



Good to Great

MWBro Chris Batty, PGM, Grand Lodge of Alberta, Saskatchewan Lodge No. 92 GRA

Introduction

In Jim Collins' book *Good to Great* [Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 2001], he indicates that for an organisation, greatness is largely a matter of conscious choice by the directors and staff, a conscious choice to implement a disciplined approach to:

1. what they are deeply passionate about;
2. what they can be the best in the world at; and
3. what drives their economic engine.

Freemasonry is all about making good men better. No one else can make Freemasons better than what we can. Our economic engine is all about how economically viable, effective, and efficiently we operate our Grand Lodge, our individual Lodges, and our charity.

Basic Philosophy

Most Freemasons have heard the phrase "To make good men better" as a response to the question: What does Freemasonry do? When we think of that statement we need to ask ourselves: "What does that mean and how do we do that?"

If we review the lessons of Freemasonry in each of the four ceremonies of a Craft Lodge, we will discover that the recurring themes are: the pursuit of happiness, health, wealth, and wisdom. The lessons of Freemasonry teach us: to be civil, courteous, and gracious; to be happy, healthy, responsible for ourselves and not a burden on society; to understand the meaning of financial freedom and personal wealth.

The lessons of Freemasonry are the tools by which we can obtain them all!

The words "happy" and "happiness" occur 13 times in our Canadian Rite Ritual. [And 12 times in the Ancient York Rite, ed.] The lessons associated with these repeated occurrences are clear guides to how we can become happy and remain happy.

The conclusion of the First Degree Working Tools: "From the whole we

deduce this moral: that knowledge, grounded on accuracy, aided by labour, and promoted by perseverance, will finally overcome all difficulties, raise ignorance from despair, and establish happiness in the paths of science" is the first of these lessons. Happiness is a choice, not a response.

There are many other gems of wisdom contained within our Rituals — two that we should consider of great importance. From the First Degree Charge: "And to yourself, by such a prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce the preservation of your corporeal and mental faculties to their fullest energies"; and from the Retrospect: "You learned to form a just estimate of those wondrous faculties with which God has endowed the being created after His own image, and to feel the duty he has thereby imposed upon you — of cultivating those divine attributes with the most diligent care and attention."

Education and regular exercise improves the quality of our lives. Education stops the cycle of poverty and leads to prosperity. Regular exercise increases our energy levels, maintains our strength, and defers the onset of old age. Education and regular exercise allows us to live more rewarding and healthy lives.

The lessons of Freemasonry also teach us that helping others makes us feel good. This is exemplified in the address to the Entered Apprentice at the Northeast Corner of the Lodge, in the First Degree Charge, the Retrospect, and in the Charge to the Worshipful Master. However, we cannot help others if we, ourselves, are destitute.

Our Rituals contain many lessons on how we may improve our lives financially. The First Degree Working Tools tells us about how we can undertake any task. Learn all you can about the task, estimate the cost, schedule the work, and persistently apply ourselves until the task is complete.

We need to apply this process to our daily lives, to our careers, and to our businesses. There is no doubt in my mind, if we do this and if we are cognizant of the lessons associated with the Three Great Lights and limit our desires, we will eventually become wealthy, so we can help others.

Wisdom is knowledge, experience, and good judgment. A good leader, who has the ability to get people to cooperate in pursuing a common cause, may be considered wise.

A Masonic reference regarding leadership can be taken from our Ancient York Rite and the trowel that binds those together that have a common cause. The process of proceeding through each position in Lodge, from Junior Steward to Junior Warden as well as Senior Warden and Master, prepares us for a leadership role.

The lessons associated with the trowel and in assuming the responsibilities of each of the positions in Lodge train us to be better and wiser leaders.

Lessons of Freemasonry have helped us on our journey of life. The lessons of Freemasonry have made us better leaders, better public speakers, better employees, better businessmen and better people.

In short, Brethren, we need to: Learn the Ritual, Present the Ritual, Understand the Ritual, and Apply the Ritual to ourselves so we can become Happy, Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise.

Sustainable Lodges

The Condition of Freemasonry Report in the 2015 Annual Communication Proceedings outlines the requirements for a sustainable Lodge. These are:

1. be located in a municipality with more than 12,500 people; and
2. have a Lodge web site.

Lodges typically close when they have small supporting communities, such as: Fort Smith, Sangudo, Inuvik, Mayerthorpe, Lac la Biche, etc. If we continue to open Lodges in municipali-

ties that have small communities such as these, I can assure you, we will continue to get the same results.

Sustainable Districts

The three criteria for sustainable Districts are:

1. a maximum travel time of one hour between the two distant Lodges;
2. a minimum of ten Lodges; and
3. a minimum of 600 members in the District.

The foregoing criteria should be considered as an objective for all Masonic Districts. It does not mean that this will occur for each and every District, or that it will occur in five years, in ten years, or in twenty years but is an objective that we should be aiming for. The more districts that we can create complying with these foregoing criteria the stronger Freemasonry will become in Alberta.

The Leadership Philosophy and Grand Lodge:

The Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge of Alberta is the administrative authority of Freemasonry

in Alberta. As such it must provide efficient and effective business guidance to the Grand Lodge Office, the Board of Benevolence, the various Committees, the Districts, and the Lodges.

The five key points of Leadership are:

1. know where you are going;
2. check the progress, on a regular basis;
3. get the right people in the right positions;
4. personally supervise their training; and
5. find your replacement.

Any leader must have a clear knowledge of where he is going, the destination, and why.

Without regular checks on where you are, no one has any idea of the progress being made.

Having the right people in the right positions is very important, actively disengaged people will undermine coworkers and sabotage projects. Further, bureaucracy compensates for incompetence and lack of discipline. This problem largely goes away if you have the right people in the right positions. A recurring theme for many

organizations is to how to effectively deal with the actively disengaged individual. The origins of the name "Fitzroy," the term "black sheep of the family," and the term "Remittance Man" are all to do with dealing with real or perceived unsavory characters or the actively disengaged individual.

Proper training of the members of a team is vital to the longevity of the team or organization. A person who cannot train team members is not a leader but simply a manager or figurehead.

Having a knowledgeable and well-trained successor will ensure the continued success of the organization.

Conclusion

Brethren, it is important, if Freemasonry is to survive and thrive in Alberta, that we all become aware of how to be happy, healthy, wealthy, and wise by studying the lessons contained in our rituals. We must also have an administration that is economically viable, effective, efficient, and promotes the lessons of Freemasonry, as well as promoting strong Lodges and Districts.

Conspirators or Patriots?

Freemasonry's role in the French Revolution has long been a topic of curiosity, but today's scholars offer new insights

Kenneth Loiselle

Conspiracy theories connecting Freemasonry to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 have enjoyed widespread appeal since the very moment Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette fell from power. Pamphleteers in the 1790s, like Sourdat de Troyes in France and John Robison in Scotland, conjured the paranoid vision that Masonic Lodges had carefully orchestrated the collapse of Christianity and the monarchy. This idea continues to weave its way into today's best sellers, like Umberto Eco's 2010 *The Prague Cemetery*, where one protagonist makes the grandiose claim that Freemasonry's purpose in the Revolution was "not only to destroy the throne and the altar, but also to create

a society without laws and without morality."

Of course, historians must move beyond axe-grinding and fiction to discern the facts: What were Masonic Lodges doing during the Revolution? Was the revolutionary call for social equality mirrored in Lodges by an increase in socio-economic diversification between members? Can traces of the Revolution be found in members' speeches, banquet toasts, and the like?

An answer to these questions may be found in Paris, within the Grand Orient of France's massive "Moscow Archives," which migrated to the former Soviet Union in 1940 and returned to France

only in 2000. Here, one finds 27,000 dossiers containing Lodge minutes, administrative correspondence, and membership lists covering the most chaotic years of the Revolution.

One of the most thoroughly documented Lodges is *Anglaise* (the English Lodge) in the bustling port city



Lodge medal of Loge Anglaise N° 204, founded in 1732.

Provided to Freemasons of Alberta and the Northwest Territories west of the 4th Meridian who are members of

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THE ALBERTA
FreeMason

Published each month except July and August by
The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.

Editor: RWBro George Tapley
 339 Whitefield Dr NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 5S2
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 e-mail: editor@freemasons.ab.ca

The Committee on the Grand Lodge Bulletin
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Deadline for copy is the 1st day of the month prior to the month of issue.

of Bordeaux. In the 1770s and 1780s, members were mostly merchants and ship captains, and these commercial classes continued to comprise the membership majority during the Revolution. Reviewing membership records from the summer of 1789, when the Revolution began, to the summer of 1794 reveals that absolutely no social levelling had occurred. In fact, in order to ensure that *Anglaise* remained financially inaccessible to most of Bordeaux's residents, initiation fees and annual dues were consistently increased during this period in response to the massive inflation. At one point, these membership fees surpassed 10,000 livres, which was the equivalent of several months' income for a craftsman in the city!

Anglaise met in a set of rooms just a stone's throw away from the public gardens where large political rallies had been frequently held since 1789, but true to Freemasonry's prohibition of discussing politics within the Lodge, meeting minutes remained silent regarding political matters. The first mention of politics does not occur until a Saint John's Day banquet in the summer of 1790, when the second warden offered a toast to "virtuous French citizens" and to Louis XVI who was affectionately referred to as the "dignified father of the French" and a "good and sensible monarch." Like much of the general public during the Revolution's early years, Masons perceived the king positively because of his public support for the political reforms under way.

Everything changed, however, when the royal family attempted to flee France on 20 June 1791. The king was speeding in a carriage to reach the border with the Austrian army when he was apprehended and brought back to Paris. Upon his return, Parisians expressed surprise, anger, and hurt — the monarch who had publically pledged support of the Revolution had tried to join France's enemies. This momentous event had an immediate impact on the political opinion of *Anglaise*: References to Louis XVI and his family in banquet toasts disappeared. The following year, they were replaced with well-wishes to "the prosperity and perpetuation of the sublime French Republic," as well as "representatives of the French Republic in the Convention."

As the Revolution progressed, the



View of the port of Bordeaux from the Salinières side, oil on canvas by Messis Vernet, 1758. This is where three British ships captains, Martin Kelly, Nichols Staimton and Jonathan Robinson, formed Loge Anglais that laboured entirely in English. In 1913, the Lodge joined the Grande Loge Nationale Français, but withdrew from the GLNF in April 2012 to found the Grande Loge de l'Alliance Maçonnique Française.

records of *Anglaise* reveal frightening times for Lodge members. During the infamous Reign of Terror overseen by Maximilien de Robespierre, from autumn 1793 to the summer of 1794, the Bordeaux city government was in the hands of Parisian officials. *Anglaise* met only twice throughout the entire autumn and one meeting attracted a paltry three Masons. It was a tense atmosphere. A surveillance committee had declared political indifference to be a crime, and association with an organization that was suspected to be anti-Revolutionary often led to execution — without trial. Freemasons judiciously responded by incorporating revolutionary political symbols into their meetings in an unprecedented manner.

Similar to streets and public spaces in the city, Lodges adopted names perceived to be more in line with the values of the Jacobin-controlled municipal government: *Anglaise* became "Equality," and other Lodges adopted names like "Unity" and "Liberty." *Anglaise* placed the national tricolor of blue, white, and red on all its official correspondence and decorations. It was hoped that these measures would shield Brothers from unwanted attention from the newly formed municipal council, which was already arresting, condemning, and executing perceived dissidents.

Once Robespierre fell and the Convention's representatives departed

from Bordeaux, there was no more reason for *Anglaise* to maintain its façade. Brethren abandoned the name "Equality" and explicitly repudiated the Lodge's conduct during the Terror, writing: "We will conduct ourselves as did our fathers who preceded us and who honoured Freemasonry, for in the Lodge, the Brother is neither a civic man nor a political man; he is a Mason. Masonry has its old ways, its old practices, its old rites and we cannot change anything."

The case study of *Anglaise* helps us to better understand what it was like for Brothers to live through the French Revolution and encourages us to invert the classic approach towards relating Freemasonry and the Revolution. Rather than seeking the origins of revolutionary behaviour or attitudes within 18th-century Lodges, we can instead view Masonic Lodges as historical laboratories where an institution of the Enlightenment encountered and adapted to a new political and cultural landscape.

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Alberta Miscellany

A message to the Lodge at the New Year

I would like to begin by wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous, happy New Year. May the New Year bring you and your family much corn, wine and oil. May your workmanship last through the ages and bring joy and comfort to those who need it.

Being installed as your Worshipful Master for the upcoming year was a truly humbling experience. I, and the Officers of the Lodge, will do our best to serve you well and work towards creating a Lodge that we all can be proud of. My goal this year is to ensure our members get plenty of opportunity to practice the trowel. Although it is important to achieve mastery in picking the rough ashlar, sizing, squaring and smoothing it right, and to have the proper designs that circumscribe the scope of our work, the true skill and essence of our association is the proper wielding of the trowel. No ashlar, however perfect, can build a temple; nor can one ashlar fail it. A temple is made up of a combination of suitable ashlars that together form the whole.

The whole process starts with the selection of the right building material. We must ensure that our building material meets spec. We then must

work the material with skill, patience and imagination. The building material will not improve itself without the workmen. Once the material is worked into a perfect ashlar, the builder must understand where to place it in the structure. Some materials are suitable for load bearing. Others are ideal for ornamentation. When one ashlar has difficulty carrying its load, the builder must assign stronger ashlars around it to provide the necessary support. When all building blocks are placed appropriately, the builder accomplishes his goal, and his creation will be sufficiently robust to withstand the elements of nature and men.

As a Lodge, we must embark on building something. Although degree-work, business meetings and socials are necessary components of our Craft, they serve no great end without a goal in mind. What kind of Lodge do we want to be? Our ritual is important because it is how Masonic wisdom is communicated, and how Masons are born. We must commit to excellent workmanship, because only through good work can we communicate the good effects and solemnity of our Craft. Business meetings are important, as the

Lodge requires structure and order, and its affairs must be properly managed. This should not stop us from adding value to those meetings by providing Research and Education, little games and a few good jokes. I really would like our Brethren to get some value out of these meetings as well.

Festive board is one place where we can work the trowel, but it should never end there. We must build relationships beyond Lodge. We must become Brothers throughout all aspects of life. Let us be there for Brethren who experience hardship. The true beauty of our Brotherhood can only be experienced when you give your love, your time, your compassion, and your dedication. Like all deep and meaningful human connections, it requires trust, respect, honesty and thoughtfulness. This cannot be achieved overnight. We are fortunate that we all start out with something deeply in common. We share common values, and went through the same unique experience. Proper use of the trowel will do the rest.

Our Lodge has a great future. We have the right quarry, and we have a lot of skillful Craftsmen with diverse backgrounds and experience, and we all have the desire to build something magnificent. So let's get to work!

WBro Tarek Hamida, Calgary 23

The Limits of Freedom

Freemasonry's Religious Ethos is Found within Anderson's First Charge

WBro John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master, Grand Lodge of California, *California Freemason*, November-December 2016

Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 — especially its First Charge — is one of the most foundational documents of Freemasonry. Here it is (with somewhat updated spelling and language):

Concerning God and Religion:

A Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law; if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. But though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was, it is now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is, to be good men and true, men of honour and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished. In this way, Masonry becomes the Centre of

Union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons who must else have remained at a perpetual distance.

The first Grand Lodge was founded in 1717, only a few years before it adopted this important statement. Masonic leaders wanted to make it clear that Freemasonry had certain fundamental principles that must be considered and adopted by all prospective members. Several concepts implied through the First Charge are of note:

- Freemasons have a moral law to which all members must adhere: Every Mason must be a "good man and true," a man "of honour and honesty."
- Freemasonry requires a belief in God, but the meaning of "God" is left to the discretion of each individual Mason.
- Freemasonry treats all religions alike; Masons are welcome "by whatever

denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished."

- Because of its emphasis on religious tolerance, Freemasonry is expected to become a "Centre of Union," engendering friendships between Brothers with divergent religious beliefs.

This foundational statement about the nature of Freemasonry came at the close of an ugly period in English history. The two centuries before had seen religious factions warring with one another, often killing one another over the slightest differences of opinion in religious matters. The culmination of the worst of this was the English Civil War (1642–1651), which resulted in the execution of the king, and the imposition of a military dictatorship under Oliver Cromwell. Although the monarchy was restored in 1661, the period's tumultuous events were burned

into the psyche of British society for several generations.

It was during the years after 1661 that Freemasonry as we know it came to the fore, with Lodges that welcomed men of all religious persuasions into their midst. This movement came together in 1717 when a Grand Lodge was formed, and the principles of freedom of religion and freedom of thought became the most distinguishing characteristics of Freemasonry.

We need to pay close attention to the language of the First Charge in order to truly understand what the Freemasons were saying in Anderson's Constitutions in 1723. Rather than implying that Freemasonry was open to anyone and everyone, with little or no regard to the principles of morality or of religion, they emphasized that morality is at Freemasonry's heart. They clarified that rather than the sectarian "morality" of warring religious sects, the Masonic system of morality was based on the concept of human behaviour, with Masons regarded as "men of honour and honesty."

Second, the First Charge emphasizes that Freemasonry has no quarrel with those who do not acknowledge the existence of God. That is their business, and theirs alone. But because a belief in God is fundamental to the nature of Freemasonry, anyone who does not, or cannot, acknowledge such a

belief will find nothing in Freemasonry to be of any value. This is the meaning of the phrases "stupid atheist" and "irreligious libertine." Freemasons do not believe that all atheists are "stupid"; rather, they believe that Freemasonry's teaching will have nothing to offer those who do not believe in God.

This position is further clarified by the phrase "If he rightly understands the art." A Freemason must embrace the basic teachings of Freemasonry in order to remain a Mason. The freedom that we experience in Lodge to have a "friend and Brother" with religious and political opinions that differ from our own is a genuine freedom — but it does have limitations. We are not free as Masons to impose our religious or political beliefs on our brother Masons. And, we are not free to ignore the fundamental principles and teachings of Freemasonry in order to welcome everyone and anyone to our ranks. Our freedom is true freedom, but it is a limited freedom: It is tempered by our common moral

standing as "good men and true," and it is limited by a commitment to a belief in God, which is a fundamental teaching of our ancient and honourable Fraternity.



The frontispiece of the 1723 edition of Anderson's Constitutions shows one Grand Master, John Montagu, 2nd Duke of Montagu, passing on the scroll of Constitutions and compasses to the next, Philip, Duke of Wharton. Both Grand Masters are supported by their officers — The Rev. Dr. John Desaguliers is seen on the far right.

Part 1 of 4

A Triad of Masonic Ideals — Introduction

Excerpted from the Grand Oration of Matt S. Hughes, Grand Orator, Free & Accepted Masons of California, 1915

At any given point in time three ages meet — the age that is dead, the age that is living, and the age that is unborn. The first age is the realm of history; the second is the field of achievement; the third is the territory of ideals. Any institution that has gone any distance beyond its beginnings finds itself related to each of these three ages; and these relations exist for the ancient and honourable order under whose auspices we meet in annual session.

Corresponding to these three institutional aspects are certain types of mind. There are those for whom the past of Freemasonry has peculiar fascination. The antiquarian here finds a field rich in treasure. The explorations in this region have been richly productive; the results have been embodied in a

great and growing literature; they are accessible upon the shelves of our libraries. There are others who are interested in the present activities of our Order. They sustain its routine work; they fill its official positions; they direct its philanthropic enterprises; they serve all its immediate and varied purposes. Then, there are among us men of vision, whose eyes are to the future. They are the prophets of the new order; the pioneers of the unknown years. They see the great Fraternity, not as it has been and not as it is, but as it ought to be and as it may be. Beyond the historical past, and beyond the practical present, these seers glimpse the possible future.

The spokesman of such an occasion as this hears a challenge from each of these three sources; and, by reason of

limitation of time and sense of fitness, must make his choice of theme. That choice has been made by your speaker after due deliberation. He has chosen to speak on certain Masonic ideals. In making that choice, it has been taken into account that the function of the orator is not that of the secretary or the historian — they make record of that which has been done or undone. Neither is it the task of the orator to confine himself to ritual utterance, routine work, or constitutional limits. He has a liberty beyond all these restraints, and by his speech he may change or confirm ritual and service and constitution.

Another consideration dictating this choice of subject has been the fact that the past of our Order has been embalmed in a literature, accessible

to all students, and the speaker has no fresh contribution to make to such Masonic lore. He has also been mindful in choosing his subject that this annual communication is a time of making and receiving reports. He could expect to add nothing worthwhile to the clear and comprehensive resumé of present activities and existing conditions contained in the annual address of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, supplemented as it has been by the reports of the other Grand Officers.

There is still another point of view. No institution can live by history alone. Decay has already begun when any institutional succession is content with the borrowed splendor of ancient glory. It was a true, as well as witty, saying that any man who has nothing better wherewith to commend himself than pride of ancestry, is like a potato — the

best part of him is under ground. We shall not yield our minds to the deadly heresy that the best of Freemasonry is written in dusty volumes or buried in ancient tombs. It is also to be borne in mind that no man does his best work in the present, unless he is inspired and sustained by a vision of the future. So a Mason may lie letter-perfect in the ritual; may be able to fill any chair in the Lodge; and may perform all prescribed duties with the precision of a piece of perfect mechanism; but if he has no vision he lacks the soul of a true Mason.

For all these reasons, the speaker has had the conviction that the demands of the hour called him away from the past and away from the present, into the limitless field of Masonic possibilities. The blindest and most devoted lover of our Fraternity would scarcely claim for it a flawless past or a perfect present. That

means there is room for improvement and reason for advancement. Our theme does not call for the discussion of anything revolutionary. The ideals are those of Masonry and the most conservative member of this Grand Lodge will recognize them as ancient landmarks. The discussion will also emphasize the practical value of the ideal; for it will have to do with elements as matter-of-fact as those embodied in the report of the Committee on Finance. And now, after this somewhat lengthy preparatory parley on the outside, we are ready to approach our subject proper.

Next, Bro Hughes discusses the first of three ideals of Freemasonry — **The Ideal of Quality.**

