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The Future of Freemasonry (Ideals and Goals for Freemasonry)

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Intro:

Let me start off by giving you some facts and figures:

- a. In 1962 our membership in Grand Lodge was 26,700 members;
- b. Today our membership is at 13,800 members;
- c. Two-thirds of the worlds' Masonic Brethren live in North America; 4.
- d. Since 1962 our population increase for those eligible to join the Craft has increased 88 %;
- e. Since 1962 our membership has decreased 44 %;
- f. Our projected loss of members this year is expected to be between 500 and 800 members.

Goals:

There are many things that we as Members are doing right but there are also some things that we can improve upon. Here are some of the following things I feel we can improve on!

1. To participate in the fellowship of sharing ideas and support the Masonic goals of living up to our ideals.

Many of our Brethren talk of living up to our goals and ideals, but, unfortunately that is as far as it goes with some. This cynicism must not be allowed to thrive in our Lodges. It only breeds contempt and disharmony in our Lodges. If however, we can be positive in our attitudes and actions both within and without our Lodges, we can live up to our Ideals. When this happens it is only natural that we begin to share in the ideas of making our Lodges and our Craft not only stronger but much more vibrant. We begin to live to the goals of Freemasonry. Therein lies the spirit of Freemasonry. The things which it conjures up in our minds are pleasant things, human things, Irreplaceable memories of the past, understandings of the present, and hopes for the future.

2. Share information on Masonic Retention and successful methods of attracting more members to attend Lodge from successful Lodges.

There are Lodges that are thriving and doing very well and there are those who are barely getting by with Lodge membership. We must learn from those who are doing well as to what it is that they are doing, so that others may share their ideas and perhaps become successful as well. One way of doing this is by using the Mentorship Program which so far has proven to be very successful. Something else we should remember is that, "the new members should be kept as active as possible until they get the Masonic feeling. Once a member feels that his is an integral part of his Lodge, he will become a more active member". This is easy in small Lodges where every members can quickly get to know every other member, but in larger Lodges he might go home feeling that his Brethren couldn't have cared less whether he was present or not.

3. Develop strong leadership qualities amongst our members.

When we went through the several degrees of Masonry, we were given the Working Tools of the different degrees that we might labour in those degrees. We must give the members the Working Tools of a Leader. One way to do this is through the Leadership Workshop. However, these are only conducted twice a year and sometimes in regions not accessible to us, We must have Leadership Workshop Committees in every region of our Jurisdiction to conduct Workshops on a need as required basis. By doing so we can cover a much larger number of Brethren. For instance the last one conducted was in Vancouver. It was the first one conducted in seven years. How many more years must they now wait before there is another Workshop there? We look to the Worshipful Master and his Officers for Leadership, but, when they do not have these qualifications, our Lodges often flounder and some take many years to recover.

4. Provide a platform for information dissemination through posting Trestle Board articles, notices, and general Masonic information.

We already have the Grand Lodge Electronic Trestle Board which is available to Lodge Secretaries, but, how many of us are aware of this? How many Secretaries use this? If you are travelling to another region of our

Jurisdiction, wouldn't it be nice to visit this web - site to see what is happening in that region so that we can visit a Lodge in that area! We can also post events that are happening other than just meetings! Electronic mail allows people to read, send, and share messages locally and across the world. As an example, you could use the the Inter - Net to share mail between yourself and other executive members of your Lodge --- or if Grand Lodge was accessing the Board, they and Lodge Secretaries could transfer mail between each other. These are just a few of the dozens of uses for the electronic mail and the dissemination of information.

5. Develop friendships and increase Masonic fellowship through e-mail communications throughout our Jurisdiction.

We could easily have a web page where Masons in this Jurisdiction could sign on to and share information with their Brethren. By doing this, we would develop friendships with those who we have not yet met. What a wonderful way of getting to know each other!

6. Designate acceptable web-sites for review and study.

As I have already said there is a Web - Page for Grand Lodge which serves this purpose but again I ask you how many have used it or even know that it exists? If we all knew of it we could have even more information on this web - site for review and study. We could even have a review and study on the resolutions that are to come before Grand Lodge so that when we go there, we are better informed. Also, by having these web -sites the Brethren pick up more Masonic information and have even more information on this web - site for review and study. We could even have a review and study on the resolutions that are to come before Grand Lodge so that when we go there, we are better informed. Also, by having these web - sites the Brethren pick up more Masonic information and education. We must have the Brethren better informed on our Craft. Younger members thrive on knowledge and younger members are all on the internet. This is the best and easiest way to get this information out to them.

7. Have better guidelines for investigative committees and find out why so many members demit in order to stop this decline.

When an Investigative Committee goes to a prospective candidate, are they in possession of the proper questions that they should be asking and do they inform the prospective candidate of all the information he requires prior to becoming a member? Most of the times they do not because they are simply not in possession of these questions themselves. If all Lodges received a list of questions which are suitable plus information that is suitable, we might be more successful in having a new member who completely understands what exactly it is that he is joining!

Also our decline of members is far too rapid! If Grand Lodge were to strike a committee for just one year and were instructed to find out why so many members were demitting we might be surprised. They could instruct all Lodges to answer the following questions such as:

- Was the member an active member with the Lodge?
- Is the members health the reason his is demitting?
- Is the member's financial status the reason he is demitting?
- Did the member have feelings of animosity with another member?
- Did you talk to the member to find out his reasons for demitting?

These questions could go on! This committee could then give their findings at our Grand Lodge Communication!

8. Improve public awareness and our public image.

Some of our Lodges are involved with the community by participating in parades, church services and community events. Others are involved in the Cancer Car Project. We can all be involved in the community in some small way to improve our image. We can also do this by looking after a particular park area, by assisting in the organizing of community events or simply by participating in any of these functions. By doing so we become involved with our community and also become apart of our community.

9. Establish electronic means to improve communications between the Grand Lodge Office and the Lodges (i.e. computerize Grand Lodge forms).

The days of filling out Grand Lodge forms by hand went out with the typewriter and 'Gestetner'. We have many Brethren who are more than capable of producing programs for us that all Lodges can use to improve their communication with Grand Lodge, and, they will do this because they enjoy doing so. We are in a new century and we must join this new century now!

10. Implement the Mentorship program by providing appropriate documents to all Master Masons upon "raising;"

Some Lodges are using the Mentorship Program and have found it to be very successful. All Lodges must be encouraged to use this program as well. If we can have all Lodges participate in some type of Mentorship perhaps, we can slow down or stop our decline of members.

11 Have more fun at our meetings and inject more humour;

If we can have more fun at our meetings and inject a bit of humour, the members will go home with a much better feeling about being there. They will want to come back again, simply because they had a good time. Boring meetings do absolutely nothing in attracting members back or encouraging them to become active in our meetings.

As I said at the start, there are things that we are doing right and things that still must be improved upon. If we can improve on some of the items mentioned, we can make a positive change in our Craft Lodges and make our chances of success even better!

Summary:

In summary the goals which I spoke of were:

- ***Participate in the fellowship of sharing ideas and support the Masonic goals of living up to our ideals.***
- ***Share information on Masonic Retention, and successful methods of attracting more members to attend Lodge from successful Lodges;***
- ***To participate in the fellowship of sharing ideas and support the Masonic goals of living up to our ideals;***
- ***Develop strong leadership qualities amongst our members;***
- ***Develop friendship and increase Masonic fellowship through e-mail communications throughout our jurisdiction;***
- ***Designate acceptable web-sites for review and study;***
- ***Have better guidelines for investigative committees, find out why so many members demit and stop this decline. - Improve public awareness and our public image.***
- ***Establish electronic means to improve communication between the Grand Lodge and our Lodges.***
- ***Implement the Mentorship Program by providing appropriate documents to all Master Masons upon raising.***
- ***Have more fun at our meetings and inject more humour,***

Thank you, for your attention but most importantly for your friendly hospitality.
