

## Masonic Conferences

In the previous two papers, which I submitted to this forum, I emphasized the need for a change in the election process within the Craft to survive in a modern changing society. With the adoption of a more democratic election process with respect to Board members, machinery needs to be put in place to generate ideas and participation by members of the Craft.

At present there is no effective formal forum where a Freemason can put his ideas forward for discussion.. However, one can commit his ideas to paper and forward them to the Grand or District Boards of General Purposes where in a number of cases the letter is tabled without action and not even acknowledged. A Brother can also stand up in Grand or District Grand Lodge in general business if the Grand or District Grand Master permits and raise his concerns. Unfortunately Grand and District Grand Lodges mainly consist of ceremonial ritual workings with a reporting session of the two Boards. As a result members are not inclined to make formal written submissions or address communications.

In the Districts a Grand Master's conference is held each year at a time and place of the relevant District Grand Installation. Only those in elected or appointed senior positions are able to attend these conferences and the agenda is tightly controlled. From my experience these conferences produce very little substance with not much feedback going back to the rank and file members.

Whilst conducting a number of Almoner's Conferences in the Greater Brisbane area as well as One in Cairns a few years ago, I observed that there were a large number of lateral thinking Brethren with innovative ideas attending these conferences. While these Brethren are not prepared to stand up at a communication and raise particular issues they are only too willing to interact in a conference situation.

In order to gather and forward the ideas of the Brethren to the various Boards and ultimately to the floor of Grand Lodge I believe that conferences should be conducted involving all members throughout the jurisdiction every two years. Members of Lodges in a particular region or district could be assembled and chaired by an AGSWks. to discuss agenda topics previously submitted by the Brethren.

Resolutions from each conference would then be forwarded to the Grand/District Grand Boards of General Purposes for consideration and feedback.

This will be my last paper as I will be resigning from U.G.L.Q. for reasons of principle, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on any further matter relevant to this jurisdiction:

I do not expect too much comment in favour of the matters which I have raised, notwithstanding that many Freemasons are privately in agreement with change. However, I believe that the hope of past grand rank outweighs personal opinions of most members.

Only history will tell whether change was needed to reverse U.G.L..Q.'s downward spiral of membership.  
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(This foregoing paper was submitted to the 'Email Masons' forum by Wor. Bro. Col Shedden in May 2001 prior to R.W.Bro. Fischer's resignation from UGLQ.)