love only skin deep with some men and does not exist in their inner being? Brotherly Love must not be theoretical and just words, it has to work in practice and be real. It says so in the VSL (Book of St John).

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## *Excerpt from Grand Oration, 2015 Annual Communication*

### **What Came You Here to Do?**

WBro Andrew Hammer, Grand Orator, Grand Lodge of North Carolina. (First of three parts.)

As many of you are aware, there is an excitement taking place right now in North Carolina Masonry. The excitement stems from a new energy that has arisen from Brothers throughout the state, Brothers who are seeking an approach to Masonry that asks for the very best work in the quarries that can be done. It's not just happening in one part of the state either; from Asheville to New Bern, Brothers are talking about ways to bring their Lodges back to the serious, educationally-based environment that

their Masonic forefathers enjoyed, where the Lodge truly was a place of learning and self-improvement in the most sincere sense of those words.

Freemasonry is undergoing a transformation of unparalleled proportions, not seen since the beginning of the speculative Craft. Everywhere in this country, Masons are asking questions about why they do what they do, and they are investigating the origins and historical documents of the Craft in order to answer those

questions.

What they are finding in many cases is that over time, our Craft has been riddled with innovations, and they are at long last mustering up the courage to say to their Grand Lodges that something somewhere is not right, and that if the Craft wishes to be true to all it teaches, those things that are not right must be put right. Through their earnest study and investigation of our history, these Brothers are now demanding that speculative Masonry be restored to the

intent of its founders, in almost every aspect of its practice.

This transformation arguably springs forth from a question. The question I want to bring before you today is that very first substantial question that every initiate is asked when he is asked to recapitulate what he has just undergone: *What Came You Here To Do?*

The answer of course, is: *to learn to subdue my passions, and improve myself in Masonry.* Now, we say that but no one explains how we are supposed to go about doing that.

***What are the Passions we are aiming to subdue?***

- the desire to bring the profane self into the Lodge
- the desire to bring particulars of our religion into the Lodge
- the desire to bring politics or political sentiments into the Lodge

***What Came You Here to Do?***

***How exactly are we to Improve Ourselves in Masonry?***

- to build true tolerance and intellectual openness to discussing ideas among brethren
- the need to understand and develop civility in the human condition
- the need to develop oneself as not only a good citizen of our own country, but a true and faithful brother in all of God's world

When we put those things together, we can understand that improving ourselves in Masonry equates to an instruction in the very discipline and meaning of life itself.

But behind this question today is a deeper concern about the purpose and meaning of the Fraternity. That concern arises from the failure to even attempt to answer that question of ***What came you here to do?***

Freemasonry is suffering from an epidemic of Brethren who appear to think that Freemasonry itself is not enough. Men join thinking that it will be one kind of thing, or join not understanding at all what it is. Then, rather than going out and seeking the understanding of what it is, they will simply attempt to make it just like every other thing in their lives, bringing in the various elements of their non-Masonic life into the Craft, because they can't admit that perhaps Masonry is not what they really were looking for in the first place. They want something else, something that involves their families, their particular religious tradition or

political worldview, and they seek to superimpose that onto the Craft rather than learning the original disciplines of the entity they chose to join.

The result has been the unfortunate tendency to seek to make Masonry in our own image. To an extent, it is human nature to attempt to mold things in this way. Yet Masonry is not just what anyone wants it to be, and it surely cannot be only that which our father and grandfathers have told us it is, because in so many cases they did not tell us at all what Freemasonry was. And in so many cases they never bothered to study it, they had no desire to understand it more deeply than the surface, and as a result they lost all ability to communicate effectively to today's generations what they were supposed to get from it. Thank God that the Brethren coming in today are asking these core questions about what the Craft is, and voraciously reading the history of our institution so that they can understand what it is they came here to do.

***It is a paradox of history that when something becomes available to everyone in a given society, that thing tends to lose its value.***

As a result, we then have to ask another question that strikes at the very heart of what it means to become a Freemason:

Do we give in to the tacit state of human nature in accepting what is familiar and comfortable, or do we challenge ourselves to find something more in ourselves, and become that which was offered to us in the beginning, something better? If the answer is to be the latter, then it requires our singular focus, dedication, and commitment to the equally singular institution from whence all of this came. That brings us to the pursuit of excellence within that institution.

It is a paradox of history that when something becomes available to everyone in a given society, that thing tends to lose its value. Any economist,

regardless of his political tendency, understands that scarcity is what gives a commodity its value. Roman citizenship was immensely valued in the early days of the Empire, when the rights it bestowed ensured not only the social rank of its bearer, but often the intelligence and abilities of such a person. As it was extended further and further over time, it eventually reached the barbarians at the gates. At that point, it no longer communicated the same value because anyone and everyone had it.

Likewise, we have seen that the extension of Masonry to all and sundry that has taken place in recent generations, has brought with it the concomitant decline in the quality of Masonic meetings and events. The hunger for numbers has taken the place of the hunger for *knowledge*; the pursuit of popularity has replaced the pursuit of excellence. The desire to make it easy for a man to become a Mason is going the same way as all similar endeavours have done since the beginning of time. The result becomes a fraternity that asks nothing from, and then gives next to nothing to its members in the way of real philosophical instruction, but congratulates itself in how well it mimics the social functions of service organizations.

An organization which is altered to be easily accepted, joined and understood by everyone will sooner or later assume the form of everyone, and in so doing will inevitably become a social rather than a singular enterprise. It therefore will also lose that which gives it distinction from other things that may be similar to it in form. This is not the definition of any craft.

Masonry began as a skill, based upon a need. It then became a trade which was organized into a guild. It required diligence and a commitment to quality work. Not just any man was taken on as an apprentice; a man was asked to measure up for a job he sought before he was allowed to do it. More important, no man who was unwilling to work to learn how to produce good work was allowed to remain long with the Craft.

Speculative Masonry also has the same requirements, but because the work expected is that of the improvement of the individual, taking place inside that individual, it is not as easy to tangibly evaluate the quality or the results. But here again, any man

who is unwilling to learn to produce good work should also not be allowed to either enter or remain in our Craft.

For years we have explained to men who ask about the value of Masonry that what you get out of it is what you put into it. This is a ridiculous and lazy non-answer, a mere platitude, and the result of it has been that men have been allowed to bring anything they enjoy from their daily lives into the Craft and call it Masonry. The assertion behind this appears to be that so long as what we are doing is good, it must obviously

be that which we define as goodness, and therefore that overall effort expended towards general goodness is what makes us better men, and that then must be what Masonry is all about.

Undoubtedly, the world we live in needs more goodness, more acts of loving kindness, and concern for one's fellow man. And Masonry calls us to perform such actions as part of our obligation to humanity and creation. But this is no more the sum of Masonry than it is algebra or physics. Surely every human being should be called

to goodness, be it through their faith, or, for a non-believer, whatever ethical system they might use to guide their actions. But what the observant Mason must ask himself is: What about Masonry distinguishes it from that goodness that we hope for in every human being or from other benevolent organizations? If Masonry is about nothing more than what any good man expects from all good people, why should anyone bother to seek initiation into our institution as opposed to another group of well-intentioned people who do good things?

