



Union Masonic Lodge #618, A.F.&A.M.

Volume 2, Issue 5

May 14, 2013

Happenings at the May stated

Thirty-one of us fellowshiped at a meeting at which our DDGL, WB Gary S. Yost, made his official visit.

Landscaping of the apron around the front and left side of the building was approved, and will be managed by WB Darrell Cline.

Brother Grooms stood his EA proficiency examination, and Brother Johnson his FC.

Established a tentative date of September 27th for our charities Golf Tournament.

Discussed how better to manage the clean-up responsibilities associated with rental of the fellowship hall.

Brother Tommy Nash presented a very interesting Masonic Education item on the Book of Amos, elaborating on its reference in the FC Degree ritual.

Upcoming events of interest

May 26th and June 2nd—Officers practice for the upcoming FC Degree. 5:00pm.

June 3rd—FC Emergent. Supper at 6:30, degree work at 7:30.

June 9th, 16th, 20th and 23rd—Officers practice for MM Degree. Sun's 5:00p, Thu 7:30p.

June 10th—Stated Communication. Supper at 6:30, meeting at 7:30.

June 24th—MM Degree. 6:30 supper, 7:30 degree work.

September 27th—Golf Tournament, tentative date.

September 28th—Ladies Night Banquet with entertainment by the Rowan Big Band All-Stars. More details to follow. Mark your calendars.

Masonic Education. Praying in Lodge. Part I of 2.

PRAYING IN LODGE

By: Gary Leazer

This STB was originally published in a brochure by the Center for Interfaith Studies, Inc., and was reprinted in the September 1999 Scottish Rite Journal. It has been published as a Short Talk Bulletin with permission.

Bro. Leazer also wrote the 10-94 STB Fundamentalism and Freemasonry. Rev. and Bro. Leazer is a member of Clarkston Lodge #492, Clarkston, GA.

Critics of Freemasonry often ask, "Do Masons worship Yahweh, the God of the Bible, when they join in

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May Birthdays (by age)

AGE / BIRTH DATE REPORT (sorted by age)

Age Birth Date Name

83 05/16/1930 JASON M. SALYER
69 05/09/1944 OSCAR Y. HAR-
WARD
66 05/24/1947 VICTOR J. GIAN-
GRANT

65 05/04/1948 RICHARD D. TUCK-
ER

65 05/06/1948 DAVID F. BARBEE

63 05/05/1950 MITCHELL A. EL-
LIOTT

63 05/14/1950 RONNIE L. SNEED

61 05/31/1952 JON R. STEWART

59 05/31/1954 AMBROSE A.
PURSER

58 05/14/1955 CURTIS A. BELK

38 05/10/1975 CHRISTOPHER R.
WILEY

30 05/07/1983 DUSTIN S.
GROOMS

June Birthdays (by age)

AGE / BIRTH DATE REPORT (sorted by age)

Age Birth Date Name

80 06/17/1932 WILLIAM T.
JOHNSON
67 06/06/1945 CLAUDE H.

HELMS

64 06/23/1948 RICHARD F.
THORNBURG

51 06/03/1961 ROBERT A. BUR-
GESS JR

47 06/14/1965 JAMES W. BEN-
NETT JR

46 06/24/1966 THOMAS B. HILL

26 06/30/1986 EDWARD C. DA-
VIS IV

("Praying in Lodge" continued from p1.)

Masonic worship with Hindus, Moslems, and members of other faiths?" Let me begin by pointing out that this question suggests "worship" occurs in Lodge meetings. This question is intended to set a certain bias against Masonry before the question is seriously considered. Worship does not take place in Masonic Lodge meetings. Worship is the function of a religion. Thomas E. Hager, Past Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee, said in an April 22, 1994, letter to Baptist Press, the official press service for the Southern Baptist Convention, "Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for a religion." Earl D. Harris, Past Grand Master of Masons in Georgia, has clearly said, "We do not go to Lodge buildings to worship" (*Masonic Messenger*, July 1995, p. 34). Lodge meetings might be compared to business meetings held in some churches where minutes of the last meeting are read, bills are paid, and old and new business are addressed.

The question is a great example of a "circular argument." This logical fallacy begins with the conclusion: that Masonic meetings are worship services where men professing various faiths join together to worship a God other than "Yahweh, the God of the Bible." The argument simply travels around in circles until it comes back to its original statement, concluding that Masons worship a God other than Yahweh (or Jehovah).

Praying in Lodge Meetings

Prayers voiced in Lodge meetings do not make the meeting a worship service. If so, then sessions of the U.S. Congress would be "worship services" as a chaplain or invited clergy leads in prayer to open the session. Congress has been accused of many things, but never of holding worship services. If prayers make a meeting a worship service, the same criticism could be leveled against organizations such as the Lions Club, the Boy Scouts, and the VFW.

Until recent years, prayers were offered at high school ball games by clergy in the community. Courts have

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repeatedly ruled that prayers may not be offered before such events. Critics complain that "God has been taken out of public school" because prayers may not be given by administrators or visiting clergy at the beginning of a school day. Students, however, are allowed to pray on their own initiative, either alone or with other students who wish to join them in prayer. Masons alone have been singled out by critics for praying in meetings while these same critics complain that the official prayers are not allowed in public schools.

Praying in Jesus' Name

Some Masonic critics are not opposed to prayer in Lodge or other meetings, even when non-Christians are present, but are opposed to the prayer when it does not conclude with the specific words, "in the name of Christ." They cite John 14:13-14, where Jesus said to his disciples, "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask for anything, I will do it" (NRSV).

Bailey Smith, a recent president of the Southern Baptist Convention, made headlines in 1980 when he said God does not hear the prayers of a Jew. Smith's position and that of Masonic critics is that God only hears prayers ending with "in Jesus' name" or prayers of repentance.

Preschool-age children are taught to pray simple prayers. They seldom end it with the phrase "in Jesus' name" and most have not made what evangelical Christians call a profession of repentance and faith in Christ. Do Masonic critics believe God hears the prayers of these children? Are we misleading children when we tell them God hears their prayers? I believe God hears the prayers of every sincere person, and I do not think we are misleading children when we tell them God hears and answers their prayers.

It was drilled into my head by my professors during seven years of theological education that a correct interpretation of a biblical text requires examination of the surrounding text, which often helps an individual understand the text in question.

John 14:13-14 can be better understood if we examine the setting for Jesus' statements. Although his disciples had been with him for nearly three years, they still had doubts about him. Philip asked him in John 14:8, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." That is the key verse to understand Jesus' teaching in John 14:13-14.

Jesus responded to Philip's question, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say 'Show us the Father'?"

When Jesus said in verses 13-14, "I will do whatever you ask in my name," he was claiming deity. He was saying, "God will hear your prayers if you pray in my name because "I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

Jesus did not mean that unless a person concludes his prayers with the words, "in the name of Jesus," God would not hear nor answer prayers.

William W. Stevens, my theology professor at Mississippi College, wrote in his *Doctrines of the Christian Religion* (1976), "'In my name' means according to his will and purpose, in direct union with him. It implies unity of thought and interest. One cannot pray in the name of Jesus and pray selfishly" (p. 269).

The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Vol. 9, p. 146) says, "The phrase 'in my name,' however, is not a talisman [magic object] for the command of supernatural energy. He did not wish it to be used as a magical charm like an Aladdin's lamp."

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Men look on the outward appearance and judge others by the words used in a prayer (Matthew 6:5-8). God looks at the heart. He knows what we need before we ask. If the prayer is a genuine desire to talk to the Father of all creation, He will hear and answer the prayer, whatever words are or are not used. That is the kind of God I know from my reading of the Bible and from hours spent on my knees talking to Him.

During my ministry as a chaplain supervisor in the Olympic Village during the 1996 Atlanta Olympic games, chaplain volunteers from six major world faiths joined together in prayer every day. Chaplains rotated leading the group in prayer. Out of respect for chaplains who did not share our faith, we did not always verbally close our prayers "in Jesus' name."

Rev. James Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's LifeWay Christian Resources (formerly the Sunday School Board), resigned from Estelle Lodge No. 582 in Euless, Texas, in 1984 after election for his second term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and as the Masonic controversy was heating up in the SBC. He had transferred his membership from Dell City Lodge No. 536 in Oklahoma when he became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Euless. In his letter of resignation, Draper, who served one year as chaplain of his Lodge, said he always concluded his prayers "in Jesus' name."

[The rest of this article will appear in the June newsletter.]

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MAKING GOOD MEN BETTER.

**Newsletter Editor: R. Darrell Long,
PM**

Secretary of Union Lodge #618

**Send any constructive criticisms or
comments to
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Don't forget to pass the word around that our Fellowship Hall is available to rent. Provide any interested party the mobile phone number for WB Darrell Cline, who manages all of the reservations. (704) 791-9470

