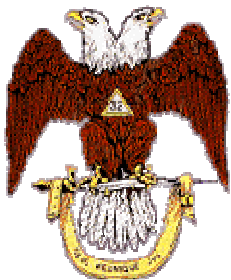


APRIL 2009

Western Montana Valley Scottish Rite Missoula, Montana



**Remembrance & Renewal Dinner, Monday April 6th, 2009 at
6:30PM...see your Honormen for tickets, \$15.00 per person.**

LIVING BY DEGREE

Part II

By Wayne T. Adams 33^o, an article from The Northern Light (August 2008)

The following was adapted from a paper presented at the winter reunion of the Scottish Rite Valley of Toledo on Jan. 12, 2008

PROGRESSION

The four groups of degrees make sense only when one understands that they share a common purpose with the other degrees in their group, and that the degrees of craft Masonry and the degrees of the four bodies of the Scottish Rite taken together offer us a progressive instruction in the formation of personal values and in the making of personal choice

The degrees in each body are not isolated in purpose from each other, and the five bodies—blue lodge, Lodge of Perfection, Council of Princes of Jerusalem, Chapter of Rose Croix and Consistory—offer a progressive advancement worthy of study and contemplation, in answering the most fundamental questions a Mason ever asked: “From whence come you? Wither are you traveling? Of what are you in pursuit? And to what do you allude?”

In modern jargon we might say, “Where are you coming from? Where are you going with your life? What on earth are you trying to accomplish? How are you measuring your success?”

In answering these questions you will arrive at a self-knowledge about yourself, that will enable you to square your life away. And right there we have the next step because the symbols, legends, and allegories found in our degrees will help you arrive at answers which are meaningful to you.

As you start to put this all together in your own mind, it is useful to remember the advice of Julian Rees in his book *The Stairway of Masonry*. He writes, “...the (Masonic) journey is concerned not with learning other people’s answers, but in working it out for yourself.”

The fact that you decided to seek more light in Scottish Rite Masonry may indicate a curiosity or a desire just to join another body you have heard about, but I choose to think that most Masons who approach the Scottish Rite do so because they have a desire—a thirst—to learn something about themselves and the way they want to live their lives.

The degrees of craft Masonry offer instruction in how a Mason should order his own life. In the Lodge of Perfection—the ineffable degrees—he is caused to reflect on those divine and spiritual attributes which form a good man’s life.

However, with study and reflection of the situations presented in the Lodge of Perfection, a Mason can come to a better understanding of the qualities of our God. For example, in the 14^o we learn that one of the

names used for deity is Yaweh which in the Hebrew language can mean “I speak” denoting that one of the greatest qualities of God is that He came speak to each one of us individually. He speaks to us from a study of sacred writings, from the example, of others, and from the inner recesses of our own conscience.

The two degrees of the Council are called historical degrees because they present historical situations. In these degrees we witness the interplay of values and temptations which visit every good man’s life.

There are several characters in the degrees of Masonry which have a profound effect on us. The first of course is Hiram Abif in the 3^o. Hiram offers us the example of a man who was faithful to his obligation even in the face of physical violence which led to his death. Masons all around the world witness that degree with awe again and again. We wonder if we would have the same stamina, resolve, determination and sheer will to resist if we were put to such a test.

In the 15^o we are introduced to Zerubabel, another powerful figure in Masonic ritual. Zerubabel was confronted with a hard choice. Some wonderful things could happen if he could just once, in one little way, break faith with his obligations. We have all been in such situations. Zerubabael had to resolve in his own mind if an unworthy means could justify a worthy end. His fidelity to his obligation was a powerful influence on Darius, the Babylonian king. This degree suggests to each of us that fidelity to our obligations is not just the right thing to do, but that it can be a powerful influence on others and can profoundly influence the way others see not only us but the world.

The two philosophical degrees of the Rose Croix invite us to reflect that there are certain fundamental values common in every man in every age and in every culture. Those fundamental values embedded in our ritual, parallel perfectly the founding philosophy of this nation. It is a philosophy which holds that all men are created equal. It holds that every man is deserving of our help, fairness and plain dealing. It holds that inclusion, toleration and affirmation among men are essential in building strong families and strong communities.

The philosophical degrees urge us to be tolerant, to overlook superficial differences among men, to look for the basic goodness found in every man and, where possible, to help a man build his life on the common values developed in these two philosophical degrees.

The 14 Consistory degrees frequently suggest a choice—not just a choice between right and wrong or between good and evil. These degrees present situations in which a man is challenged by competing obligations and has to make a moral choice.

Constans in the 31^o is the most powerful figure in the Scottish Rite degrees. He is faced with several temptations which he is able to handle easily. Then he is faced with the very difficult situation of faithfulness to two competing obligations over which we will see him agonize. All of us have faced choices between right and wrong as did Hiram. Every one of us has had slightly more complex choices where we were tempted to let the ends justify the means as was Zerubabel. And now Constans we understand that a man often has to make moral choices between two inconsistent obligations.

A full examination of how the characters in these degrees progressively develop and explain the fundamental principles of Masonry and of how each one handles the difficult choices in life is the glory of the Scottish Rite. It is the offer of the Scottish Rite to each Mason who seeks further light. In the 32^o we see Constans again, having learned all the lessons and successfully passed all the tests, he is created a Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. Scottish Rite Masons symbolically receive that degree. It does not mean you are a prince. It does not mean you have the royal secret. It does mean that your own personal value system is a work in progress, and it suggests a goal.

First, master the virtues, tenets and lessons of blue lodge Masonry. Second, discover the power of the ineffable divine in the Lodge of Perfection. Third, learn the power of truth and fidelity from the historical examples in the Council of Princes of Jerusalem. Forth, reflect on the lessons of universality and toleration taught in the Rose Croix degrees, and finally, acquire life experience in the difficult task of balancing the moral dilemmas as presented in the Consistory degrees.

A Mason who follows these steps will indeed have progressed to a point where he will be regarded by his fellows as a prince among men and possess the secret to living a life which is good and true.

For the complete article, please go to our website: www.wmontanascottishrite.org



RiteCare Clinic Donor List 2008-2009

New RiteCare Web Address: www.soe.umt.edu/commsci/RiteCare.html

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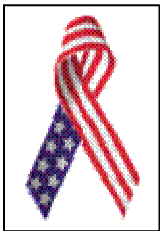
MAY 4, 2009 REGULAR MEETING

This is an important meeting which will include our annual planning and goal setting, as well as the kick off our Mac's Kids Fundraiser for the Clinic. It's very important we have a big turn out Executive meeting is at 5:30PM, a Light Supper at 6:30PM and the regular meeting 7:30PM.

THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN PROGRAM

The Master Craftsman Program has just come out with its newsletter, *Blueprints of the Master Craftsman*. They plan on featuring: Articles written by the readers of our essays, dissecting frequently missed questions, personal profiles, facts, and figures. To date, 1617 members are participating and 378 have completed the program and are asking for more. Each week the program gets 25 to 30 new participants. If you would like to take part in this enlightening tour of the Scottish Rite, please contact Mark King, the valley secretary, to order your book; or visit the Scottish Rite on line. If you have any questions about the program contact Bob Anderson 33°, the first Master Craftsman in our valley. Congratulations to Phil Blaisdale, 32°. KCCH for also obtaining his Master Craftsman Pin & Certificate.

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email or update your email address, please send me an email to: Eric Anderson MT-Eman@hotmail.com



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