



Be a Mason!

Why you SHOULD be a Mason, and
how to join a Lodge.

By Robert J. Arnold DDGM



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This Book's Objective

I want you, either a man or a woman, to consider joining the world's oldest fraternity to improve both yourself and your community. Unlike other "promotional" books on Freemasonry, this book shows you the good, bad and the ugly, so you can make a balanced decision.

I will not only introduce America Freemasonry (or just "Masonry") but also about where it originated, the UK.

Introduction

I've been a Mason for 40 years, it is the best thing I have ever done. I petitioned the lodge because of the respect I have for my father and my grandfather who were both Freemasons.

At the time I was an active church member, and I found that the Lodge work helped me to take and apply the moral lessons I learned in my church. I worked hard in Freemasonry, advancing through the York Rite degrees. I remember the night I received my First Degree, it was exciting and as I advanced through the degrees, it kept getting better. I had previously belonged to other organizations like the Lions, but I never felt the Brotherly Love I have experienced as a Mason.

The greatest gift that Freemasonry has given me, is the wonderful people I've known, and to be accepted as a brother. Before I joined I spent many years reading about Freemasonry on the Internet but just never took that first step. I didn't know anyone that was a Mason to ask, so I wasn't able to join.

I knew I had to make the first step, as Freemasonry wasn't going to come to me. As I did not know any Masons I emailed my town's Lodge from their website and was invited to meet with a Brother a few days later. Then I was invited to an event at the Lodge, and I went with my wife, and I was surprised that I already knew many of the Brethren, some for many years.

I became a Mason because I wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself, I had searched for a long time to find a place to fit in, like the church or even a bikers' club, but nothing filled the gap I had in my life until I joined a Lodge. Being a Mason answered the loneliness I had in my life with true friendships. Since joining I feel it has made me a better person, influencing me to be a better husband and father, and helping the community. I have moved around the country with my work, but each time I called the local Lodge and was greeted with the same friendship and brotherly love. Truly I could not have made a better choice than being a Mason.

If you are thinking about joining Freemasonry, don't wait as long as I did. The only regret I have is that in not joining sooner!

Robert J. Arnold DDGM

What is Freemasonry?

Some people equate Freemasonry with power or mystique; a shadowy political network operating behind the scenes that exerts influence over not just the police and judges but also governments (see P2 below). For others, it means an old boys club, or “God’s waiting room” as some have called it, where grown men with ridiculous titles act out fantasies followed by a few too many drinks and a big meal.

There are some 6,000,000 Masons worldwide, including more than 2,000,000 in the USA. In the country of origin, Great Britain, there are 200,000 Masons, and a further 4,700 female Freemasons. In 2019, the Honorable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons, a women’s Grand Lodge, opened the first Lodge for women in USA,¹ though there are many other Masonically connected organizations for women (see below).

Freemasonry is an international charity that promotes faith, hope and charity, which are represented in a Lodge by three great pillars of wisdom, strength and beauty.

As President, and Mason, Theodore Roosevelt said,

“Freemasonry teaches not merely temperance, fortitude, prudence, justice, brotherly love, relief, and truth, but liberty, equality, and fraternity, and it denounces ignorance, superstition, bigotry, lust, tyranny and despotism.”

Loyalty

The first thing a person says about Freemasonry is "At first I thought it was a bit odd, but then you start to understand what it's all about, it can be quite addictive." Most Masons join on the recommendation of somebody close to them. Loyalty and trust are two of the most important characteristics of Freemasons.

Charity

Freemasons are among the biggest charitable donors anywhere. In the USA \$700m² and in the UK £42m³ (\$60m) was given away in 2019 alone. Many professional people enjoy the charitable side of membership as it feels good to do something worthwhile.

Good Works



Shriners International, known as "Shriners Children's" since 2020, runs a network of 22

Shriners International hospitals that specialize in providing orthopedic and burn care to children at no cost to the family. Given our over-priced healthcare system in America this is unknown outside Shriners' Children's. To become a member of the Shriners, a man must become a Master Mason and then join the Scottish Rite, he is then eligible to join this admirable fraternity. Over 1.4 million children have

received treatment since 1922. Besides the hospitals, the Shriners have almost 225 Learning Centers that help children with dyslexia, speech and hearing disorders and other services.⁴ The Shriners started in 1870.

Masons in Minnesota

In 2020, Freemasons donated \$35m for brain research at the University of Minnesota in what was described as "an interdisciplinary initiative focused on the early diagnosis, prevention and treatment of neuro-developmental disorders in early childhood and adolescence." Teams of researchers and clinicians who study the brain, will be brought together to study how the brain develops during early childhood and adolescence, formative years when the brain is most receptive to positive intervention, particularly disorders such as autism, ADHD, cognitive delay, drug addiction and severe depression, conditions that can often be identified early and that have lifelong consequences.⁵

London Freemasons' \$3.5m Donation

Following a horrific high-rise apartment building blaze in Grenfell in London England in 2017, the fire department realized that they didn't have ladders long enough to use in these types of fires. So, Freemasons stepped in and donated \$3.5 m (£2.5 m) to help them buy the ladder trucks.

There was some controversy over the donation because the UK government had made budget cuts in the fire department, and newspapers were critical of private organizations like UGLE funding public equipment. The

criticism wasn't pointed at the Freemasons, but rather at the government for not providing adequate funding.

UK Freemasons are one of the largest charities in the UK and in the past have also paid for helicopters and other vehicles for the public ambulance service, as well as lifeboats for the Coast Guard.

These are just a few high-profile examples of Freemasons' Good Works, but more than this is all the local charity work that is done for the homeless, veterans and dozens of other worthy causes by local Lodges.

Social Network

For many, Freemasonry is a social network. You meet people from all walks of life, and over the years you build up relationships with them, becoming friends. Members invite their friends to join, and the circles get larger.

Loneliness has become a major crisis across the globe, partly fueled by the growth of communications. Though we can talk to each other anytime, we miss the physical interaction.

Safety Net

Masons look out for each other. They regularly check on each other, especially the older members. There has been an alarming increase in suicides among American farmers, and this is also important to the Masonic fraternity as many US Masonic Lodges are in rural areas.⁶ Now COVID-19 has

also isolated the Brethren and enforced lockdowns have had their own damaging effects on people everywhere.

Even in major cities like San Francisco, the rise in death by suicide has been unprecedented.⁷ This is where Masons act as a life-line by calling on Brethren and making sure that their needs are met, because isolation from human contact and very little social interaction is contributing greatly to the dramatic rise in suicides.

This is the major reason that there is a need for Freemasonry (and other fraternal organizations) to fill this emotional void. So, it is important to “ask not how many men there are in Freemasonry but how much Freemasonry is in men,” as the saying goes. The most important job of a Lodge is to keep the members enthusiastic about their work and happy to keep coming back. When a Lodge is successful, more people want to join and then it becomes the center of a community.

Building a Business

People say that it is a myth that Freemasons join a Lodge to help build their business. The Lodge stress that “the network is not to be used for your own personal benefit.” But the reality is different. Meeting important people leads to introductions which can lead to new jobs or new business. Masons generally trust each other, so why not give business to someone you trust? I know it has helped me, and I see no wrong in it. However, it should not be the primary motive for joining. I talk more about that below in the joining process.

Because of this safety-net and the perception that Freemasons help each other out, people think that Freemasons have undue influence in both private and public dealings. In the past there were cases of nepotism, as were pointed out in the book "The Brotherhood" by Stephen Knight, but in all honesty, this is true of any society, the army, academia or medicine.

Secret ceremonies

While members are discouraged from discussing politics or religion, a belief in a higher power is a prerequisite to join. That "higher power" can be any major recognized belief system.

Depending on the region, Lodges meet a different number of times a year. Some meet twice a month, others only four times a year. The initiation ceremony has always been a closely-guarded secret, but in outline it is an allegory based on the rebuilding of King Solomon's Temple, and slightly grounded in religion. It is like a play where everyone has a part to play. The new member has the leading role. When you go through your three degrees (ceremonies) there is a catechism you have to learn, questions you have to learn answers to.

The bottom line is whether a secret society that can trace its history back to the Middle Ages, can really have a role in modern society, and what role? The answer is that it is about self-development, a journey to learn about yourself and what our core values are. It brings out the best side of human nature.

Members' Opinions

When somebody asks, "What are the Masons about?" The reality is that it is not "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols," as Masonic pamphlets say, it more than that.



The Lodge provides a weekly night out where we meet up. When

Scottish Rite Friends Dinners members are young they are very focused on their family end of things, and don't go out and interact with friends much. Often the commute is long and free time is short, so you don't necessarily want to go out. Having the lodge strengthens friendships.

Though some Lodges in major cities are large with as many as 250 active members, most are small with 15 or 20 members who show up on a regular basis, though the total membership roster maybe 150 or more. These 15~20 members are the "active members."

Lodges are a male-only space, which has its advantages, because the two things that get men into trouble are politics and women! In Masonry members are not allowed to talk about politics, or religion, and members are also not competing over the affections of the opposite sex. Masonry gives men an opportunity to be around other men without having to deal with politics or competition. One of the things

that Masonry teaches people is that the only competition in Masonry is to see who can be the better ritualist. It's not like locker room trash talk, it's more about serious conversations in an open and relaxing atmosphere.

Secondly, a wife knows where her husband is going, and that he will be with a group of good friends, who she probably has met.⁸ She knows that the focus of the Lodge is not only on improving themselves, but also on helping out others in the community. So, for her, the husband is having a night out where she doesn't have to worry about anything.

The other thing is that Masons enjoy travelling to other Lodges and meeting new people, so it's easy to make new friends. When a Mason meets another Mason, automatically they have something in common.

The Image of Freemasonry

One "problem" all Masons face is that of the conspiracy theory. Things like that Masonry was started by the Egyptians or that they masterminded the French Revolution and are associated with the disgraced Knights Templar. (More on this below.)

In 2016, the United Grand Lodge of England, the head of Masons in Britain, published a report, "The Future of Freemasonry" researched by the Social Issues Research Center. The report avoids conspiracy theories and instead surveyed members and the public on Masonic themes such as charitable work and ritual. In summary, the report showed that firstly, Masons value the Freemasonry

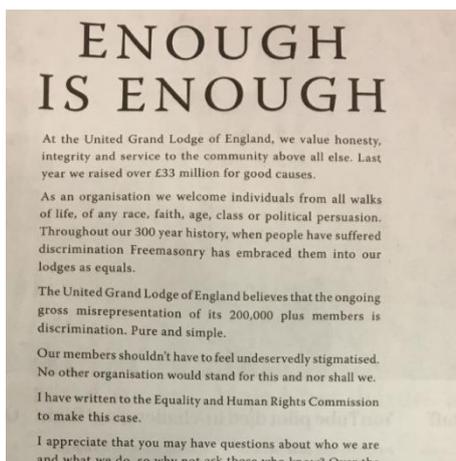
community and that secondly, outsiders were ignorant about the organization. Members point out that Freemasonry is about camaraderie and making lasting friendships. Also, the mystery of Freemasonry is also important, because if candidates for the Craft knew everything, it would no longer be of interest. There is also the elitism. If Freemasonry was not difficult to join, then what would make it special? It would be another dining club like the Rotarians or the Lions.

Freemasons call for end to 'discrimination'

In 2018 in the UK, Freemasons placed full-page advertisements (Enough is Enough) in national newspapers calling for an end to the "discrimination" against their members, as they felt stigmatized and "grossly misrepresented."

This was based on news stories that questioned the influence of Freemasons in policing and in parliament.

The Grand Lodge UGLE stated that it had raised more than £33m (\$46m) for good causes in 2017. It emphasized that men of any race, faith, age, class or political persuasion were welcome in the 300-year-old organization. UGLE is restricted to men, although separate women-only Lodges also exist.



Freemasonry: Your questions answered

Is Freemasonry dying out?

It is true that many Lodges are closing, but this is due to growing too fast after the Second World War. When new members join, or old members die (“join the Celestial Lodge”) then Lodges also change. It is important that Lodges should always have the ability to adapt to the needs, desires and preferences of their own members. It is important to remember that all Freemasonry is local.

Do you have to be Caucasian to join a Lodge?

Any man over the age of 21 can apply to join the Freemasons, regardless of race, colour, religion, political views or social or economic standing. Freemasonry is a non-religious and non-political organization, and discussion of politics and religion are forbidden at Lodge meetings.

How can one become a member?

The best way is to ask a member about how a person joins, because Masons are not allowed to proselytize. If an individual doesn't know anyone who is a member, he can either contact a Masonic Office in their area. (More on this below).

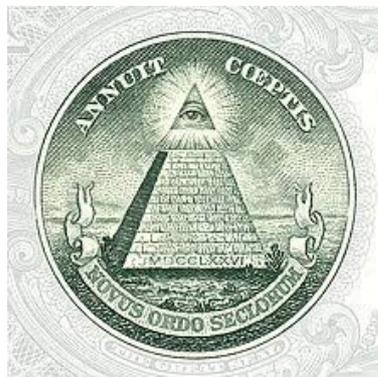
Is Freemasonry linked to stonemasonry?

Freemasonry was reorganized 300 years ago in London, England, and takes a lot of its symbolism from

stonemasonry. In a way, Freemasonry is similar to stonemasonry as members start out as apprentices and, by gaining further knowledge and experience, they move up in the organization.

What does the one-eyed symbol on the dollar bill and some flags signify?

The symbol is known as the All-Seeing-Eye and is a reminder of the existence of a higher being.



Is Freemasonry compatible with Humanism?

This would be difficult because, the most important qualification for admission into Freemasonry is a belief in a supreme being. As Humanists do not believe in any form of higher power they cannot fulfil that qualification.

Do judges and the police have to declare their membership in Freemasonry?

No, it is not necessary. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2007 that in a modern democratic society it was discriminatory to single out Freemasons or require them to register their membership with their employers.

What is the benefit of being a Mason?

Freemasonry is a multi-faceted organization; part ritual, theatre, charity, fraternity, debating society and spiritual society. Though there are many different reasons why people join the Freemasons, one of the main reasons is the

fraternity and social support net Masonry provides. Most importantly, members enjoy Freemasonry, if they didn't, Freemasonry would soon die out.

If I'm accepted, will I be told to do things I don't want to do?

No. Because this is a voluntary organization. You can leave at any time if you don't like it. (But you have to clear your dues first!)

When I become a Freemason, will I learn the secrets of Freemasons and Masonic Lodges?

Yes. However, if you are looking for occult (hidden) knowledge you may be disappointed. Members discuss these things and sometimes there are lectures, but normally charitable work is discussed and proposed. (More about occult Freemasonry below).

I saw on YouTube that Freemasons' rituals are pagan and worship Satan, and that Masons are attempting to create a New World Order. Is this true?

No, it is not. These are just conspiracy theories made as click bait. Would your bank manager join an organization that follows Satan? I don't think so!

Is Masonry a secret society?

No, it is not secret, it is listed in phone books and on the Internet, but it is "a society with secrets." It is the same for you; the balance in your bank account is a secret as is the password to access it. Our secrets are in the old rituals you

perform, that are more like plays where everyone has a part.

When can I wear Masonic rings and Masonic lapel pins?

Only after you complete the Third Degree and when you can call yourself a Master Mason. You can buy these every-where, but if you were stopped by another Mason, you would not know how to identify yourself and would be deemed an imposter.



BricksMasons.com

Is Free Masonry Anti-Christian?

No. We use the Bible as a “cornerstone” of our Lodge.

Is Freemasonry a religion?

No, it is not. We also welcome members from all religions.

If I become a Free Mason, will I be expected to change my religion?

No. Masonry is “the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God.” However, only those who believe in a Supreme Being can be members of Freemasonry. Also, Freemasonry is not a substitute for any religion, so you can attend church or synagogue as well as Lodge.

In America, most Lodges use the Christian Holy Bible, but you can request that your sacred holy book (Torah, Daodeching, Veda, Koran, etc.) be placed beside the Bible

during Lodge meetings, and if they don't have one, you can bring your own.

Is a Masonic Bible different than regular Bibles?

No. It is the same.

Is Freemasonry a political group?

No, and both political and religious discussion are discouraged because it may upset the harmony of the Lodge.

Can I quit Freemasonry if I want to?

Yes. Any Mason in "good standing" (meaning that your annual dues are paid) can withdraw from membership at any time.

Will I be expected to travel if I become a member?

No. But a Master Mason can choose to visit other Lodges in their local area or anywhere in the world (often with a letter of introduction from your Lodge secretary). However, there is no requirement to do so.

Can anyone become a Freemason?

Most traditional Masonic Lodges only accept adult men (see requirements below). They don't follow any specific religion (at least officially), but atheists and agnostics can't join. Since 2018, the most original Masonic Grand Lodge (UGLE) has officially allowed trans men. Other Grand Lodges may not.⁹

Can women join some Lodges?

In Europe this is sometimes allowed, but in American and the UK it is not. But there are women-only organizations like The Order of Women Freemasons and the Order of the Eastern Star.¹⁰

How long does it take to become a Freemason?

This depends on the size of the Lodge. If it is large with a hundred+ members, it could take three months to receive you petition, then a year before you are a Master mason. Personally, it took me more than a year and that was in a small Lodge!

Does it cost money to be a Freemason?

Yes, though not usually very expensive. (see below).

Is there a requirement for a Freemason to be financially stable?

Yes, members are required to be financially independent. There is no minimum income requirement, but the Lodge will not accept a candidate who is out of work or struggling. It is not social security. Some people misguidedly join expecting to be supported financially.

Do Freemasons get paid?

No, the regular members do not get paid, conversely they pay fees. However, there is an exception. Often Lodges will pay a small fee to the Secretary as it is seen as an onerous job.

What do I have to do once I'm a Mason?

The most important requirement is to attend every summons (invitation) sent to you by the Lodge. Besides the meetings, there will be study groups, banquets and charity work (usually at the weekends). Masons put their family first, job second, and Freemasonry third.

What if I don't get on with the members of the Lodge I joined?

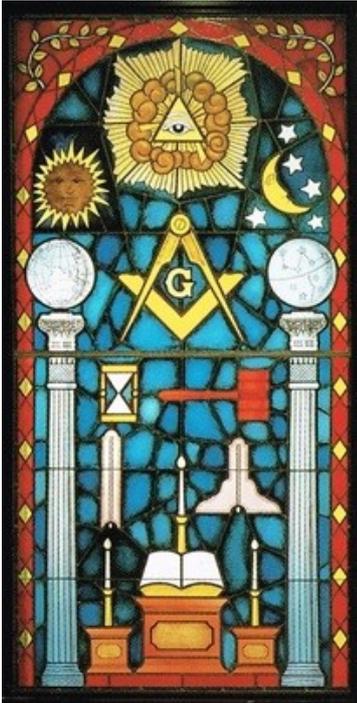
This does happen. You have the opportunity to join another Lodge (Dual membership). You won't have to go through the initiation again as you're a Master mason, but you will have to pay their yearly dues. Depending on the Grand Lodge you can quit (demit) from your first Lodge after you've joined the new one. Don't demit and then ask to join as you will be treated as a non-member.



Duke of Connaught Lodge

Is it easier to become a Mason if a family member was a Mason as well?

The process is the same, but it can carry weight especially in the interviews following your petition. You are unlikely to be black-balled if your father is/was a Grand Lodge officer.



Will my tattoos prevent me from becoming a Mason?

Not at all. Masons judge a person on his internal qualities not his outward appearance.

Can I join if I have a disability?

Though this is unfortunately uncommon, a man in Yorkshire England was initiated in 2018. This all depends on how enlightened the Grand Lodge is that governs the Lodge you want to join.¹¹

Are the identities of all Freemasons kept secret?

This is a private decision, but the names of senior officers of Freemasonry in USA can be seen on all Lodge websites, and in England they can be found in a masonic yearbook. Masons who have declared their membership in recent years include the Rev Jesse Jackson, the former astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and musician Rick Wakeman. However, a register of each meeting is kept that everyone signs that has to be handed over to authorities if asked for.



Grand Lodge of Mississippi

Famous Freemasons

Currently, the Duke of Kent is Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, and some members of the Royal Family are members. In USA, the first US President, George Washington, and fourteen other presidents have been Freemasons, the last being Gerald R. Ford.

Other famous Freemasons have included Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, John Hancock and Norman Vincent Peale, and on the other side of the “pond,”¹ Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, Peter Sellers, Oscar Wilde and Sir Alexander Fleming.

Benefits of membership

Masonry now is different from when the 1984 book “The Brotherhood: The Secret World of The Freemasons” by Stephen Knight complained of Mason police officers letting other Masons off speeding tickets, or leniency in court. These things do not happen now.

¹ A British nickname for the Atlantic Ocean.

Brotherhood

As mentioned above, the camaraderie of a Lodge is fundamental to Freemasonry. Our values are passed from generation to generation, Mason to Mason, through the teachings of the three degrees, making “good men better.” These degrees provide a framework that affects every aspect of modern life and are based on the values of “Brotherly love, relief (charity), and truth.”

Visiting Lodges

Visiting other Lodge in the neighborhood, or even travelling overseas and visiting Lodges, is not a right, it is a privilege. When a Mason attends a different Lodge for the first time, he will be examined to make sure he is who he says he is. It is a simple exam, but it keeps out the frauds! A Mason is only qualified to visit another Lodge after he has passed the Third Degree and become a Master Mason. This will normally take about a year to achieve in a Lodge with many new candidates.

Remember, it is important to follow the rules of Freemasonry as practiced in the jurisdiction where you join. You will be given the books of the Constitutions and By-Laws on becoming a Master Mason, and you need to study them. Contrary to what is commonly believed that once a man has taken his first obligation as an Entered Apprentice, he is, once and forever, a Freemason, this is incorrect. Many good men are expelled from the Craft for breaking these rules. Unfortunately, this has also been abused.

A Little Bit of History

This is how old Masonry is. The first Grand Lodges were formed in: England in 1717, Ireland in 1725, France in 1728, the United States in 1730 and Scotland in 1736. Masonry has a 300-year history, which is older than the United States itself! (See more at the end of this book).

Core Values

The core ethical principles of Freemasonry are compassion and tolerance for all humanity. The “Three Tenets” of Freemasonry are:

BROTHERLY LOVE

Looking out for each other and helping one’s community.

RELIEF

Charity. Giving time and/or money to help those in distress without putting you or your family into difficulties.

TRUTH

Studying and debating knowledge, practicing honesty and understanding to build ourselves into better men.

When you become a Freemason, you join a long tradition of world leaders and great men in many fields who found inspiration and support in the Craft. Even if you count yourself as ‘just an ordinary man’ you can reach greater potential in your own life, as a son, father, partner, husband, brother or friend. Other benefits include:

Mentoring

You will be assigned a mentor in the beginning to help you with all the new stuff you have to learn. But later you will be asked to mentor others too.

Role-Model

You will be looked up to as a role model for other men in your community, as well as in your family as a good son, brother, partner, husband and father.

Community Service

Hospitals around the world have either been established by Masons or supported by them. There are Masonic Retirement Homes and Orphanages. Besides these, there is disaster relief and donations to other charities to support their work.

Timeless Wisdom

The ritual of Freemasonry contains profound truths that have been handed down from generation to generation. The ritual, the three degrees, look simple, but have very deep philosophical lessons in them for those who want to study further. (See below)

International Welcome

After becoming a Master Mason, you will be able to visit Lodges in other states and even other countries when you travel. This will easily become a support network to you if you need it.

Become a Leader

There are many functions in a Lodge that Brethren will be asked to help out with, such as drawing up budgets, organizing refreshment and banquets, recording the decisions made in Lodge and even, one day, leading the Lodge as its Master. These are all invaluable leadership skills that will benefit the member's job and his community.

Intellectual Discussions and Talks

Often Lodges provide regular opportunities to attend lectures on a broad range of topics, some of the lectures focus on themes like integrity and leadership, but Lodges also invite outside speakers who have expertise on the history of Freemasonry.

Relieve from Stresses of Life

Instead of wasting time at a bar, Freemasons meet to discuss things that are important to them, while having a meal. This simple camaraderie helps relieve the loneliness that some feel and reduce the stress that life brings. They also know, that should they be in difficulty, they can always ask the Lodge for help, and sometimes financial assistance.

Meeting Diverse Groups of People

A lodge of Freemasons will have a diverse membership, because members ascribe to various religions, and will range in age from 21 to 80 or older. They may have different racial and ethnic backgrounds and work in a wide range of professions. Many members are married, while others are single. I visited a Lodge in Europe once, where

there were members from five different countries – luckily they all spoke English!

Freemasonry: will membership leave you better off?

Many join Freemasonry believing that they will become rich. Is this true? Besides the social and philosophical riches to be gained from membership, will the Craft make you richer?

Networking forbidden

Despite the United Grand Lodge of England, stating that “Networking within Freemasonry and trying to use it for personal gain is completely forbidden,” it does go on.

After two or three hours of ritual and ceremonies, the members either prepare a meal (sometimes prepared for them by their wives) or go out to dinner and have a good time. This is when the networking happens. People working in the same industries help each other out. There are words and phrases which can be dropped into conversations to reveal to others that a person is a Mason.

One of the purposes of a Lodge is for members to look after each other. When a member is sick, other members will visit him at hospital or his home to make sure he has what he needs. If one falls on hard times, then the Brethren will help him out, often by introducing jobs. And it doesn't stop with the member, if a Brother dies, the Lodge will look out for his widow and orphans.

However, critics suggest that Freemasonry encourages nepotism and corruption, even if members do not intend to behave immorally. But this isn't unique to the Craft, A report by Bloomberg suggests that in US fraternity houses some privileged students get jobs at the expense of women and graduates who did not or could not join a fraternity.¹²

In reality, there's a hidden value to membership. Freemasonry is based on trust, it is the most important currency we have. If a Brother says he will do something, for example taking a speaking role in a degree or helping at a charity event, we expect him to do it. Because of this trust, one Brother may be inclined to offer that Brother a job. That is not nepotism, just plain sense. Unfortunately, as we will see below, this has also been abused.

What are the responsibilities of becoming a Freemason?

When you become a Freemason you will be asked to help out, that may be washing dishes or taking a speaking role in one of the degrees.

You will be given long catechisms (a question-and-answer exam) that you will have to learn by memory. The ritual is all written in code so that a non-Mason cannot understand it, so the new member has to learn this code ready to answer the catechism standing in front of the whole Lodge. Your mentor will teach you the code and the catechism.

Later, you may be asked to learn Lectures to recite; some of them several pages long, which explain “A peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” Many (most) Masons don’t like this part of membership! But think of it in another way: it is exercise for the brain. Memorization improves the brain, so in another way of thinking, Freemasonry extends your life!¹³

Finally, there are fees to pay. The entrance fee, to pay for the ritual and the books and the white apron you will receive, and the yearly dues, and your part of the dining fee after a meeting, either an unset amount “a donation” or the bill divided by the attendees. (More below).

Just like a gym, you won’t build muscles if you don’t go, so Lodge membership won’t benefit you if you don’t regularly!

How is Freemasonry different from the Rotarians?

Service clubs like the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions are very different from the fraternalism to be found in a Masonic lodge. Freemasonry forms a unique bond between its members that business-related groups cannot. Freemasons become good friends not just potential customers, it is what we call the “Mystic Tie.” This connection is also worldwide. This means there are friends you have not yet met in nearly every country in the world.

How to Become a Freemason

1 Requirements to be a Mason

In order to become a Freemason, you need to meet some basic qualifications (again these may vary from one lodge to the next). But if you meet the Freemason criteria, you still have to petition (this means make a request) a Lodge to becoming a full member. (See below)

1. You must believe in a Supreme Being (this is not defined).
2. You must be joining of your own free will. This means that no one pressured you into joining. Join because you want to.
3. You must be a man. (This also depends on the organization, women can join women's organizations)
4. You must be free-born. (This is an outdated term meaning that you are not in servitude or bonding.)
5. You must be of lawful age. Again, depending on the Grand Lodge, this can be anywhere from 21 to 25.
6. You must be able to support yourself and your family while paying Lodge dues.

2 The Method

Step 1: You must first find a Masonic lodge near you, contact them, and ask for a petition to join. (However, it can be difficult to call a specific lodge because most Lodges only meet a couple times a month, therefore, if you stop by,

there probably won't be anyone there. I give advice on this later.)

Step 2: You will need to provide 2 (or more references).

Step 3: Three (or more) of the members will interview you and report back to the Lodge. As business meetings are usually held once a month, this can take a few months to complete.

Step 4: A secret ballot is held; this is where nobody knows how the others have voted. Usually, you need 100% positive vote to be accepted, however this can be different for different states).

Step 5: You will be asked to arrive on a certain date for your initiation, the first of three degrees.

Step 6: There is a catechism you have to learn before you can proceed to the next degree. You have to learn this by heart.

Note 1: Please wear a dark suit for the interviews. A good impression is important.

Note 2: Two References. Lodge members will call your references to ask about your character. Make sure that your references know that someone will call them. They will need to say nice things about you: honest, punctual, hardworking &c.

Note 3: The application. You will be asked why you want to join, I suggest one or any of these (or similar) answers:

1. I have a strong desire to make a difference in the world.
2. I want to be a better man.
3. I want to make my community and the world a better place to live.

Note 4: About the interviews: some of the questions you'll be asked are:

1. Have you been pressured to join by anyone? A family member?
2. Do you think that you will benefit financially by joining?
3. What is your opinion of Masonry?
4. Do you have a sincere wish to serve your community? How?
5. Are you joining just out of curiosity?
6. Do you agree to follow our rules? (This is difficult because you won't know what they are until you join! Just answer "yes." Also, you are not expected to know anything about Masonry until you join, so don't talk about some conspiracy video you watched or you may upset the interviewer.)

3 Costs

There are four costs that you will face when joining a Lodge:

1. Initiation fee: This tends to average anywhere from \$300 to \$500. This covers the costs of the initiation, namely giving you books to study and a white apron,

and secondly to dissuade the unemployed from seeking membership to find work or receive charity. This is a one-off cost.

2. The yearly dues: again, these can be as low as \$50 a year or even as high as \$1,500! So be sure to ask when you hand in your application.
3. Dining fees: it is not compulsory to attend the meal (Harmony) after Lodge meetings, but this is where the camaraderie is formed. Also, once or twice a year there will be banquets (Installation of new officers, Ladies Night where wives and girlfriends attend, or a charity banquet where non-Masons are also invited), these costs can range from \$20 to \$100 for a banquet. (Also, black tie and tuxedo is often a requirement for banquets!)
4. Lastly, Masons are often asked to donate towards charitable events, or disasters. Sometimes a collection is taken (\$10 or more) or just spare change is collected on the way out of the Lodge.

A Glossary of Masonic Terms

This is a list of common Masonic phrases:

Appendant bodies: Organizations such as Scottish Rite, York Rite and the Order of the Eastern Star that are affiliated to Freemasonry that Masons may join after becoming a Master Mason.

Blue Lodge: The first three degrees, called this because the aprons of these degrees are blue.

Craft, the: What Masons call Freemasonry

Degree: First, Second, Third. Three ceremonies that are performed as plays to teach new Masons about the history, beliefs and philosophy of Freemasonry.

Grand Lodge: The governing organization with authority over the individual Lodges in its jurisdiction, each Grand Lodge has slightly different rules.

Grip or token: An identifying handshake used by Masons to recognize each other, a different one is taught at each degree.

Harmony: A meal enjoyed after a Masonic meeting.

Hoodwink: For historical reasons, candidates wear blindfolds during portions of the degree ceremonies.

Light: Masonic knowledge or wisdom.

Lodge: A building does not make a Lodge, people do. A Lodge is group of Freemasons assembling under the authority of a charter issued by a Grand Lodge. Though people make Lodges, the term also refers to the building or a room where Masons meet.

Operative Masons: The period of Freemasonry when Masons worked with stone and constructed buildings.

Passed: A Brother completing the 2nd degree.

Profane: A non-Mason.

Raised: A Brother completing the 3rd degree.

Recognized: The agreement between various Masonic Grand Lodges that they accept each other's rules and customs as conforming to a certain accepted standard.

Regular: A regular Lodge is one that conforms to the laws and regulations of a Grand Lodge. (People set up Lodges as money-making scams without the approval of Grand Lodge in some states. These are irregular Lodges).

Sign: A hand gesture used as a mode of identification between Masons, different for each degree.

Sitting in the East: where the Worshipful Master sits in Lodge, also known as the "Oriental chair"; Lodges are traditionally situated east and west.

Speculative Masons: Modern Freemasonry (post 1717) is known as Speculative Freemasonry using stonemasons' symbolism with a unique philosophy and moral code.

Word or pass: A password used as a mode of recognition between Masons, different for each degree.

Symbols

Symbolism is at the heart of Freemasonry. Symbols convey more information than can be done in words, like "a picture says a thousand words."

How do I know if someone is a Mason?

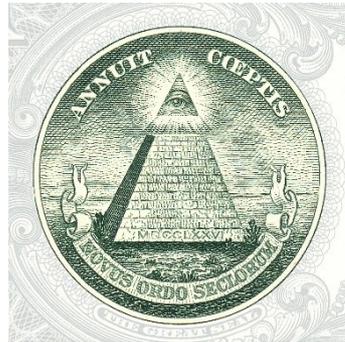
In the US we proudly wear Masonic rings and lapel pins. In Europe this is frowned on. The easiest way is to ask someone! Also look out for bumper stickers "2 B 1 Ask 1" (If you want to be one (A Mason) ask one!)

The Universal symbol for Freemasonry is the "Square and Compasses." These have deep symbolic meaning, and a new Mason will be taught this in the Lodge.



How do I find a Lodge?

The Eye of Providence can be found on masonic temples around the world, also called "The All Seeing Eye" it is on the \$1 note above the pyramid.



Grand Lodge of California

The Structure of Freemasonry

There is no one single worldwide Masonic organization, instead every country, state, or region has a "Grand Lodge." It's job is to decide on the rules for the daughter Lodges. These rules can be changed or adapted every year when the Grand Lodges and representatives from each Lodge meet for the "Annual Communication."

1. There are two types of meetings

- a. A stated meeting for the business of the Lodge such as letters received asking for charity, or communications from Grand Lodge &c. The accounts are read out so that everyone knows how solvent the Lodge is. Plans for events and banquets are discussed. Every decision is voted on by all the members.
- b. Special meetings where the degrees are conferred on the candidates. The number of candidates at any one time is usually a maximum of three (this rule depends on the Grand Lodge) and if there are more (which is difficult for the Lodge as the ceremony gets to be very long) then the Lodge applies for permission (a dispensation) from the Grand Lodge.

2. Officers of a typical Masonic Lodge

A Lodge is organized by a team called "officers":

Worshipful Master (WM): Sets the schedule for the year and enforces discipline..

Senior Warden (SW): Often responsible for the budget.

Junior Warden (JW): Often responsible for meals and entertainment.

Secretary: Keeps a record of all decisions and correspondence

Treasurer: Reports to the Lodge on its financial strength

Senior Deacon (SD): messenger

Junior Deacon (JD): messenger

Senior Steward (SS): assistant for Harmony

Junior Steward (JS): assistant for Harmony

Marshall: organizes the ceremonies

Inner Guard: door guard - inside

Tyler (or Tiler): door guard - outside

Chaplain: Starts and closes the Lodge with non-denominational prayers.

After being “raised” to become a fully-fledged member, a Master Mason, a member sits at the sides of the Lodge watching. After a number of years, he will be invited to be an officer. Normally he starts as the Tyler and works his way up the “chairs” until he is Master of the Lodge. However, it is not always this simple.

The top five officers are elected by the Lodge once a year in a democratic process, but the other eight (Senior Deacon down) are appointed by the Master. Often he will appoint his friends for these positions. The appointed position that everyone wants is that of Senior Deacon as he is often chosen as Junior Warden the next year, which is a shoo-in for the Master’s position.

The first Lodge a member joins is known as his “Mother Lodge,” this can be important when you want to join (as a dual member) other Lodges. This is not a rule in other countries such as the UK.

3. Demitting

Leaving a Lodge is easy, it is known as demitting, but the member has to have paid his fees for the Masonic year that he demits in. The Lodge does not have the authority to deny a members demit application. If you demit and want to rejoin it can be more difficult, so consider this step carefully.

Many men leave the Craft because it was not meeting their expectations, particularly concerning education. Lodges need to consider if what they are doing could be done better.

4. Grand Lodges in a Country

Some countries or regions within a country have several Grand Lodges, such as Brazil with 37, France with 15 and here in the United States, California for example has seven Grand Lodges, as well as a Prince Hall Grand Lodge.

Recognition

This is difficult for a person who knows nothing about Freemasonry, but many Grand Lodges do not recognize each other as they say the ritual is not authentic, or that they do not have a sacred text on the altar &c. These Grand Lodges are irregular, and if you join a Lodge under one of these irregular Grand Lodges, you may find that you are ostracized by other Lodges, and they will not let you attend their meetings. This is one of the quirky things about Freemasonry, it is an international fraternity, but not everybody works together.

Even in the US, fights can break out. In 2016 the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma briefly withdrew recognition of the Grand Lodge of Arkansas; then again in 2018 the Grand Lodge of Kansas also temporarily suspended recognition of the Grand Lodge of Arkansas. The spats were based on recognizing members from different Grand Lodges and visitation rights. So be sure to ask about recognition before presenting your petition to a Lodge.

and spiritual development, teaching a greater reverence for God and the Bible, patriotism, and respect for parents.

The York Rite: York Rite is a descriptive term used for three groups (The Royal Arch, Cryptic Masons, Knights Templar) that confer a total of ten degrees in the United States.

The Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite (or just *the Scottish Rite*): This Rite is not ancient, and it didn't come from Scotland, which confuses people. It is technically a "concordant body," because its degrees continue the story of the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple started in the first three Blue Lodge degrees. It confers up to the 33°.

Shriners international: An organization to bring a bit of fun to Masonry to raise money for their 22 children's hospitals in North America.

The Mystic Order of the Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm (simply known as the Grotto): is an organization by and for Master Masons, though it is not connected with Masonry proper, its membership is restricted exclusively to Master Masons in good standing.

The Order of the Eastern Star (OES): a women's auxiliary for a Lodge. It is open to all female relatives of Masons, and functions under the authority of a sponsoring Lodge.

The Order of the Amaranth: It is similar to OES, members of the Order must be age 18 and older; men must be Master Masons; and women must be related to Masons as wives, mothers, daughters, widows, sisters &c.

The Social Order of the Beauceant: An order only for women. It is an organization of women limited to the wives and widows of Knights Templar.

The Ancient Egyptian Order of SCIOTS a little-known fraternity comprised entirely of Master Masons in good standing, similar to the Grotto and the Tall Cedars, with the objective of applying, in a practical way, the teachings of the Fraternity in everyday business affairs.

High Twelve: is an organization of Master Masons who support Masonic causes with special emphasis on youth support and patriotic events.

National Sojourners: An organization designed especially for Freemasons who have served in active duty of the armed forces of the United States. They advance programs that promote love of country, providing a wide range of complimentary patriotic programs and services in support of churches, Veterans &c.

The Tall Cedars of Lebanon is an appendant Masonic organization devoted to fostering friendship and fellowship among Freemasons and to all humanity.

Female Freemasons

In the UK there are two female Masonic groups that confer the same three degrees as in UGLE. The organizations are about 120 years old and have over 5,000 members.

The Honorable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons

The Order of Women Freemasons

Freemasonry and my Beliefs

Christian attitudes towards Freemasonry

Freemasonry states unambiguously that it is not a religion, nor a substitute for religion. Masons do not have their own God. Freemasonry geometry and architecture as a framework for its teachings, so the Supreme Being is referred as the Great Architect of the Universe. Freemasons use this term to make clear that the reference is generic, and not about any one particular religion or unique name of God.

Freemasonry is a syncretic organization, meaning “combining or bringing together different philosophical, religious, or cultural principles and practices.” So long as a member believes in a Supreme Being that is sufficient.

However, the opposite is not always true - some religions do not agree with Freemasons and often ban their congregation from joining.

The Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church is one of the most persistent critics of Freemasonry, it issued a Papal Bull in 1738 banning Catholics from joining. Later the writings of Leo Taxil (see below) accusing the fraternity of outright devil worship added fuel to the fire.

The current situation is that Catholics who join will not be excommunicated but they cannot receive rites such as Holy Communion or funerals. The Church advice is that if you wish to join Freemasonry you should consult with your

parish priest first. Personally, I think that is a waste of time as he will only say what he has been told to say by the bishop and will put pressure on you not to join.

The situation is a mess because there are tens of thousands of Freemasons in Catholic countries such as the Philippines, and Brazil who face no condemnation. It would be hypocritical therefore to ostracize a Catholic in Europe for joining the Freemasons.

Separation of church and state

In USA Freemasons consistently advocate the Freedom of Religion, as found in the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which emphasizes the separation of church and state. But the Catholic Church sees this as an attempt to exclude Catholicism from its place in public life.

One strange Catholic claim is that Freemasons refuse to promote one faith as being superior to any others, which is seen as teaching an indifference to religion.

Protestantism

Although many Protestant denominations do not prohibit or discourage their members from joining Masonic Lodges there are still some small churches which discourage their congregants from joining Masonic Lodges such as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Mennonites, the Society of Friends (Quakers), and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The largest Protestant denominations in the US, such as the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal Church and Methodist churches have not taken a stand against Freemasonry, and

many Masons are active members of them. Most churches leave the matter of Freemasonry to the individual's conscience.

Eastern Orthodoxy

All the Eastern Orthodox Churches have condemned Freemasonry, starting in 1933, with the Synod of the Church of Greece, 1937 the Church of Romania, and 1950 by the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

Church of Latter Day Saints LDS

Joseph Smith Sr., the father of the church's founder and first president, Joseph Smith, became a Freemason in 1816. His son, Joseph Smith also became a Freemason in 1842 when the church was headquartered in Nauvoo, Illinois. Then hundreds of his followers, including the next four successors as church president, all became Freemasons. This relationship with Freemasonry is controversial as Smith introduced the church's temple endowment ceremony based on some symbols and language closely copying some of the rituals of Freemasonry.

When the church relocated to Utah in 1847 after Smith's death, Brigham Young was unsuccessful in establishing Masonic Lodges in the Utah Territory. This was because of several factors, including the practice of polygamy and the strong anti-Mormon sentiment of the era. In 1872, the Grand Lodge of Utah was formed and immediately implemented an anti-Mormon policy prohibiting members of the church from become Masons or from associating with

Utah Lodges from out-of-state. In retaliation, the church also discouraged its members from joining any "oath-bound" fraternities or "secret societies" without naming Freemasonry specifically. In 1984, the Grand Lodge of Utah and LDS church leadership agreed to recognize each other. In 1992 the official Mormon position was "the philosophy and major tenets of Freemasonry are not fundamentally incompatible with the teaching, theology, and doctrines of the Latter-day Saints."

Other Things You Should Be Aware Of.

Firstly, not everyone likes Freemasons, and secondly, sadly, not all Freemasons are honest.

Anti-Masonry

There is no organized anti-Freemasonry movement, it tends to be the actions of the lunatic fringe based on envy that people of such disparate backgrounds, faiths and careers can meet "on the level" and be friends. Here are three incidents from recent newspapers.

For example, a number of Lodges have been burnt down in recent years by arsonists. The most recent were the fires in Vancouver April 2021, where a man burned three Lodges to the ground. One of the Lodges had a 110-year old history.

In France in May 2021, the police arrested six neo-Nazis for planning to attack a Lodge in Moselle, France. The small group had been on the police's radar since February the

same year. Their plans also included an attack on a Past Grand Master of the Grand Orient de France who lived in Moselle. They were charged with criminal terrorism.

In June 2020, a crude bomb was found outside a Masonic Hall in Cornwall, West England.¹⁴ It was defused by the Navy, and nobody was hurt. No motive or perpetrator have been found yet.

Historically

There was suspicion of Freemasonry from its beginning in 1717. But because it was adopted early by aristocracy and then the king, it became "respectable," and at one time it was believed that if you wanted to succeed in a career in the British Civil Service, Army or Police, you had to join.

The first backlash came from the William Morgan Affair. A storekeeper in New York called Morgan threatened in 1826 to expose Freemasonry's "secrets" by publishing its rituals, then he subsequently disappeared. It was presumed that he had been killed by Masons, but this conspiracy has never been proven. This led to political anti-Masonry parties being established in the 1830s to 1850s. These political parties died out in the early 1850s.

During the Second World War, Nazis persecuted Freemasons, and as many as 80,000 are said to have died in concentration camps. Freemasons were treated as "political" prisoners and wore an inverted (point down) red triangle on their coats.

In 1989 in the UK, there was a short-lived anti-Masonic movement following the publication of "Inside the Brotherhood" by Martin Short, this led to the British Government to propose laws requiring Freemasons who are judges or police officers to declare their membership publicly to the government. The law was later amended so members of the police and judiciary in England are asked to voluntarily admit to being Freemasons. This was challenged in 2009 in the European Court which stated that the policy was "disproportionate." Now government employees can voluntarily declare their membership in Freemasonry.

Freemasonry has been persecuted in all the communist countries, the Soviet Union and all its republics, as well as in China, but Masonry has survived in Cuba, allegedly providing safe haven for dissidents including, at one time, Castro himself!

Since 1738, Islam has rejected Masonry equating it with atheism in the Ottoman Empire and the broader Islamic world, this opposition was reinforced by the anticlerical and atheistic slant of the Grand Orient of France. In 1978, Islamic authorities reaffirmed that Freemasonry was "dangerous" and "clandestine." Freemasonry is also illegal in all Arab countries except Lebanon and Morocco.

Conspiracy theories

There are so many of these that it is difficult to list them all, but most focus on the idea that Freemasonry is bent on world domination and controls world politics (cf. Bilderberg Group). A second common claim is that Freemasonry is a

secret society founded as part of a Zionist plot to control the world, as claimed by the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas.

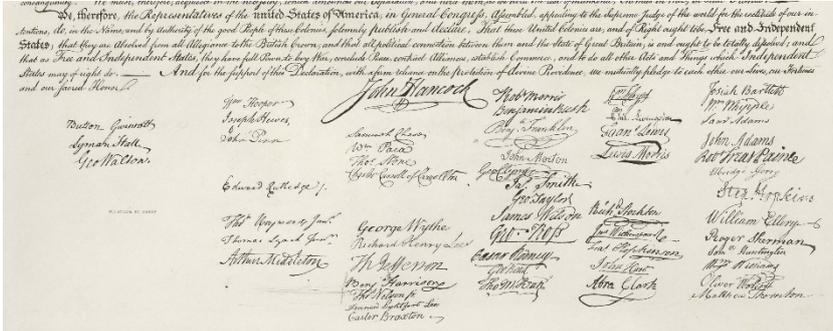
Even the French Revolution of 1789 is said to be the work of Masonry, which would be strange because at that time it was mainly the aristocrats who were Masons. However, it is true that Masons helped rebuild French society following the Revolution.

Many claim that Freemasonry is controlled by the Illuminati, especially in the “higher” (appendant) degrees, and that they are working to establish the New World Order. Some conspiracy theories also involve Jews as part of the plan for universal control of society. This was believed by Adolf Hitler, which is why Masons were outlawed. A note about the Illuminati. This organization was never associated with the Masons, it was thought up by a German professor Adam Weishaupt in Bavaria and existed from 1776 until 1785, when it was disbanded by the German authorities. Contrary to what theorists like to believe, it was never revived.



Another claim is that groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Orange Order are intimately tied to Freemasonry. The first claim is based on the fact that the Masonic historian

Albert Pike had been a Klansman, but there was no other connection, and secondly, the Irish Orange Order uses the Royal Arch degree in its ritual, as do York Rite and Scottish Rite Masons.



The conspiracy claim that the United States was founded by Freemasons is true, as nine of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons (including Founding Fathers such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and James Monroe) during their lifetime, though not necessarily in 1776. Also Masonic symbols can be found in many places such as the national seals, the layout of streets in Washington, D.C., certain architecture, and the dollar bill.

It has been claimed that Freemasons were involved in the murders of Jack the Ripper in 1888 and John F. Kennedy in 1963, but again, there is no proof.

In modern times, the New World Order as promoted by the Bilderberg Group, which itself is based on Jewish-Masonic conspiracy theories, usually blaming the Rothschild family or "international bankers". Again, just hot air!

The Taxil hoax



Léo Taxil had written negative things about the Pope in 1890 and later converted to Catholicism hoping to undo the damage. Then he wrote a large book detailing satanic rituals supposedly carried out by Freemasons. Taxil recanted in 1897, saying it was a joke, but despite this, people still quote his works as bonafide.

Negative Press

Nobody likes to wash one's dirty laundry in public, but I promised to show you the good, bad and the ugly of Freemasonry so you can make a balanced opinion of the Craft.

1. Freemasonry Changes with the Times



In June 2020, the statue of Albert Pike in Washington, DC was toppled, defaced and burned by protesters of the Black Lives Matter movement. Albert Pike, a month after the beginning of the Civil War in August 1861, was commissioned a Brigadier

General in the Confederate States of America. He was also a well-regarded historian of Freemasonry, an Associate Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court and the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite's Southern Jurisdiction. His famous book is "Morals and Dogma" of 1871. (See notes at the end of this book).

2. Propaganda Due (pronounced "Propaganda dew ei").

This story is one of the saddest in Masonic history, and is very convoluted, so I can only just summarize. In reality it has nothing to do with Freemasonry as the Lodge in question P2 was no longer Masonic when it turned rogue.

Propaganda Due (P2) was a Masonic lodge under the Grand Orient of Italy, it was founded in 1877, but its charter was withdrawn in 1976. It then turned into a clandestine, anti-communist organization. It was headed by Licio Gelli, and was implicated in numerous crimes in Italy including the collapse of the Vatican-affiliated Banco Ambrosiano, the murders of journalist Mino Pecorelli and banker Roberto Calvi, who was found hanging from a bridge in London in 1982, initially ruled a suicide but later prosecuted as a murder.¹⁵ The organization was also active in Brazil and Argentina. Among its members were a dozen generals, some admirals, many politicians, magistrates, and bankers to the Mafia. It was closed down in 1982 by order of law and all charges against Gelli were dropped for lack of evidence.

3. From Australia, an exorcism

We sometimes hear of “conversion therapy” as a pseudo treatment for homosexuality, but sometimes it is aimed at the Freemasons.

In Australia a woman named Felicity Loveday (84) and her son, Adrian Meneveau (56), were lost at sea in 2020 during a three-day boat trip. It seems that Felicity had been the Worshipful Master of an Australian Co-Masonic organization Le Droit Humain (French for 'The Human Right') Lodge in the mid-2000s. The police were told the boat trip was part of a plan to exorcise Felicity of “evil spirits” that her son claimed Freemasonry that had possessed her with. Some people get strange ideas into their heads as Freemasonry has nothing to do with evil, black magic or exorcism rituals. The bodies were not found.

On the other side of the “pond.”

1. In 2018, Freemasons were accused of proving an obstacle to reform at the Police Federation, but this was denied by UGLE. The head of the Police Federation trade union accused Freemasons of preventing women and minority groups from progressing in the Craft. UGLE said Freemasons were proud of welcoming people as equals and pointed out that Freemasons themselves were "quite openly discriminated against" and insisted it was for that reason alone that many Freemasons kept their membership a secret. UGLE asserted that there was no

reason that police officers, or people from other walks of life, should not belong to the Freemasons.

2. Previously, in 2016, the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams controversially named a Freemason as the next Bishop of Ebbsfleet. He had previously said that Freemasonry was "incompatible" with Christianity.
3. A senior Freemason was jailed over theft of £120,000 (\$165,000) over five years from a Lodge in 2017. Unfortunately, this happens quite often, due to a number of factors, such as the Treasurer being too busy to implement proper oversight or trusting Brethren too much. The Lodge was in Ireland and had pre-signed the checks for use by the Treasurer, because they had to have two signatures on them to be cashed. The Mason received a two-year sentence in jail – no “Masonic leniency from the judge either!”
4. In 2018 the county of Norfolkshire, south of London, a proposed a policy forcing any sitting Masons on the Norfolk Council to declare their membership publicly was tabled, singling out Freemasonry specifically. The idea was to bring more “transparency into government.” Another county, Suffolk had moved to make it a requirement in 2017. The proposal was made despite the fact that the UGLE's legal counsel notified the council that such a requirement "would be unlawful" under the European Court of Human Rights ruling of 2007. However, the motion was defeated, and Labour councilors walked out in protest.

What Are Masons Doing to Improve their Image?

Public relations campaigns have been on-going since the dawn of the Internet. Some state Grand Lodges do it well, GL Ohio¹⁶, others not so well. National Grand Lodges such as the Grand Lodge Scotland and the Grand Lodge of England UGLE have large budgets to make videos and day events open to the public. Affiliated organizations such as the Shriners even advertise of television, it all depends on your budget. But smaller Lodges across the US, and other countries too, work hard to emphasize the “good” and play down the “bad and ugly” by opening up Lodges to the public for events that are not even Masonic. All Masonry is Local!

In the UK, UGLE ran an “Enough is enough” campaign¹⁷ claiming that members were being “stigmatized,” for belonging to one of the world’s oldest and most successful charities. The charity part of Masonry was set up in 1724.

In 2017, UGLE cooperated with Netflix to produce a five-part documentary “Inside the Freemasons” to celebrate the 300th of the Grand lodge of England. It was met with great acclaim.



Summary

I have covered the Good, Bad and Ugly of Freemasonry. I hope you see that the good outweighs the bad by 1000:1! Unfortunately, in modern society it is the sensational and conspiracy nonsense that grabs people's attention, not all the good work of raising money for Retirement homes, hospitals, helping Veterans and the homeless which is done all-across America in Lodges of 300 members to Lodges of 50 members.

Your Choice

Do you want to make great friends while advancing your career and helping your community?

- If you are a man or woman, over 21 years old, there is a Lodge waiting for you.
- Nearly every country in the world (except a few countries such as China and Somalia) has Masonic Lodges.

Want help finding a Lodge?

If you cannot find one, contact me here. Send me the name of your city and country and I'll send you the address of the Lodge nearest to you.

BeaMason0@gmail.com Be a Mason (zero) @ gmail.com

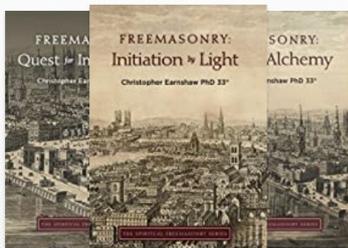
Next Steps

Please review this book. If you liked it, please let me know on Twitter!

Read more about Freemasonry

If you like the history and occult Masonic studies, then I cannot recommend my friend, Chris Earnshaw, books highly enough.

The Spiritual Freemasonry Book Series (3 Books)



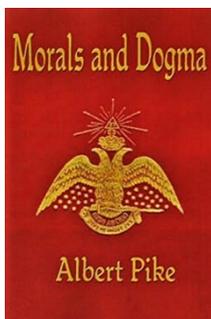
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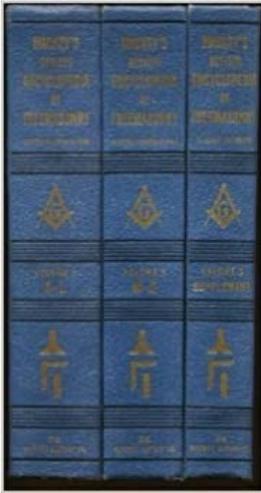
From Book 1

Modern Speculative Freemasonry was born at a Lodge meeting at the Rummer and Grapes Tavern, later moving to the Horn Tavern. The first three Grand Masters had changed the existing Operative Masons' rituals in some way, and the only way to find out what those changes were, was to compare the current ritual to the bits of ritual that exist prior to the establishment of the Premier Grand Lodge in [Read More](#)

Other Classic Masonic Literature



Morals and Dogma by Albert Pike



Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry - 3 volumes

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