

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF TODAY

28 April 2001

**What are the needs?** Part of the answer to this question will be determined by your groups at the 11.20 am session today.

To assess what the needs of "today" are, we must look at the social change which has influenced Freemasonry in the last 35 or so years. This change of attitude, in the community has had a dramatic effect on Freemasonry, both directly and indirectly.

Freemasonry by and large has not adapted to this massive social change - hence the downturn in our numbers. What are the **needs of today** for Freemasonry.

### NEEDS

**Social interaction through organized Lodges.**

**Education of Freemasons about their own organization. Participation by Families.**

**Quality Ceremonial with Impressive Regalia.**

**Quality Festive Boards with healthy food.**

**Only sufficient meetings per year, so as not to impose on Family and Work time.**

**Some charitable endeavours by either Lodges or Grand Lodges.**

**Publicity for our charitable endeavours**

**Eliminate Apathy**

**No doubt then are other "needs for today" to add to the above.**

I believe that by analysing where we are going wrong, we can reintroduce into the community the benefits of being a Freemason and a member of a Lodge.

### Freemasonry - HAS IT KEPT PACE WITH SOCIAL CHANGE?

*Or has it not yet entered the 20th century?*

#### LIFESTYLES IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

*In the Industrial Age (1898 - 1964)*

Australian Lifestyles were manifest in:

Home ownership and the quarter acre block dream;

Dad at work, Mum at home (4 kids);

Long careers for men (& the gold watch)

Strict rules about sex, blaspheming and other stuff:

High Street shopping (grocer, butcher etc.);

Do-it-yourself (DIY) everything in, and around home.

The corner pub (weekdays), sport (Saturday arvo), and Church and midday roast on Sundays

Service Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, generally Community-based organisations, large attendances at Churches.

#### LIFESTYLES IN THE INFOTRONICS AGE

*In the new age 1965-2040, we are heading for:*

Home leasing, especially apartments, townhouses etc.

Dad & Mum at work, with 1-2 kids somewhere; (thank God for mobiles)

Many jobs over a lifetime, retraining, multi-skilling and restructuring will be the order of the day.

Modern clubs, pubs, hotels, casinos, entertainment, strip joints, discos.

Shopping at Centres and on the Internet;

Outsourcing household services and chores.

Sport all the time (including, TV) and new gambling, options.

Service Clubs, Scouts, Guides, Lodges, Churches are all suffering from poor attendances

Cinema., radio, TV (B&W), Cards, Lodge as entertainment, Family picnics; Dances.

Holidays (Christmas, by staying with relatives

Very few people ate at Restaurants

Electricity, the telephone, washing machines, Mum's sewing room, Dad's shed, and the BBQ

Your word was your bond. Accept responsibility

The Govt. Picked up the cost for quite a few services; Health Insurance was organised by Friendly Society Lodges (HACBS, PAFSOA, MUIOOF etc) & Friendly Soc. Pharmacies.

The Internet, TV (including pay TV), Radio FM

Frequent holidays (especially short breaks) and lots of Overseas Travel,

12 out of 21 meals eaten by Aussies each week are either eaten in Restaurants or are takeaways; Mobile telephones (world's fastest uptake), electronic household gadgets, electronic payment, and EFTPOS.

Everything is a written contract. Litigation is the order of the day. Do not accept responsibility.

User Pays.

Health Insurance organised by Govt. in 1970's.

Let us look at these two groups and see the changes which have affected our way of life. Does the slogan of the Business World apply to Freemasonry in 2001?"adapt or perish"

What sections of Freemasonry must adapt to make the organisation socially acceptable to "meet the needs of today"

1. Number of meetings per year.
2. Style and format of meetings & what times during the year for meetings.
3. Amount of Ritual work at meetings. Do we need teams of professional ritualists?
4. The Education of its members. (very little at present).
- 5
  - (i) Training in meeting procedure.
  - (ii) Training in learning of ritual.
  - (iii) Training in public speaking.
  - (iv) Leadership training.
6. Festive Boards - Style and format, Quality of Food. Does the Toast List at a Festive Board serve any worthwhile purpose?
7. Are some of the ceremonies too long?. Is 2 to 3 Hours too long to sit through an Installation Ceremony and then another 2 or 3 hours at the Banquet?
8.
  - (i) Do we follow up enough on our members? (Those who do not attend)
  - (ii) Do candidates need mentors?
  - (iii) Do the mentors need training to become mentors?
  - (iv) Do we need Liaison Officers to help "sick" lodges?
  - (v) Are our Boards policy making groups effective? Perhaps we may consider that if they had been efficient in the last 35 years, we may not have a need to be at this seminar today. Would we be better off with "Specialists" being appointed to our "Boards" instead of elected members?
9. Do we have sufficient input from our Ladies/Partners and Families?  
Or should we be a "men Only" organization?
10. Are the communication systems (Circulars/Magazines/Seminars) presently used, sufficient and efficient, or do they need to change?
11. Has the organisation become "tired" ? (Is it an old persons club?)
12. Does the "formal" style of dress/regalia/customs etc need to change?
13. Do we need to reconsider what support we give to various Charities/Homes and direct our energies elsewhere?
14. Does Freemasonry have an appeal to the current young generation? If yes, how do we measure it? If not, why not?
15. Are there sufficient Social activities to involve families?
16. How many candidates have you brought into Freemasonry? Do your candidates still attend?

17. Is your Wife assisting you with your endeavours in Freemasonry ?
18. How many or your immediate family become involved in Freemasonry?  
(How many of your Sons or Sons-in-Law have joined?)  
Why did they join? / Why didn't they join?
19. What do you think needs to change?  
Is Freemasonry outdated?
20. Do we need to sell our Buildings and rent premises to hold our meetings? Would it not be more efficient in terms of cost?

Remember that out of 365 days each year, the Centre has very little use during the day. It is usually in a high density Commercial area with high overhead costs including rates. Is this effective and efficient? Should we throw in our lot with organisations such as OES etc in Buildings?

*Let us help Freemasonry enter the 21st Century with some honest, unselfish, analytical, soul searching.*

Perhaps our deliberations will have an impact on the "Strategic Plan".

**WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS NOW on "The needs of today in Freemasonry"**

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*I wish to dedicate this paper to the "Lateral Thinkers " in Freemasonry, who, by their deliberations, enthusiasm, rhetoric, and perseverance today will bring about a healthy change within the organisation, will aid its survival and be acceptable and well received by all Brethren.*

**Ex Oriente Lux**

*Light from the East.*

**A R Grant PDGDC.**

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*Note: The above paper was compiled for a seminar held under the auspices of the District Grand Lodge of North Queensland at Townsville by V.W Bro. Andy Grant for the purposes of assisting Grand and Dist. Grand Lodge. Senior Officers of the former were present at the conference on the May weekend.*

*We are fortunate to obtain a copy through the assistance of P.W.Bro.Allan Wakeham. one of our menthol and Bro. Grant has given his permission for it to be copied.*

*It would be of tremendous benefit to the Craft if some of our correspondents of this Lectern i.e. members of the Lodge of Research, were to outline their thoughts on the '20 Questions' posed. If you send them to us, we will make sure that they get posted to Townsville.*