

**An Address Given by WBro. Richard M. Bray, PGS,  
Junior Warden of the Hawke's Bay Research Lodge No.305,  
at the 6 November, 2000 Meeting.**

I had thoughts of a lecture on the Two Pillars, or on the men who worked in King Solomon's Temple, or, even, on the tools that were used. But no, I have decided to do something different. Brethren, you all know that what I say is usually what I am thinking and not always in a logical way to you, so I have decided to call this,

**MY THOUGHTS ON WHAT I GET OUT OF FREEMASONRY.**

As a freemason, I have often thought about what it is that I get out of this organization? I believe it is:-  
**Friendship, Tolerance, Brotherhood and Improvement.**

**First lets take Friendship...** I believe that, in freemasonry, this is one of the most important parts to our organization. This is where we make friends who come from all walks of life, there is no pretence, no snobbery, just a warm hearted and genuine brotherly friendship that every mason has for each other. This also extends, not only to when we meet in the lodge rooms, but when we meet on the street, or in business dealings. Back at the time when the temple was being built, there were thousands of workers on this site, in the quarries and in the forests. There would have been some very strong friendships formed which would have lasted to the end of the building and beyond. In this modern day and age, our friendships must extend to our families and to our wives. For I believe, that you can not have love for a person unless, first, there is friendship. Which is followed by love. Then comes happiness. The last two, then, become friendship once again. Thus friendship can take many different forms. If there is no friendship in freemasonry, then why do we keep coming along to these meetings?

**Tolerance**, to me, is that perseverance which we have towards those who do not, or can not, by no fault of their own, learn their work, or towards those who may have a temporary memory loss. This tolerance extends to our friendships. Therefore, if we claim to be true masons, tolerance is friendship, or, if you prefer, a true friendship will have a lot of tolerance. This does not mean that you have to agree with everything that is said or done. Tolerance should also extend to those outside of our organization, in our dealings with the general public and towards those that we are teaching, so, in the end, our tolerance becomes friendship. If we examine some of our teachings, we find, that in the first degree tracing board, our ancient brethren communicated by signs and symbols. Just think of the tolerance that our Grand Master would have had to have, to be able to teach the 330 odd overseers, let alone communicate with them - as you well know he could not pick up a telephone or loudspeaker to tell, or ask, what was going on. Now think of the tolerance that those overseers had to have, as they taught their own 33 men those signs and symbols. Plus, I believe, that those 330 overseers would have had to have had other signs and symbols among themselves, so that they could keep tabs on what was going on - where, what and which group (if any) made the mistakes. This, in turn, would have produced many a long and fruitful friendship, so, as you can see, one may lead to the other. As I see it, if tolerance leads to friendship, or, if you prefer, friendship is tolerance, then this makes you a good freemason and, I hope, a better man.

**Brotherhood**, is where we are welcome into any lodge, anywhere in the world and are treated as a long lost friend. We do not have to be able to speak the language, eat the same foods, or even believe in the same supreme being. We are all assured, after the Tyler, the Junior Warden and a couple of Past Master's have put us through a test or two, that we will be made very welcome in their lodge meeting. We, also, will help any mason, whatever his circumstances, either, to put them on the right track and to help his family, or, to see that his family are informed of any misfortune and to make their suffering as comfortable as we possible can. This is what I would call Brotherhood. Once again we see that Brotherhood is Tolerance, which I believe may turn into Friendship. So, as we know freemasonry exists throughout the world, the term freemason describes a network of freethinking men, who embrace brotherhood, friendship and tolerance. The goal of these communities is to improve society so that humankind can become a single people, composed of true brothers. To do this we must first set some goals - charity, unselfish endeavour and a love for mankind.

**The fourth is Improvement** and, on this matter, I have to say, that freemasonry has given me a lot. It has given me confidence in myself, through the learning of ritual and the positions I have held throughout my membership. As freemasons, we are taught that improvement is part of our learning, because, there is always someone who will tell you what you are doing wrong. If we heed his advice, we must improve. So, that means, improvement is tolerance, which becomes friendship and, then, brotherhood. I believe, that as freemasons, we are always learning in whatever we do in our lives - at work, at play, at leisure, when helping others, when watching TV, using the computer or, just talking to another person.

I could talk for hours on what freemasonry has done for myself and, for others, but, I will finish on this note. If Friendship, Tolerance, Brotherhood and Improvement can be found in freemasonry, then, surely, we must be able to see it in ourselves, so that we can demonstrate that quality to others.

Brethren, thank you, for letting me ramble on with **my thoughts on what I get out of freemasonry.**