

**A CHRISTIAN MEETING WITH OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS  
THROUGH A DIALOGUE WITHIN FREEMASONRY**

Submitted by

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this dissertation has not previously in its totality, or partially been submitted for the attainment of a degree at any university.

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Thomas Arnold Carmichael  
September 2003

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the continuing influence of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith within a pluralistic society, with emphasis on the changing religious developments and context within Freemasonry, from 1717 to present day, and the teaching of an all-embracing fellowship, which can support an ever changing and developing community.

It aims to investigate the reaction of Christian communities to a pluralistic approach to religious beliefs, in particular the understanding of Jesus Christ as “The Logos”, with emphasis on the role given to Jesus Christ within Freemasonry.

#### **1.2 THE GOAL OF THE RESEARCH**

The goal of the research is to develop a basis of dialogue with other world religions within our contemporary society, and investigate the depth of Spirituality within Freemasonry and individual Freemasons. It will investigate the teaching of Jesus Christ and his teaching regarding the encouragement of a fraternity with other religious bodies within the structures of Freemasonry. It will further expand the question to consider the Masonic understanding of Christianity, and its understanding of the Revelation of God through Jesus Christ and the implication of this for relations with other world religions

In developing this question the intention is to attempt to demonstrate that there are religious teachings and philosophies within Freemasonry which can assist in the development of synchronisation of beliefs, without the compromise of one's personal teaching, ethos and belief, emphasising the statement that: "It is the crowning glory of Freemasonry that requires that only a candidate shall believe" (Haywood 1943:132) and that within the fellowship of Freemasonry there are lessons to be learned regarding religious and racial harmony and tolerance.

### **1.3 CONTEXT**

From the original development of the early church, freedom of expression and thinking has not been encouraged. Much of the dictate of the early Roman Church was through one individual, The Bishop of Rome.

Limitations within the Christian community regarding dialogue with other religious groups has been strongly enforced by a fundamentalist approach to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the Christian faith, which taught the infallibility of the Christian Bible, and Jesus Christ as the only 'Logos' from the creator to all of humanity. Within Freemasonry there is possible a deeper sense of God's contact with his creation through other world religions without compromising one's own Christian faith.

Through Freemasonry there can be an encounter of world religions, in a similar sense of that encounter expressed by the Jesuit monk Jacques Dupuis in his book of the same title. "Jesus Christ at the encounter of World Religions" (1989:9). "He not only seeks to take a

position from a Christian viewpoint, but gives regard to the possibility of many diverse ways to God, as expressed by other world faiths. He likewise seeks to reveal the light the confrontation with other world religious traditions can shed on the Christian faith itself.”

Within Freemasonry members talk of a light, a light which leads to knowledge of ‘The Great Architect of the Universe’. In the context of this light some sense of God’s greatness is shared by all humanity. Freemasonry endeavours to see and express that light to all humanity.

#### 1.4 **METHODS**

The method of research will be based on content analysis and archival research. This research will cover Masonic ritual and teaching since its recognised official inception in 1717 and will investigate the changing emphasis on religious content and the development of an all-embracing, worldwide fraternity. The research will cover reactions from both a positive and a negative perspective to these changing developments, and the reaction of religious bodies to the influence Freemasonry has had upon society in general.

The approach to this research will be through the investigation of existing literature within the academic environment of Freemasonry and religious communities, through reports within South Africa regarding secret societies, and established reports from at least two mainline Christian denominations, investigating the motivations for the outright rejection of Freemasonry within many modern Christian organisations.

## 1.5 ENVIRONMENT AND FOUNDATION

Freemasonry as an organisation is surrounded by mythology, some dating the order back to the Biblical story of creation and Adam; some orders within Freemasonry relate the Order to the Biblical account of Noah and his family in the Ark, and three articles of Noah said to be found in the Old Testament book of Genesis. It is the intention within this dissertation to look more closely at the last two centuries and the documented information found in modern Freemasonry, with particular reference to the spiritual content within Freemasonry that has been an encouragement to thousands of individuals within the South African community. The effects Freemasonry has had on the development of the principal of freedom of expression throughout the world will also be considered.

Many of the men and women involved in Freemasonry over the past two centuries have come from a Protestant Christian background (however in the early and mid eighteenth century there were many Roman Catholic Lodges). Along with this the roots of modern Freemasonry in South Africa reflect the eighteenth century colonial church from England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Dutch settlers. Freemasonry was interwoven between the political and religious structures of the eighteenth and nineteenth century settlers.

Freemasonry was central to many developing communities within South Africa from the days of early settlers into the country. For some it brought with it a sense of stability and the security of familiarity in strange and new surroundings. In our present day one can witness the presence of Freemasonry when travelling through the small colonial townships

of South Africa; throughout the country monuments and buildings bear witness to the establishment of Freemasonry. Most town centres have a Masonic Hall. Some Masonic Halls are alongside the church and built of the same stone, a symbol of the strong link of those who attended the Lodge and worshiped in the church. There was no secret that the Masons met at this place, for at that time, as now, Masonic Halls are visible for all to see.

Freemasonry in the last century has possibly had more books written about it than any other modern subject, and the rituals are available for any person to read at most central libraries. From an investigation of the roots of Freemasonry, the intentions of the first known Lodges and their development over the generations, the question arises as to whether there is a message of hope within this ‘so-called’ secret society for a developing South Africa and the diversity of ethnic and religious groups. Is there an historic foundation within Freemasonry that could help bond the diverse groups within a developing South Africa?

The structures within Freemasonry are so diverse and complex that it would be difficult in this dissertation to reflect on all branches and institutions, although a brief look within the lower degrees gives some insight into the complexities, as well as a clear understanding of the all embracing fellowship of Freemasonry in general. Degrees that follow the ‘Entered Apprentice’, ‘Fellow Craft’ and ‘Master Mason’ (the first three degrees of a Mason), include such degrees as Royal Arch, (The Complete Workings of the Royal Arch Degree:1957) which reflects on the tribes of Israel and the driving force of God’s involvement with the spiritual development, teaching and enrichment of His chosen

people. Other degrees include the Secret Monitor (which holds dear the concepts of brotherly love and servanthood expressed in the Biblical characters of David and Daniel), the mystical degree of the ‘Knights Templar’ (also known as The Order of Christ), a degree still only conferred on those who recognise the Messianic character of Jesus Christ and the Cryptic Rite (Wilkinson, 1977: 5) which is based on the building of King Solomon’s Temple. It is from within these aspects of Freemasonry and particularly within the South African context that the foundation of a spirituality that embraces all people can be found, which can bring together the various racial and religious groups within South Africa, without compromising one’s own fundamental religious and historical beliefs.

Freemasonry is said to free the individual from bigotry and fear by bringing individuals into closer contact with the world created by The Great Architect of the Entire Universe for all of God’s creation. As early as 1738 an all-embracing charter was formed in the Freemason’s Charges with regard to God and religion. The charge states:

*In ancient Times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian usages of each country where they travelled, or worked. But Masonry being found in all nations, even of divers religions, they are now generally charged to adhere to the religion to which all men agree (leaving each brother to his own particular opinion) that is, to be good men and true men of honour and honesty by what ever names, religions, or persuasions they may be distinguished (Anderson, 1738).*

Within these early charges the central philosophy and ethos of modern Freemasonry was founded, namely, a passion and love for humanity and all of God's creation. This is the embracing character of Freemasonry, a character designed to encourage healing and constructive dialogue no matter how diverse the participants may be.

According to Anderson (1738) Freemasonry is the central meeting place for all humanity. It is a place for personal understanding and development, with a deep sense of love for The Divine Creator. It is not the intention of Freemasonry to synchronise all sacred writings, as this would only be an attempt to eradicate the uniqueness of each individual's faith and deep held beliefs. Freemasonry encourages diversity, but demands the love and compassion, which, from a Christian perspective is expressed by and through Jesus Christ.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE CENTRALITY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

It is the intention within this chapter to show the width of topics touched on by Freemasonry and how the issues can be reflected in the historical context of South Africa, in particular in a period of the development of globalisation, how these systems have developed and how they can be used in everyday society as a structure for development and the nurture of a trusting relationship between individuals and groups. It will be shown that over the past two centuries, men of different faiths have met and discussed moral and social issues at a level not witnessed within a divided South African community.

#### **2.2. THE CHANGING FACE OF FREEMASONRY**

Henry Josiah Whymper, in *The Religion of Freemasonry 1938*, points to two extracts from the charges given in Masonry:

*An extract from 1722*

*The Almighty Father of Heaven, with the wisdom of The Glorious Son, thro' the goodness of The Holy Ghost, Three persons in one Godhead, be with our Beginning, and give us His Grace so to govern our Lives, that we may come to Bliss, that never shall have end.*

*From London 1884*

*1. Concerning God and Religion*

*A Mason is obliged by his tenure, to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. He, of all men, should best understand that GOD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh at the outward appearance, but GOD looketh at the heart. A Mason is, therefore, particularly bound never to act against the dictates of his conscience. Let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the Glorious Architect of heaven and earth, and practice the sacred duties of morality. ( Whymper 1938:36)*

The first quotation points clearly to an organisation with a Christian bias, and Jesus Christ at the centre, the second, (over one hundred years later) to the all-embracing charge given to new candidates. Whymper (1938:12) however rejected all connections with other religions stating that Freemasonry is a true religion in its own right and is the centre of the Christian faith as handed down by the Church Fathers. He saw any association with those of other faiths as a kindness of the Christian body, but those of other beliefs, according to Whymper, could never be part of the true Masonic body. This is not a position that has been held throughout Freemasonry nor does it reflect the standing of Freemasonry today that now encourages the development of an all-embracing fellowship where members reach out with a hand of fellowship and reconciliation to all.

The changes within the 1884 charge were seen as very liberal in context, contrary not only to the thinking of the time, but would also lead many modern day fundamentalist church members to brand Masonry and Freemasons as the Anti-Christ and dare to suggest that humanity could come before the Creator by any other means than the Christian faith. However the Christian church of today can learn much from the all-embracing character

and teaching of Freemasonry as a way of developing fellowship with individuals from other faiths, without compromising one's own beliefs that could lead to a greater understanding between all of God's people.

Freemasonry developed within Christian communities, developing at a faster pace during the Reformation and Catholic-Reformation period of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth century. This was seen as a period of change within the church, and in this change there was a new sense of freedom of expression. For many there was a belief that Freemasonry held on to the historical foundations of the Christian Church, and during a time of turmoil the true faith had a place of refuge. Many, if not all Freemasons, at that time had a true sense of the teaching of Jesus Christ in their lives, and a commitment to bring that teaching to bear on their activities within society. In particular when they were to consider the needs of others (both inside and outside the structures of Freemasonry) the common saying was heard that 'Freemasonry takes good men and makes them better men'. Within the society that Freemasonry found its roots and developed, Jesus Christ was always placed in high honour in all their undertakings and thus was reflected through their church membership and devout dedication to church worship. The changes in the constitutions and the charges presented by Freemasons are a witness to their willingness to listen and change in a continually developing society, developing a platform where all individuals feel welcome.

## 2. 3 CHRISTIAN ROOTS OF FREEMASONRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In its early stages Freemasonry was mainly linked with Christian communities. Much of the evidence of this is found in the ritual of English, Scottish, Irish and Dutch Freemasonry; also in the Masonic symbols to be found within the churches of the first colonial settlers. Freemasons were also at the forefront in encouraging peaceful solutions in post war situations in South Africa. The grand Lodge of South Africa was instrumental in the effort to unite many individuals in South Africa who had been ostracised after the Boer War (1899 – 1902) and the growing conflicts in Europe that led to the First World War. One-way of establishing contact with persons who had previously been seen, as ‘the enemy’, was to permit them to join fellow Masons at Lodge meetings. (such meetings having been banned in 1916). In March 1923 John Charles Duff; the then Pro-Grand Master moved the following resolution;

“That Grand Lodge having in March, 1916 decided by resolution to require Brethren of Enemy Country Birth to abstain from attendance at meetings of Grand Lodge, or of a private Lodge, or any other Masonic meeting until after the treaty of peace had been signed and until such time as Grand Lodge will determine, now resolves that any private Lodge may, by unanimous vote of its Brethren present and voting, at a regular meeting, after giving notice on the Summons to every Subscribing member allow a Brother, or Brethren, of Enemy Country Birth, to resume his, or their, full membership”  
(Gould 1935: 44)

One must not underestimate the influence that this had on the vastly changing community in South Africa as many businessmen belonged to the Lodges and trusting relationships were re-established through their Masonic links. These links were also found within the

established church organisations in South Africa, and the charitable giving from Freemasons was seen in the development of many new church and public buildings.

Many of the Christian churches built in the Cape Province of South Africa have foundation stones laid by prominent Freemasons or local Lodges, whose members were responsible for raising the vast majority of the funds required. The Protestant Christian Church and Freemasonry were inter-wound in the post Second World War era of South Africa and as buildings developed, the Temples (as Freemasons Lodges were called then) would be consecrated by a leading cleric. At every consecration of a Masonic Temple and of a Lodge itself, a Brother of Holy Orders is invited to give an address. One such address printed in 'A Review of the Report of the Synodical Commission of the Dutch Reformed Church (Cape) of Freemasonry'; issued in 1942 quoted from The Reverend C. Reed in January 1939 who stated:

“We have assembled here this afternoon to take part in the consecration of a new Lodge of free and accepted Masons. To consecrate means to set apart for a sacred purpose. We use the words of sacred buildings of Masonic Lodges and also of the men who devote their lives to some sacrificial vocation. The Consecrating officer will soon dedicate this Lodge to God and His service and shortly afterwards it will be my duty and privilege on your behalf to invoke the blessing of The Great Architect of The Universe upon this new Lodge, and pray that the members may increase in the knowledge of Him, and in love towards each other. We address our petitions to the Almighty Father and realise that only so can we speak of brotherly love”

It is evident that the links between the Church and Freemasons Lodges in South Africa do not have this same relationship today; many of the adverse publications by individual church members and some of the campaigning from certain church groups witness to this.

The Church of the Province (Anglican Church) in Port Elizabeth had a large plaque on the East wall dedicated to the Freemasons within Port Elizabeth, and one in particular, that had donated funds for the care and development of the building. After many attempts in recent times to have this symbol of gratitude removed from the wall, protesters have been successful in having this historical reference to Freemasonry removed. It was noted at the time that the protesters never thought it prudent to return the fifty thousand rand that had been donated by the individual Freemason for work within the church.

When the Dutch Reformed Church received the report on secret societies, in particular Freemasonry, in 1942, it was found that many within the Christian community belonged to the organisation, and Jesus Christ and His teachings were placed at the centre of the ethos driving much of their work. It was reported that when a new lodge was to be opened that it was consecrated, and at all times a prominent person of “Holy Orders” was invited to address the brethren. Reverend Barnett Clark, Dean of Cape Town (and the then District Grand Master of Freemasonry) is reported to have said,

“Freemasonry is not a religious domination or rival sect, but when its brethren and members fulfil their solemn obligations it is a helpmeet and handmaid to true Religion. Masonry is a stalwart, staunch, and watchful Guardian and warden of God’s Holy Volume of The Sacred Law” (Dutch Reformed Church Synod report 1942).

Reverend Dean, a most devout Christian, was also a leading Freemason within a new and developing community within that community. He brought to that community a love of

Jesus Christ and an ethic of love for his fellow human being, which was developed within Freemasonry. The Synod report went on to say,

“as members of the Synod go to their worship in the ‘Groote Kerk’ let them look at the memorial stone built into the fabric of the church to the memory of the late Sir John Truter and remember he too was a Freemason for forty years head of the Netherlands constitution in South Africa.”

Throughout South African History prominent leaders such as General Louis Botha, Presidents Burger, Ritz and Pretorius as well as many other leaders were associated with Freemasons Lodges (*see appendix 1&1A and 2,A&B*). It is worth noting the comments of General Louis Botha and his words regarding the equality of individuals. AA Cooper writes,

“Botha’s life was based on Masonic principals – Brotherly love, relief and Truth.” He added, “He never failed to promote it (Brotherly Love) whenever possible, between the two great races of this country” (Cooper 1997:156).

It is a sad reflection that this ideal environment of brotherly love could not be adhered to throughout the whole of the South African community. This in itself would have alleviated may years of suffering and humiliation for millions of black Africans and the South African community would have reaped the rewards over the years becoming so much richer spiritually, morally and commercially.

In times of conflict those within Freemasonry have sought to bring peace and peaceful solutions to situations causing division and suffering. There are many stories related

during the Anglo-Boer War associated with Freemasonry. Men who were called to fight on both sides had been members of Freemasons' Lodges, and during the conflict they met each other in battle. Because of their Masonic links the victor would show kindness to his brother Mason. It is clear that many of the final negotiations in this conflict were brought to a swift conclusion because of the foundation of the negotiators in Freemasonry (a large number of the high ranking officers on both side of the conflict had links to Freemasonry) “ During the second war of independence (1899 – 1902) many Boer prisoners of war were sent to camps at St Helena and Ceylon” (Cooper 1997:140).

While at the camps they were allowed to meet as Freemasons and mix with other officers and men. The fact that this shortened the conflict can only be described as a blessing to all those involved (Appendix 1 and 2). This relationship is still evident to day. In 1990 the then Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Africa, George Groenewald (1990) spoke of the union of Lodges and the relationship:

“A relationship which is still experienced today since many Afrikaans speaking Freemasons are also members of the three Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland and are very proud of that association” (www.geocities.com: 2002)

There are also many examples of Freemason graves in many areas within South Africa. These grave sites are clearly marked with the Symbol of a Square and Compass, or in the case of Knights Templar and Rose Cross and the symbol of a Skull and Crossbones and Rose below a cross. It is obvious that there was not the animosity found today towards Freemasons There was a level of pride in both life and death resulting from belonging to what was an extension to a Christian man's life and the Christian Church.

Many, if not all Freemasons at that time had a true sense of the teaching of Jesus Christ, in particular when it came to caring for those in need. The common saying was heard that ‘Freemasonry takes good men and makes them better men’. Jesus Christ was given a privileged place by those in authority and society as a whole. As Freemasons were from within that society they also gave Jesus Christ a place of high honour. Within South Africa, such prominent personalities as General Louis Botha, Presidents Burger, Brand, Reitz and Pretorius, belonged to various Masonic Lodges. Also many other political and Religious leaders were associated with Freemasons Lodges (Appendix 1 & 2).

Many years of suffering and humiliation for millions of black Africans could have been avoided if the same fellowship that had been developed among those of different nationalities could have been extended to the indigenous people of Africa. The Southern African community would have been so much the richer, spiritual and morally, if this fellowship, care and trust could have reached across the racial barrier of the day.

#### **2.4. CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN FREEMASONRY**

Arthur Waite (1996:415) describes the ‘true real church’ as a ‘spirit and a life’, “a bond of integration in Christ through the life and Spirit of Christ” Masonic statements such as Waite’s indicate that the root of Freemasonry is influenced by the Christian faith. Among many of the rituals, the wording points to there being a firm belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and although the Royal Arch Freemasonry (to be commented on below) is based on

Old Testament principles; the Christian ethos of the Trinity is clearly symbolized in the ritual published in 1957 with words in the closing of the Lodge, such as,

*“We all do meet and agree, in peace love and unity, the Sacred Word to keep, and never to divulge the same until we three, or three such as we do meet and agree.”*

Whymper argues that Freemasonry is indeed a religion in its own right, a religion of Christian men who support the Masonic declaration that the Word is Jesus Christ the Divine Incarnation. It is worth noting that there is no record to date within Freemasonry that it should change from a Christian body to a Theistic organisation. This charge is rather seen and expressed as an evolutionary change within the organization, as the Lodges have opened up to brethren of other beliefs and learned valuable lessons from within other religious beliefs. However, many of the early rituals introduced by Sir Christopher Wren recognized and maintained a connection with Christianity, with much emphasis on St John the Evangelist, John The Baptist, the Cross of Christ and the Triune God of the Christian faith. As an apologist for the Christian faith to maintain full control of Freemasonry Whymper (1938:12) wrote:

it is futile trying to shirk the position – either our volume of the Sacred law, the Bible is to be treated as the great light of English Freemasonry or it must be relegated to our museum of symbols.

Because of these early influences it has been argued that Freemasonry has always been the domain of Christian men, who have been encouraged to maintain their Christian beliefs. Within Freemasonry individuals are encouraged to be true to themselves and their Creed. Christian Freemasons are taught to believe in the One Great Light of the Holy Bible and

the revelation of Christ as the universal unity of all things. Within the Masonic order of Knights Templar Priests it is clearly stated that, “the temple is a spiritual house and those who serve therein are a Holy Priesthood who offer up spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (Waite 1970: 294). The sacrifice they speak of is inclusive of peace – faith and goodwill in all undertakings. The Knights Templar can be seen as the continuation of historic Freemasonry, still maintaining the character of a Christian fellowship, basing their ritual (practiced during their meetings) on an allegiance to Jesus Christ, and their vows made on the Gospel of Saint John. The order of The Rose Cross accepted the ‘new law under Christ as leads a grade of Christian Priesthood’, lifting the individual to a higher grade within the Lodge. The Mark (A Masonic degree known as a side degree) Master Mason also relates to Christ accepting the teaching and principals of the Christian faith within these Masonic Orders.

Early Masonic lectures presented in Lodges throughout the country clearly stated that God sent His only begotten Son at the appointed time to instruct Israel. One of the original prayers within the order of Royal Arch Freemasonry, at the opening of the Lodge concluded with the words. “This we humbly beg, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savoir.” It was in one of the first drafts on Freemasonry ritual where Jesus Christ is described as. ‘The first true gentleman who ever breathed.’ This is one of the motivations leading to the comment that Freemasonry makes good men better men, ‘True gentlemen’, as Christ.

## **2.5. THE FIRST THREE DEGREES OF FREEMASONRY**

Freemasons are taught that there are only three degrees within Freemasonry. However, some say that these degrees can only be completely understood when a person joins the Royal Arch. The Royal Arch is said to bring all the ritual of the first three degrees to a climax, giving the individual Freemason a fuller understanding of the work undergone thus far. Although there are many other degrees within Freemasonry, (so called side degrees) many that attain these first degrees are contented to participate at this level only.

### **2.5.1. First Degree Freemasonry**

Each degree within Freemasonry has its own principal teaching, and takes the candidate through a series of lessons. Within each degree God is indeed central to the ‘working’ for in the first degree the candidate hopes to obtain the privileges of Freemasonry ‘by the help of God’. A prayer is said for the candidate, praying that he should dedicate his life to God’s service, praying that God will share with him His Divine wisdom, to enable the candidate to be loyal to his brethren and do all things to the glory of God. Part of the lesson in this degree is founded on the Biblical teaching of faith, hope and charity, and in particular charity. The candidate is shown that there may be a time when they meet others who are in need, and they are encouraged to care for others less fortunate than themselves. The work continues with the ritual of a ‘First Degree’ which is named the ‘Entered Apprentice’ new and learning the trade of a Mason. The new candidate will take a vow, this vow will also be to God and be taken on the Volume of The sacred Law, (The Holy Bible within a Christian Lodge) and at the close of the lodge again a prayer is said.

### **2.5.2. Second Degree Freemasonry**

At the second degree the candidate again enters the lodge and recites certain parts of the First Degree ritual, that he has been instructed to memorise. This is the first real stage of the individual's Masonic progress and the development of the candidate's memory that will be a central part of all future involvement in the Lodge and will continue throughout his Masonic life. Again his hope of obtaining this degree is 'by the help of God'. After this statement he will go on to give passwords and address other Masonic symbols all related to the ethics of his way of life and the principles of love for others. Prayers are again a prominent part of the Lodge's activity, calling upon God to be with the candidate and all within the lodge, asking for a blessing from heaven upon the work that is to be done.

### **2.5.3. Third Degree Freemasonry or Ceremony of Raising**

The third degree is said to be the completion of a Freemason's journey. Although there are recognised side degrees they are said not to limit the development of the new Mason who having completed his third degree will be raised to the level of a Master Mason. But first as in the former degree he must answer certain questions, and again the help of God is called upon in prayer. Because there is a part of the ceremony that relates to the death of Hiram Abif, (the head Mason of the Temple of King Solomon, who was killed in a failed attempt to gain his secrets) it is claimed by some, that the third degree teaches a man how to die, and there is indeed a resurrection from death to a new life with God. When the candidate has completed the ceremony a prayer is said for all Masons and for the candidate.

After each of the degrees and after most Masonic meetings the brethren retire to another room where they will have a light meal together. At this meal a grace is always offered in thanks to God before they eat.

It is clear from these small sections of the ritual of Freemasonry that they do have a firm belief in God. As a Christian Freemason one will see God through the divine revelation of Jesus Christ; the prayers said will not restrict or offend the individual's belief, nor will it put one's faith to question. However the candidate must believe in an Almighty Creator who is all-powerful over all things (this has been developed even further over the past decade and there are those within modern Freemasonry who say the candidate only needs state that they have a belief in a Supreme Being. This will open Freemasonry to many other individuals of non-theistic beliefs). From a Christian perspective the 'All Powerful' is witnessed through the gift of Jesus Christ and of His Holy Spirit. There is nothing within the first three degrees of Freemasonry, which would come into conflict with this belief.

## **2.6. A LOST SECRET**

Many of the ritual workings within Freemasonry centre around the search for a lost secret, this lost secret may in actual fact be found in the development of memory. The development of memory is a religious principal, not only taught by the Church Father Augustine, but by many other faiths. The development of memory is a way to understand

our own creation and to reach back to God. A search for a memory of God Augustine said, (Stevenson 1990: 89) is embedded in every portion of God's creation, and within the soul of humanity, reaching back and having a clear understanding of the Creation story found in Genesis chapter one verse twenty-six:

*“ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness”.*

And further in verse twenty-seven:

*“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them”.*

God created all beings and all beings are from God; it is a logical progression to search for the Creator by searching for a memory of the Creator's work in creation

William Schaw (Stevenson 1990: 85,86) taught that all Masons should be skilled in the art of memory. The development of this skill would enable the individual to understand their own purpose within creation. As early as 1599, Schaw is known to have wanted to make all Masons skilled in the art of memory.

The development of memory is central to a Freemasons work within a Lodge. This development of memory is a forgotten part of the development of modern culture and the arts. It was central to education in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was encouraged in the royal courts. It is when one understands this need to develop memory that one understands the need for icons within the church, for they are placed there as teaching and memory aids. Dudley (1986:117) writing on learning with power, points to different methods of developing memory used by early scholars.

“Among the medieval scholars who used memory systems, applying them to a series of images of their own choice, were St Thomas Aquinas, Albert Magnus, Ramon Lull, and others. The use of rectilinear buildings for this purpose is known as square art memory. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) favoured round art. He employed circular diagrams called ‘Memory Wheels’, these wheels had images on them that Bruno claimed showed a complete picture of the universe and could hold all human knowledge within its scope.”

These methods of teaching are used within all of the first three degrees of Freemasonry.

The pictorial image (a tracing board in Freemasonry) is available to assist the candidate in memorising the particular degree. One of the ways taught to develop memory was to imagine a large building with many rooms, when an individual is to remember a report or a lesson, (or in the case of a Mason, a ritual) each section of the presentation is to be placed in a different room. When asked to recall the information the individual would imagine walking through the building, stand in each room and recall an item placed there. All he would need to do is remember the route he took through the building and the articles placed therein.

This practice forms the very core of Freemasonry, where the large building is the Temple of King Solomon and at various stages of induction the new Mason is taken through the Temple and at each stage a lesson is shared and learned. To remember the lesson the Mason need only imagine entering the Temple of King Solomon and all will be remembered.

In many Roman Catholic churches members are encouraged to recite prayers and memorise sections of Catechism. There are also within the church ‘Stations of the Cross’;

stages of the life, death and resurrection of Christ for adherents to meditate upon and remember. This is not idol worship, but rather an aid to the worship of God.

The recognition that many of the symbols within the Roman Church were placed as aids to the memory of the adherents will help in creating a basis for dialog between the Reformed Churches and members of the Roman Catholic Church.

### **2.6.1. Memorisation and meditation in Freemasonry**

The teaching within Freemasonry is said to be a progressive science, within this science is a firm belief in one God, Theism. Esoterically it is said to be a search for light, for a lost world, for the ultimate truth. That ultimate truth may in fact be the development of memory for the search of knowledge of our Creator, ‘The Great Architect’ of all things and all humanity. If this search can help support one’s own faith, then the individual and the individual’s worshiping community can but benefit from a deeper understanding of their place within society and creation.

Freemasonry, or Speculative Masonry as it became known, which originated in the early Mason’s guilds, has been defined as an organised system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. This is the basis of all Masonry. The allegory is to be found in the organised systems and activities of builders within the old Mason’s Guilds. And it is the tools of this trade which are used today to teach the modern principles of Freemasonry.

One of the main practices within Freemasonry is the development of an individual’s memory. It is the practice within all Lodges for a candidate to memories various rituals

verbatim. All the members will learn various sections of the work presented in a Lodge, when a new candidate is presented before the Lodge each member will have a role to play. The members present a theatrical enactment of the role the candidate is to play within the Lodge. The history of Freemasonry is re-told to new and old members alike and each member will memories the part he is required to present. This development of memory is believed to be one of the parts of prudence, the other parts being intelligence and foresight. Stevenson (1990: 89) points out that the work of Saint Augustine also emphasises the significance of developing memory, for he regarded it as part of the soul, (the other parts being Understanding and Will) and taught that through explaining memory, men could find a memory-image of God embedded in their own soul. Augustine developed this memory principal into religious icons, what had begun as a utilitarian technique for improving the memory had come to be seen as being of importance in religion not just as a valuable method of imprinting religious truths on the mind, but also something that in itself had moral value and would lead to knowledge of God. This practice of memory development can be found throughout many religious faiths, a means to meditate and learn to understand the purpose of our creation, searching for a lost secret that God has implanted in His very creation.

The emphasis on memory can be found in Islam and Buddhism as well as Hinduism and of course in many African communities where for generations tradition and history were orally transmitted from one generation to the other with great accuracy. This use of oral transfer of events has brought modern day African communities in touch with the very

roots of their existence, and for many a sense of God through an understanding of the growth and development of their ancestors.

The teaching and development of memory with the reciting of ritual is found within all structures of Freemasonry and is looked upon with pride by those who are adept at the art. The teaching within Freemasonry is said to be a progressive science and within this science there is a firm belief in one true God. Theism is esoterically interpreted as a search for light, for a lost Word, or the Ultimate Truth. This Ultimate Truth may in fact be accessed through the development of memory, which can lead an individual to the knowledge of the Creator, ‘The Great Architect’ of all things and all humanity. If this search can help one understand ones own faith, then the individual and the individual’s worshipping community can benefit from a deeper understanding of their place with creation and society. There is a development of the realisation that all the answers are not yet available to any individual’s religion. When one realises that the search is still to be completed, then there is a toleration of others who are searching, individuals learn to tolerate other pilgrims on the road of life and learn to learn from each other.

## **2.7. THE HOLY BIBLE IN FREEMASONRY**

In a lecture given in 1860 by W.T. Wilkinson under the authority of the lodge of instruction the candidate is addressed with the following words.

“Your very position is designed by Masonry to remind you that in a state of nature you are poor and ignorant, and blind and naked. You are tonight to look upon the Holy Bible as the only source of the true riches – wisdom– enlightenment and happiness. The Author of this Holy work is Almighty God. The design is to be

a light unto your feet and a lamp to your path. To Guide your feet into the way of peace – the end is to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus – to teach you that true wisdom, which is in the fear of the Lord, and the understanding which is to depart from evil.” (Whymper 1938:80)

Even at this late stage in Freemasonry the Bible and Jesus Christ were given great emphases, it was pointed out to the candidate that God’s Messiah was the Great Architect of the church and had come into the world for the salvation of all creation. Because Freemasonry was seen as an institution of Christian men who supported the church (both financially and by their regular attendance at church services) there was a warm response from the early reforming church to Freemasonry, many church ministers were, and still are members of Masonic Lodges. English Freemasonry in particular was seen as a Christian institution.

## **2.8. SYMBOLISM**

Freemasonry, or speculative Masonry as it is called, originated in the early Masons’ Guilds, and has been defined as an organised system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

“From the very beginning of his Masonic career, the Freemason is exhorted to live by the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief (i.e. Charity or Philanthropy), and Truth; to practice the four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice; or to have as his distinguished characteristics, the qualities of Virtue, Honour and Mercy. As he proceeds through the ceremonies of the three Craft Degrees, the Mason is first impressed with the need to maintain his faith in God and his hope in salvation, and to epitomise charity in his dealings with his fellow men. He is next taught the importance of understanding God’s creation by unlocking the ‘hidden mysteries of Science and Nature’ through the study of the seven liberal arts and sciences; Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy. Finally he is enjoined to maintain his honour at all times and display stoic fortitude in the face of death, placing his faith in the certainty of

immortality. All these principles, qualities and ideals are presented to him in symbolic form in the visible ornamentation of the Lodge, in the pictorial diagrams for each degree.” (Hamill and Gilbert 1998:57)

This is the basis of Freemasonry. The allegory is to be found in the organised systems and activities of builders within the old guilds of practicing Masons, and it is the tools of this trade (rule, plum-line, spirit level, square and other tools), which are used today to teach the modern principles of Freemasonry.

### **2.8.1. Tradesman’s Tools**

Much of the symbolism seen within Freemasonry is based on an ethic established for humanity. The rule, plum-line, spirit level and the square and compass are all implements which are to be related to an individual’s life, presented by the Freemason in an allegorical role, stating that “as most Freemasons are not operative Masons we apply these tools to our morals” (Masonic ritual). These Masonic symbols are used to guide and instruct the Mason to maintain a good life, to be kind to others, (not just fellow Masons) and to give of his time and resources to others. (Appendix Three gives an outline of a small portion of the giving of Freemasons to others, which is in the millions of rand.)

### **2.8.2. Acacia leaf and the Mormon Church**

The acacia leaf symbol signifies simplicity, innocence and the mind turning from evil with intense horror, (expressed symbolically during the Third Degree working). This is also a symbol that is given great importance and significance by the Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) which uses many Masonic symbols and rituals within their chapels as a means to introduce new members. The first Mormon Masonic

organisation was established in America in 1842. However the mainline lodges did not recognise them. The Masonic rituals and symbols used in their own religious rite include the five points of fellowship, oaths with similar penalties, gestures, the use of an apron and the use of a square and compass as important symbols within their chapel. Joseph Smith the founder of the Mormon Church, was himself a Freemason and many of his teachings regarding the finding of hidden knowledge can be traced back to Freemasonry, in particular the Knights Templar who it is said travelled from France to Scotland then on to America and hid certain scrolls there. Is it possible that Smith did indeed find these scrolls and interpreted this as the finding of the Golden Plates of the Mormon Church? Although much of this is speculation, the information regarding the journey of the Knights Templar is relayed in many Masonic publications

### **2.8.3. The Pentangle and Five Points of Fellowship**

Many Christian groups have interpreted the symbol of the Pentangle as proof that Freemasonry is a satanic organisation and that Freemasons practice satanic rituals. However in Masonic literature the Pentangle or Star is taken from the symbol of good health found within the early Christian Church in the time of Constantine (Stevenson 1990:173). In Sir Robert Moray's 'Masonic Mark' the Pentangle summarized his Stoic, Platonic, Christian ethic with great emphasis on the love of all mankind, which is symbolized in five points: -

“Agape. (‘He loves’ or ‘love thou’)  
 Gothi. (An imperative ‘know’ or ‘gaining knowledge’)  
 Anecho. (‘Remain constant’ or ‘endure’)  
 Pisteuei. (‘He puts his trust in’ or ‘he has faith in’)  
 Apecho. (‘Abstain’ or ‘exercise restraint’)  
 (Stevenson 1990:174)

These five points Moray claims, were the points of life for all of humanity to follow. The symbol was taken into the teaching of the Christian Church to the extent that it was recognised as a reminder of the five wounds received by Jesus Christ, each point representing a wound and the love give by Jesus in receiving the wound on behalf of humanity. In modern Freemasonry the symbol is used to represent and the points of fellowship embraced by all Freemasons.

In the context in which the Pentangle is found in Freemasonry, it is a symbol of love for all of creation, where the individual strives for knowledge of himself and his creator, remaining constant in his word (Your yes is always yes and your no is no) with a trust in God, that all will be revealed to those who have the patience to exercise restraint. Frances Yates wrote:

“Where is there such a combination as this of religious toleration, emotional linkage with the medieval past, and emphasis on good works for others?”  
(Stevenson 1990:85)

The answer she gives, is in “Freemasonry”

#### **2.8.4. The All Seeing Eye**

Another symbol often misinterpreted by those seeking to sensationalise the purpose of Freemasonry is the ‘All Seeing Eye’. This is made quite clear by Freemasons to represent the eye of God who watches over all of creation, not just Freemasons, but all whom he has

created. That must include peoples from all race, ethnic and religious groups, for the Creator, or Great Architect of the Universe is in communion with all creation. The Masonic Encyclopaedia describes the All Seeing Eye as God's Eye "Who never slumbers or sleeps, an Eye which pervades the innermost recesses of the human heart and will reward us according to our merit" (Waite 1996:21)

### **2.8.5. Terminology and abbreviations**

In many of the books published by Freemasons there are many abbreviations of words and sentences, often just using the first letter of a word. The misinterpretation of the abbreviation 'GAOTU' led some to believe that Masons worshiped a 'GOAT', as it states in the Masonic ritual that "they offer all glory to the GAOTU. In fact the letters are an abbreviation of 'The Great Architect of The Universe.

There are multitudes of symbols within Freemasonry; all designed to assist the Mason in the rule of his life and to give direction on how he should treat other human beings. And (as previously discussed), to aid the development of an individual's memory. Within a Masonic funeral service the apron is shown to symbolize the emblem of innocence, the whiteness of the apron represents the belief in the purity of the soul which is a gift of our Heavenly Father. This is to show that even though our outward self may be tarnished God sees in us the things He has created, which is holy and pure.

It is this foundation that could teach those who still have bitter hearts regarding past events, to forgive those who still resent, to stop, and learn to build with a 'Craft-man's'

tools. In this way Freemasonry teaches and practices unity of the body, mind and spirit of the individual irrespective of colour, race or creed.

## **2.9. HYMNS, SONGS AND POEMS**

Throughout history songs and poems have held many hidden truths about the period; some truths that could not be openly recorded are recorded in folk songs and poetry. A genealogy of a village or a chief can be related in poetry, great people are remembered in songs and hymns. The whole of the Christian faith can be found in the hymn writing of generations of believers. The history of Freemasonry is no exception to this; the history and development of Freemasonry has been told in famous songs, hymns, classical music and poetic themes. Mozart is said to have found inspiration through Freemasonry, his opera ‘the Magic Flute’ is an allegory for spiritual enlightenment initiates find in Freemasonry. Many of the poems of the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns (who was a Freemason) mention the working and activity in Freemasons Lodges. Writing with great passion of the love that each Mason has for his brother, he comments, “May secrecy resound by the mystical bound, and brotherly love at the centre” (Barke 1991: 664)

Sir Walter Scott was the most successful British novelist of his day. In two of his novels (Ivanhoe and The Talisman) the Knights Templars are featured. In 1823 he was offered the Grand Mastership of the Masonic Knights Templar in Scotland, but declined due to ill health (*A list of other famous authors and historic persons can be found in appendix 4.*)

Religious songs that were once obviously Christian can be found in the documentation used in the opening and closing of Lodges. Hymn's (odes) in Freemason's Lodges, such as 'Hail eternal by whose aid' 'All people that on earth do dwell', and a hymn famous among Masons 'Abide with me'

One of the odes sung when closing a Lodge finished with the words:

Fair virtue and friendship, religion and love  
The motives of this noble science still prove;  
Tis the key and the lock of Christ'anity's rule (Whymper 1938: 28)

(The last line was changed in the 1940's to read "God's rule")

## **2.10 SUMMARY**

With the opportunity for development of individuals within the structures of Freemasonry, there is also the opportunity to develop one's self-esteem, to learn from others how to develop one's own intellect. This is done in a safe environment of care and compassion, which should enable individuals to learn to trust each other. In South Africa there are many people who have not had the opportunity to mix with people from different economic and culture groups. Freemasonry offers a way forward for Christian men within the Lodges to offer a basis for dialogue and enrichment, and in giving also learning from people from other religious and ethnic groups.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **FREEMASONRY AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Freemasonry has attempted (with various levels of success) over the past two centuries to include all men from all faith groups who have an interest in the development of Masonic principals and ethics. Freemasonry has only one requirement that being that any prospective candidate professes faith in a Supreme Being or 'The Great Architect of The Universe' as was part of the formulation of the old Masons Charge. Even in the day's of Operative Masons (those who practiced stonemasonry as tradesmen, in the building of structures), it was common practice to employ craftsmen who were not Christian, giving them the opportunity to develop their craft and be part of a respected group of individuals within that community. After this there was the introduction of Speculative Masons, (those individuals who are not tradesmen, but rather use the symbols of the tradesman as a guide to their ethics in life) which led to the establishment of the Grand Lodge in 1717 (For English Freemasonry).

With the establishment of Grand Lodge there was a conformity within Freemasonry on an international level. This enabled Freemasons to find companionship wherever they would travel and they were assured of fellowship with like thinking individuals. It was evident that Freemasonry touched all aspects of a Masons life, both in the care of the individual Mason and support when required, through to care for children and widows of Masons.

### 3.2 UNIVERSALISM IN FREEMASONRY

The idea that Freemasonry fosters Universalism is based on a relatively modern aspect of Freemasonry, propagated by those who see Masonry as a true embracing body of all individuals, no matter what faith group they come from. Many modern Freemasons' Lodges have changed the terminology used regarding the religious requirements of a proposed candidate. The new rules for membership have been changed from the need to believe 'The' Great Architect of the Universe, to a requirement to believe in a Supreme Being. The motivation for this is not based on the belief that there should be a great mixing pot of religions, but rather as pointed out by Faivre and Needleman (1992:274) "Universalism should be reached through specific understanding of specific traditions"

There will always be those who will see the greater mystical aspects within Freemasonry and look toward the deeper, some believe esoteric, meaning of the rituals. This can be found within the ancient rituals and structures of the Masonic Craft. It is however, believed that with greater participation and understanding of the practice of Freemasonry individuals gain a greater foundation to their own faith, and are enriched with an understanding of others. The organisation, 'Let Us Reason Ministries' in an article entitled, *The influence of Universalism on Society and Church* (2002:2) quoted former South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

"He gave a speech on the "Christian" view of God. In a press conference prior to his speech at OSU, Tutu urged leaders of all religions to work together in order to find a new image of God. "No religion can claim to have the whole truth about the mystery [of faith] he said. The Associated Press said Tutu "urged Christians to embrace other faiths"

Desmond Tutu is expressing a view which has been expressed by Freemasons for generations, and it is for this very reason many church organisations have castigated Freemasonry.

Much of the text used by today's Freemasons has been developed from the early fifteenth century, through to the middle of the eighteenth century. This was recognised as a turbulent time within the whole of society, and in particular for the Christian Church. This was a period of Protestant Reformation, Catholic Reformation, Scholasticism and Revolution (industrial and social). The working and rituals developed in Freemasonry occurred during this period of turmoil and vast change within society, and still express much of the history of that period, when individuals joined together in an attempt to establish stability within their own environment, outside of the organised (or often disorganised) church. It was this that brought a greater participation by all groups within society, bringing more sense to one's own faith and an understanding of others, and also creating an environment where individuals from different social backgrounds could communicate on the same level, not (to use a modern term).to' level the playing field', but rather to ensure that all could get on the field in the first place.

### **3.3. FREEMASONRY AND ESOTERIC TRADITIONS**

During the seventeenth century there were many individuals who became frustrated with the effects of the Reformation, and then the Counter Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church. They certainly found their own faith had become tested and the foundations of

their beliefs had been destabilised. This in turn led some to search for a stronger foundation for their faith. In their search they rejected the recent past history of the church and turned to the distant past in a search for understanding and knowledge of life and their purpose for being, along with the rest of humanity. This search took them to research for what had become lost in the esoteric religions of ancient Egypt, where it was believed that a society was found that had a true knowledge of creation that had passed down through the generations, later being influenced by Greek Platonic and Stoic philosophy, and leading to the ultimate, divine revelation of God in Jesus Christ. It was believed that through the development and understanding of this lost religion one could once again unite humanity in one faith. It was hoped that this would give humanity the opportunity to develop its spiritual quest, distancing oneself from the natural world and moving closer to the spiritual world and thus gaining knowledge of the creator of all things. Stevenson (1990:83) wrote that:

The supposed magical mystery religion of the Egyptians was linked to Christianity and made compatible with it by the fact that it was herald to a certain prophecy of the coming of Christ and parallels with Christianity. This made it acceptable as an imperfect forerunner of the true faith.

Thus to find the truth of the Christian faith one would first need to investigate the ‘herald’ to understand the fulfilment of the prophecy.

For others the Egyptian religion was in fact the true religion and Christianity a corruption of it. However, the reasoning behind both arguments was that it would give the individual the opportunity they sought to turn their backs on established religious dogma, turning to

an intense personalised religion and hopefully finding a way to bring religious conflict to an end.

This new religion, it was believed, would bring humanity back to its spiritual purpose, which is to become one with the Creator. This period of enlightenment and spiritual rebirth of mankind coincided with the development of groups that became known as secret societies. The Masonic ‘secret societies’ of Scotland was formed within the great esoteric hermetic movement that was spreading across the whole of Europe. There is no doubt that a link can be found between the development of this structured search for new knowledge, and the development of Freemasonry in Scotland. Many of the rituals within the structures of Freemasonry refer to a search for a lost secret, which when found, would give the Mason spiritual enlightenment.

However, as individual Christian Masons regained their trust in the established Church, and the Church structures, they developed within this newly enlightened and enriched Church community. This did not mean that Freemasons had turned to worshipping Isis or become worshipers of the sun god Ra, but rather that the Freemasons of the seventeenth and eighteenth century had investigated their Christian roots with a fresh perspective and in accordance with the spirit of the time.

In the Acts of the Apostles we witness a coming together of different cultures and faith groups. On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Christ Jesus, the apostle Peter, and the others who were touched by the Holy Spirit, spoke to all

the community, the miracle was not that they spoke in different tongues, but rather that they all heard in their own language. “ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue” (Acts 2:6) “and all that believed were together, and had all things in common” (Acts 2:44)

The Freemasons hoped that all would be able to share in the blessing given by God to humanity, not just a select few, and it is this coming together of the first Christian Church, and the need to care for others which formed the basic principals of Freemasonry. It offered a message of hope and good will that did not exclude anyone based on race, language or religion.

As is witnessed in the Acts of the Apostles, the first Christian communities accepted other people and their different cultures, which enabled them to join together and strengthen the Church.

In the early seventeenth century, when the Church was experiencing division and internal conflict, there was also much suffering, as religious factions fought to establish their rights over territories and people, which led many individuals to meet in secret to discuss their faith and their philosophy on life. A pattern developed as people gained new freedom to express their own thoughts and feelings, in that rapidly changing society. If the Church appeared to fail the community, then the natural instinct was for people to go on their own quest to draw closer to the Creator of all things, and with this attempt to bring unity within society. This may have appeared as anti-Church or even anti-Christian by the established

authorities, but it was this reaction and search for different ways for individuals to express their faith that was encouraged by the earlier Protestant Reformation and an input into the Christian church from those such as John Calvin, Martin Luther and the great Roman Catholic Humanist, Erasmus.

One could say that we are facing a similar climate in our own time, as the systems of the world start to blend into one; there is a need to bring together different groups of people. Globalisation is a fact of life, and we are witnessing a mergence of cultures. To ensure that the majority of people are not disregarded and become disenfranchised in this globalisation process, individuals will look for a deeper meaning to their own lives, not only seeking for a voice in the commercial development of their environment, but for a greater understanding of where they fit into a world society and how their faith and beliefs can have an impact on the changes within society. Although one recognises the movement of socio-political structure and the need for global care for all nations, this does not mean that people must lose their identity. One could say that we are experiencing a similar reaction now to the development of the Christian Church through the protection of the 'Pax Romana'. The peace of the Roman Empire enabled the apostles to take the good news to other nations. Paul was protected throughout his journeys by occupational forces.

The same was true of the early colonialists who came and brought with them the 'Goodnews' of the Christian Gospel to South Africa. Both systems were not necessarily good in themselves, as both could be seen as occupation forces suppressing nations, yet

even in this God ‘hitches a ride’ to bring a message of hope and to inform nations of His existence in their lives.

In our modern society as individuals search for their personal role in life, and for a deeper understanding of their faith, once again many feel that the established church has failed them. The traditional churches stand empty as people search for comfort in their lives and the Church has in many ways failed the community. Individuals are turning away from the Church, but not necessarily their faith, and they are searching for fulfilment, as before, by turning to the ancient past for answers.

In South Africa, as people search they will look back on ancient tradition, tribal genealogy and stories passed down through the generations, and with new insights they will look for God’s hand in the process and development of their culture. Again this is not a rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, but rather finding where Jesus fits into the vast jigsaw of their lives. In understanding their roots and their faith development one can witness that Jesus is the centre, but it must be their own past and not one imposed on them from a foreign land and by a foreign culture.

Over the centuries Freemasonry has been associated with a variety of different groups and organisations, some truthful in their context, many a flight of fancy and vivid imagination, stirring the imaginations of a curious society. Often the stories told about Freemasonry are developed and woven into the Christian faith and then reported to be the cause of many schisms within the Church. Bishop Patrick Moran (1823 – 1895) believed that Freemasons

were in league with government bodies and the Protestant church claiming that they were working against Catholic mission work he said:

“The withholding of state aid was an extension of the ‘Penal laws which Protestants had long imposed on Irish Catholics, while secular education and the increasing role of the State in society was part of a worldwide conspiracy against the church and Christianity itself, Behind this conspiracy, he said, was a malevolent chain of command reaching back through the Freemasons and the ‘Jews’ to the ‘power of darkness’. The order (i.e. Persecution) has gone out from one end of the world to the other. Free, compulsory and secular education is the war cry of the great army that is marshalling in posts against Heaven. For in the minds of the men who originated it secular education has for its sole objective the destruction of Christianity and in the first place an indispensable means to the end, the destruction of the Catholic Church. The 1877 Act was the Freemason’s programme, and the Freemasons in this country were the dupes of those on the continent” (www.geocities.com: 2002)

The encouragement of free education was seen as the work of Freemasons who wanted to take control of education away from religious organisation. This alone was justification to brand Freemasonry as an evil force within society. Mather and Nichols (1995:35,36) Give brief statements from various church organisations regarding their view on Freemasons within the church. Their opening statements are from the Roman Catholic Church claiming that they have banned association with Freemasonry based on the principal that,

Freemasonry embraces all the characteristics of a distinct non-Christian religion. The Pantheism of Freemasonry proudly ignores the redemption of mankind, heavenly grace, the sacraments and eternal happiness. It practices blatant racisms.

None of the statements would be supported by Freemasons, who clearly have a firm belief in a Supreme Being and an afterlife with that Supreme Being, ‘The Great Architect of the Universe. As they do not support one religious organisation they would not comment on the sacraments of any religious organisation. There is no proof that the organisation of

Freemasonry supports any racist dogma within its organisation. Further in the report the Lutheran church is quoted as saying that,

“Masonry conducts worship services, has prayers, conducts funeral, and therefore insists that Freemasonry is a religion”

George Grobblar, a leading Freemason in South Africa pointed out during an interview with him that all Freemason’s services are led by an authorised minister of religion of a particular denomination, and not by individual Freemasons. The prayers in the Lodge are based on the work of the Lodge and are not of any particular religious organisation.

The Christian Reformed Church denounces Freemasonry for its denial that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. The fact that Freemasons do not support any faith group against the other could be interpreted that they will not give exclusivity to any faith, including Christianity.

The Salvation Army opposes Freemasonry on the grounds that;

“the name of Jesus is not given exclusive pre-eminence in religious ceremonies or services, and the place where Jesus Christ is not allowed, is no place for any Salvation Army officer”

The list gives other statements from other church groups, all pointing to the assumption that Freemasonry is anti-Christian. However for it to be specifically pro-Christian would be against its own philosophy of being all embracing. If there is a funeral service for a Christian Freemason then Lodge members will go to a Christian service, and with other Freemasons pray and worship in the name of Jesus. However, these same Freemasons would go to a service at a Mosque and pray in the name of Allah. They would not

explicitly support any particular faith, but would rather embrace the individual Mason and giving support to them and their family in times of need.

Freemasonry has been linked to esoteric medieval cults, Gnostic beliefs, and the French Cathars who were thought to be eliminated when 15,000 were killed in a Roman Catholic Crusade led against them in the thirteenth century:

They had earlier been excommunicated at the council of Verona by Pope Lucius 111 (1181 – 1185) in his bull *Ad abolendam*, a blanket condemnation of heresy. (Walker 1986:306).

Walker (1986:305) also highlights one aspect of the Cathars that could be seen as something that would appeal to the ethos of Freemasonry claiming that; “The chief appeal of the Cathar religion, in any case, was moral and ethical, rather than doctrinal and intellectual,”

The famous Knights Templar and the Rosicrucian organisation are also linked to many Masonic groups. To some extent they are all included within the structures of Freemasonry, for the body of Freemasonry is an organisation in a search of knowledge. It is not stagnant, but an evolving organisation, which is constantly changing and maturing in an ever changing world. It is within this structure that those within various cultural and racial groups will find established dynamic structures for research and communication at many levels within society.

### 3.3.1. Kindred souls together

Freemasonry, in theory, is colour blind, for it sees beyond the individual into the individual's kindred soul. As much as it encourages individualism, it also recognises the need for a like-thinking group of individuals to unite. It is taught that no individual can speak on behalf of Freemasonry, as it will always speak for itself with one voice, "a united soul" claims Waite, "In the Spirit of God and the Spiritual buildings of the House of God" (Waite 1996:249). A principle Freemasons believe in goes back to creation, where through time each individual born has an effect on all of creation; thus for one individual to care for another, they must not only care for themselves but the whole of God's creation, all souls created by God. When this level of understanding of each individual is recognised and achieved, (and not all Freemasons achieve this level of understanding) then other individuals will be uplifted and start to see that there is no reward in selfishness and self-seeking, for this destroys the individual and society as a whole. This mystic reaching out is described by Gerson (in Waite 1996:213) as "an extension of the soul in God by the desire of love".

Freemasonry has many of its foundations rooted in the teaching of the early Church Fathers, those such as Saint Anthony, Chrysostom and John of The Cross, or in modern times from the Mahatma Gandhi and others from other faith groups who have sought a way to bring human beings into an environment of understanding of the Divine Creator's love for all people. The meditative form of teaching of the early church Fathers and the sense of a wider understanding of our faith and the Message of Jesus Christ must lead us

to a greater understanding of other people. Jacques Dupuis (1989:43) expresses the ethics of Gandhi saying,

Mahatma Gandhi's ethic model of Jesus permits him to see, in the Jesus of the Sermon of the Mount, the perfect symbol of non- violence. In this sense Jesus is a manifestation of the truth that is God. Whether or not Jesus is a manifestation of God is a meaningless question here.

This principle of finding the wider context of Jesus Christ's contribution to the complexity of humanity and the 'divine idea' which comes alive in him is supported by Freemasons, but not to the exclusion of other faith groups and their revelation of God.

Max Heindler of the Rosicrucian Fellowship describes the giving of one's self as the spiritual quest of the individual Spirituality;

“does not consist of emotionalism but a radical system of life, directed by a heart felt understanding of the purpose of existence and the faith that does not manifest in works is dead” (Heindler s.a.: 89)

It is this practical system of life that is reflected through Freemasonry, a system of life that endeavours to bring peace and harmony to the community in which it belongs.

### **3.4. FREEMASONRY AND NON CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

As society developed, so did Freemasonry and it became evident to many that Freemasonry was not just an exclusive club for Christian men to have fellowship together and practice philanthropy, but rather a place where like-minded men could gather and in some small way have some effect on the deteriorating moral state of the society in which they lived. This then would include all that lived within that society, with one provision

that those who wished to seek admission had a belief in an all-powerful creator, “The Great Architect of the Universe”. Freemasonry was seen as a secular fraternal society that requires belief in a Supreme Being as its principal qualification of membership; and is dedicated to the practice of tolerance, respect and the understanding of others, it was never perceived as a religion in its own right. This opened the doors to many men who came from other faiths, which, among others included men from influential Jewish communities (to the irritation of those who supported the Anti Semitic movement of the time). Many of the attacks upon Freemasonry were racially based, on the unfounded belief that Freemasonry was controlled by Jewish commercial and political interests set to take over the world.

Under the assumed name of ‘Inquire Within’ a critic of Freemasonry, launched a scathing attack upon Freemasonry and Jewish people in general (Within 1972:20). In his book ‘Light-bearers of darkness’ he refers to ‘Cabalistic Jews’, whose main aim he claimed, was world domination, and thus Freemasonry’s main purpose was to stimulate world revolt.

Within (1972: 21) claims,

the present revolution is the actual end. It is the consummation, by a formidable convergence of efforts made everywhere and at the same time, of a permanent conspiracy, which failed, was taken up again, and pursued with a terrible tenacity, and with ever increasing skill gained through long centuries of experience. Their aim for ever inaccessible would be the final domination of all peoples by the god-people, all esoteric religions having been but ethnological forms of the Cabala, transitory forms which vanquishing Judaism must get rid of. The sole force of Jewish cohesion lies in the submission of its scattered communities to the religious supremacy of a Patriarchate, whose social seat constantly changed, remains unknown to the profane. The Jew looks upon himself as the son of humanity, the male, opposed to which the

other peoples are but the female, manifesting and assuring the coming of the Messianic era.

The conspiracy of world domination was organised as Within put it, “Oriented by Jewry” was orchestrated in and through Freemasonry and the various Lodges. However, even with the animosity found within the political and religious world, Freemasonry was later to be found within Muslim and Hindu communities, and many distinguished supporters of Freemasonry have expressed very different views in their writing. Sir Walter Scott (1771 – 1885) said:

*“It is the secret sympathy  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
That heart to heart and mind to mind  
In body and soul. can find.”*

And Matthew Prior (1664 – 1721) wrote these words of Freemasonry,

*“It is like the ladder of Jacobs dream  
Its foot on earth, its heights above the skies.  
Diffused in its virtues, boundless in its power,  
‘Tis public health and universal care,  
Of heavenly manna, ‘tis a second feast,  
A nations food, and all to every taste.”* (Beha 1962:46)

The words, “A nations food, and all to every taste” would indicate that Freemasonry as always sought to bring individuals together, feeding them on a moral structure that would be acceptable to every society.

Rene Guenon (1886 – 1951) had great influence both in Freemasonry and the religious community of his day he encouraged interest in Eastern Religions, it was said:

That many Masons who looked towards the East to find the meaning of Masonry referred to him. This is due to the fact that Guenon founded his doctrine of tradition and initiation on the meditations of the ‘Vendata’ and in many incidences interpreted Masonic symbols in the light of Eastern teaching (Faivre et al 1992:273).

This ties in with the fact that in South African Freemasonry today the place of the Master of the Lodge is always in the East of the building.

Freemasonry is said to lead to a greater understanding of fellow human beings in other religious contexts. Faivre and Needleman (1992:276) claim that the way the basic principles deal with differences of religion suggest an underlying belief in a transcendental truth of which the various religions would be different expressions in different historical and cultural contexts, an expression which will bring all individuals together in a collective understanding of their creator.

There were actions taking place that were really symbolic of the age; the eighteenth century was indeed an age of revolution from within all aspects of society, not just on the political front, rather a revolution within the thinking of the whole of humanity. This, like all change, created fear; fear of the unknown, fear of losing an established way of life, fear of losing position and power, and with fear comes reaction. The reaction towards Freemasonry was particularly harsh because of its perceived clandestine activities. What had first been embraced and often encouraged by the main body of the Christian community was to be rejected with acidic vigor. This organization that had embraced all of humanity as God's children had been branded as being a satanic organization, one that should be avoided by all Christian men.

In spite of this reaction early settlers took Freemasonry from Scotland, England, Ireland and the Netherlands to many other parts of the world. In South Africa the initial influence

was from Dutch and Scottish Lodges, established by businessmen, traders and prospectors in Cape Town. The influence was later to spread inland as communities developed there.

Freemasonry was also spread through times of war, where it was found that Freemasons would give comfort to prisoners of war and groups from different ethnic backgrounds. For they could gather together with like thinking men from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds expressing a love for humanity and their Creator, finding common ground and not offending or judging each other.

Rudyard Kipling's poem 'Mother Lodge' paints a picture of the attitude of Freemasons during wartime duty in India; he speaks warmly of mixed groups of race, station and rank:

*“There was Rundle Station Master,  
An' Beasley of the rail  
An' Ackman, Commo-sariate  
An' Donkin O the jail;  
An' Blake, conductor sergeant,  
Our master twice was 'e,  
With 'im that kept the Europe-shop,  
Old framjee Eduljee*

*Outside-“Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam”  
Inside-“Brother,” an' it doesn't do no harm.  
We met upon the level an' we parted on the square.  
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother Lodge out there.*

*We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,  
An' Saul the Aden Jew,  
An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman  
Of the Surrey office too;  
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,  
An' Amir singh the Sikh,*

*An' Castro from fittin' sheds  
The Roman Catholic.*

This attitude towards fellow men was not new to Freemasonry. What was new however was the embracing of all other men in particular in a war torn community based in India. Kipling expressed the welcome offered to all groups, which were to be found within Freemasonry as a place where one could belong and share with those of other faiths, without compromising one's own beliefs.

### **3.5. RACIAL ISSUES**

Freemasonry the world over was, and to a great extent still is, the domain of white males. The only time that other racial groups came into contact with Freemasonry was in times of conflict, or colonisation. During these times some non-white males would be invited to become members. However as Freemasons reflected the society they belonged to, not all members welcomed, what was seen as an intrusion by other ethnic or racial groups. For instance, Albert Pike a famous Masonic historian stated that he would renounce masonry if he were requested to recognise a black Mason as his brother. (South Africa was an area where different race groups could not meet together. One of the many cruelties of the apartheid system was that it prevented groups from travelling and meeting with others thus Freemasonry within South Africa is still dominated by white male).

This has impeded the benefit Freemasonry could have been to the religious, social and ethical structures of a developing society. With the influence of Freemasonry and the teaching of care and support of fellow human beings this could have been reflected across

the whole of society, assisting the development of the vast human resource available in South Africa, not only bringing economic and financial benefit to the country as a whole, but also enriching all groups who could have learned so much from each other. In many ways Freemasonry, and therefore Freemasons in South Africa, failed to maintain their own ethos of brotherly love and care, which, as they say, is open to all.

With the barriers being removed, since the 1990's, with new government strategies and the introduction of freedom of movement, there is no excuse for segregation and suppression, and there is an opportunity for Freemasons to assist in the development of individuals who have been previously disadvantaged in society. It is hoped that now that there is an opportunity to share the foundations of Masonic philosophy with others, that this will be part of the growing together of communities in this vast, richly diverse and developing country. However the separation of groups was not just an issue in South Africa.

As early as 1786 it is recorded that a Muslim brother complained to the Grand Orient of France, that a Lodge in Nantes had refused to receive him as a visitor. This was responded to by giving the brother a certificate of authority enabling him to enter any lodge. (Faivre et al 1992:269). The Grand Orient also withdrew the need for the candidate to take a vow on a holy book and replaced this with the Lodge's constitution. This was to open the Lodge for a person from any background to join the Lodge. This was to result in other established Freemason's Lodges withdrawing recognition of The Grand Orient. (The Grand Orient Lodge will be commented on below)

Racial and religious barriers have been a destructive influence within society for many generations, and Freemasonry as an organisation has also been guilty over the years of exclusivity. However, it is the platform and structures within Freemasonry, and the moral ethic that is offered with traditional Freemasonry, and the teaching that offers tremendous opportunities for a basis of reconciliation. Although many of the principles of Freemasonry were not adhered to by its members that does not undermine the fact that there are opportunities open within the structures of Lodges spread throughout South Africa. Within these infrastructures are the means to assist and encourage people from all racial and ethnic groups. There are few organisations that can offer a greater opportunity for individuals to meet in groups, even in the smallest of communities, giving all groups the benefit of enrichment and understanding regarding the diversity of culture and history within a multi-cultured society.

People within other African countries have done this with various levels of success. There have been visits from other Freemasons from Guyana, Kenya, and the Island of Mauritius where over 90% of the Lodge members are non-white. This has helped break down many of the racial barriers feared by many, and has brought a new dimension to the infrastructure of Freemasonry in the African continent. With the successful development of Freemasonry in other African countries, and the established network of Lodges in South Africa, there is a new dimension added to the influence Freemasonry could have, that of being a bridge-builder between other countries and giving many individuals a common basis when communicating with each other.

### 3.6. FREEMASONRY IN LIFE AND DEATH

Freemasons are taught that God (The Great Architect of The Universe) is active in all aspects and activities of an individual's life, and in life a person can prepare himself for death and the ultimate unity with their Creator. It is clear from all the Degrees, that there is a path to follow, and teaching of a way of life that prepares an individual for a final meeting with, as is described in the Emulation Ritual, a meeting with "The worlds Great Architect, who lives and reigns for ever" (Emulation Ritual 1995)

In the mid 1970s Lawrence E Kynett the then Past Master of the Emulation Lodge 225 in America developed (under their authority) what he called a 'Blue Lodge service'. This service is based on a Christian church service, but can be adapted for a Mason from any other religious background. It is designed to show respect for the passing brother and comfort to his family:

We are taught that in every contingency of life, we should first make application to The Great Author and Source of life, therefore, in this our great sorrow, let us remember that we have a Heavenly Father who has directed us to look to Him in every time of need (Kynett, 1995:1).

This opening statement is then followed with a time of prayer, which is directed towards the deceased Mason's family. Indicating to them the firm belief that he has gone on to a greater place and that The Holy Spirit will comfort the family in their time of sorrow.

The Masonic funeral service has a two-fold purpose. The first is to make a public witness that Freemasons have a firm belief in the afterlife and God's care for all of His creation in

life and death. Second, to give all those close to the deceased the opportunity to honor his memory and bring comfort to his family, assuring them that he was loved by those who knew him and he would be cared for by The Great Architect of all things, whom he has now joined in 'the Grand Lodge' above.

During a Masonic funeral service the congregation is told that the apron worn at Lodge meetings by Masons symbolises innocence. The whiteness of the apron represents the belief of the purity of the soul that is a gift from our heavenly Father. This is to show that although we may be outwardly tarnished, God sees in all of us the things He has created, which are holy and pure. This symbolism shows that the outward appearance of a person is not what God seeks for the being, but rather the soul of the person. God's love goes beyond our ethnic, racial religious grouping, to the God likeness by which we are created.

In South Africa many of the traditional Protestant mainline churches still permit Freemasons to hold Masonic funeral services, (or funeral services that permit the use of Masonic terminology) and there are still many ministers of religion who are members of Freemasonry, who hold services for brethren from all religious backgrounds, no matter what their race.

### **3.7. SUMMARY**

It is evident that Freemasonry touches a wide spectrum of issues, and has a foundation for further development, both within its own structures and collectively within society as a

whole. The opening up of Freemasons' Lodges within South Africa will give support to the growing need for a cross cultural community. It is not just the fact that Freemasonry has the infrastructure; there is also an ethos within Masonry that would be of benefit to a society which requires an unbiased body to assist in a healing process, one that holds dear faith in God and the love of humanity. As Freemasonry goes beyond the bounds of religious bigotry and shares a deeper understanding of God's creation, it can, if permitted, impact greatly on a developing society, in religious, social and commercial spheres.

## CHAPTER 4

### INVESTIGATIONS OF FREEMASONRY

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

Freemasonry has been investigated by State organisations and Church bodies from many different denominations. The investigations by governments have often been at the insistence of religious organisations, or in times of unrest, when all organisations are investigated to assess their loyalty to the state. Many of the investigations from religious groups have started with the assumption that Freemasonry is 'guilty' of some act against the established church, and is an organisation that is in some way in league with an anti-Christian organisation, with many of the investigations making assumptions before the investigation begins.

There is an assumed guilt and many of the investigators act as prosecutor, searching for evidence to convict, and in doing so ignore all the evidence that may be to the contrary. Investigations by the Roman Catholic Church resulted in Papal Bulls against Freemasonry, many of the established Protestant Churches in South Africa have published articles against Freemasonry and warned their church members against joining and in many cases expelling Freemasons from church membership.

It is the intention in this chapter to look at some of the investigations in South Africa and in the wider context of social, ethnic and gender inclusion, and the findings, showing that

even in this biased atmosphere Freemasonry still proves to hold support from many within the established Christian Church, and that further investigation is encouraged to look at the religious aspects of Freemasonry which have led to the claim that Freemasonry is a religion itself, which is a direct threat to the Christian Church.

## 4.2 INVESTIGATIONS

During 1965 there were concerns raised in South Africa regarding secret organisations, in particular Freemasonry. The concern was voiced that Freemasons were actively involved in politics and that Freemasons in general were antagonistic towards established church organisations. An investigation was carried out that found that Freemasonry was concerned with the up-liftment of society. It was reported that, “it is clear, that true Freemasonry is concerned only with man and his spiritual and moral up-liftment” (Commission Report 1965.7). Regarding religious criticism the report concludes that there is a religious footing but not a particular religious ethos. The order itself asserts that, although Freemasonry has a religious foundation and is a “*Handmaid to religion*” it is not itself a religion. As this “handmaid”, or servant to religion Freemasonry encourages its members to continue in their faith and their particular worship. Giving a stronger sense of the necessity to support each other and to give to all that are less fortunate to oneself.

An investigation by the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in the mid 1980’s did not denounce Freemasonry as an organisation; it came to no final conclusion regarding church members belonging to any particular Lodge. At the General Assembly meeting in 1985

where this was debated, it was placed on record that the church recommended that ordained ministers of the denomination not belong to any organisation that could cause dissent within the denomination. This would include Freemasonry.

A government 'Commission of Enquiry into secret organisations' published by the South African government in 1965 investigated the political and religious aspects of Freemasonry. In section 93 of this publication, which was presented to the State President, the subject of Freemasonry and religion was discussed. In a memorandum to the Commission it was reported that:

it was alleged that the religious activities of Freemasonry in South Africa are subverting the religion and, subsequently, the morals, customs and way of life of the South African people, and that the religious activities of the Order therefore fall within the preview of a paragraph of the Commission's terms of reference, I was unable to agree with this claim and ruled out of order the evidence, or rather the arguments based on the ritual of Freemasonry, and other writings on the order, which were presented in support of the allegations made. If an enquiry into such an important aspect as religious aspects of Freemasonry had been envisaged, I should have expected an explicit directive to that effect, especially in view of the fact that freedom of belief and religion is recognised in the Republic, and that I must assume that the state would not wish to interfere with it (Commission Report 1965:12).

Although the initial investigation of Freemasonry was based on whether or not these, and other organisations, were a threat to the security of the country it soon became clear that the religious aspects could not be ignored. In section 94 of the report the author reports having read much of the anti-Masonic literature, and made it clear that many of these publications are not based on the Lodges in South Africa stating that:

A further consideration in this connection is that the ritual, allegory and symbols of Freemasonry are open to various interpretations, especially by those who are not Freemasons. This fact coupled with an inadequate knowledge of Freemasonry, has

in all probability also contributed greatly to the unfavourable criticism of the order down the years (Commission Report 1965:12).

#### 4.3 FREEMASONRY A RELIGION?

The question continues to be asked. “Is Freemasonry a religion?” It has all the trappings of a religion; there are foundations to argue that Freemasonry is a Gnostic religion, with its dual teachings on good and evil, and the teaching of a search of hidden knowledge. Webster’s third New International Dictionary’s definition of Religion on page twenty two, states that one of the definitions given for the term religion is:

A personal awareness or conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being or of supernatural powers or influences controlling one’s own, humanities or all natures destiny.

With this definition one can argue that Freemasonry is indeed a religion in the true sense of the word. However when one attempts to draw Masonry into religious argument it can not, for it has foundations in all, and none, for Freemasonry can not answer the question when asked to decide on the truth of an individual faith. A Muslim Freemason will recite the *Shahada*. *There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet*. A Jewish Freemason may believe in the teachings within his faith that to be truly Jewish is the belief in the one *True God* “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God the Lord is One (Deuteronomy 6:4)”. And a Christian Brother will find the message of The Great Architect through the teaching that the One *True God* is revealed to humanity in the Holy Bible and that Jesus Christ, God incarnate, revealed Himself as the only way to God. (John 10.1,14.6; Acts 4.12). And each of these believers can be a Freemason, and be free to maintain their

personal faith without prejudice being demonstrated towards them; this is one of the strengths in the fellowship found within Masonic Lodges. It has nothing to do with the supposed secrets of either recognition, or the ritual within the Lodge, but rather with the spirit within the individual and the sincerity of the teaching to love and care for fellow human beings. Of course there are going to be those who abuse the trust give and put in them, and they will attempt to manipulate and use Freemasonry to their own end, but this is true of any group. There are those within all groups who manipulate and abuse; the Christian church among others has a history of such abuse of power.

The basis of Freemasonry has always been a system, which accepts all men, and treats all as equal. The political and racial attitude prevailing within South Africa has prevented mixed racial groups meeting. However as has been the case throughout the centuries Freemasonry is a microcosmic environment of the whole of society and as society changes there is a change being witnessed within South African Masonry; this change is reflected by the introduction of many individuals from different racial groups. A sign for many within South Africa Freemasonry that there is now a true brotherhood of all the peoples of this society. And these men can come forward as equals within Freemasonry, knowing that they will have equal status with all other members, from the President and King, (literally, as through the ages Presidents and Kings have been Freemasons) to the labourer and poor man; all have in the past been given the same opportunities within Freemasonry.

#### **4.4 WOMEN IN FREEMASONRY**

The Commission also reports on the inclusion of women in Masonic organisations, refereeing to a less known organisation, 'The Eastern Star' although this organisation is not officially recognised by traditional Freemasonry, it does receive some support from individual Masons, and many of the women who belong to the organisation are related to active Freemasons.

There have been many moves over the centuries to establish women in Freemasonry, but as this fraternal order has always been recognised as a male institution it has been difficult to introduce women into Freemasonry. The separate women's Lodge which appears to have some recognition among Masons (that is The Eastern Star Lodge), one of which has been established for many years in Johannesburg, South Africa. However for many women who show an interest in Masonry this is seen as a patronising form of Masonry designed to pacify women who have a desire to become involved in Freemasonry.

In South Africa women are encouraged to support Freemasonry through their efforts in charity functions, support of their partners and in the daily activities of the Lodge. They do not meet with the men, and there is a difficult task ahead for all Freemasons as they consider bringing women into the Lodges. The exclusion of women is receiving more attention and it is a criticism that this exclusion could prevent Freemasonry from being a force of unity in society.

There are Lodges in The United States who not only admit women to the Lodge but also encourage family participation. This may be the future for Freemasonry in general, which would make it more acceptable as an institution with an ethic which values the family role in society. In England the number of women's Lodges are growing, and new membership is said to be outnumbering the amount of new men who are joining (British Daily Telegraph, July 1999). These Lodges still do not have the full recognition of the main line Masonic bodies. This tide of woman joining the lodge may change the attitude of the male institutions in the future, but as the present constitutions stand no women is permitted to join established Freemasonry.

There are reports of women in the past who have become members of Lodges, but this has been through default or necessity. A landlady of a tavern where Freemasons were known to meet took the initiative to drill two holes in a wall when Masons met as far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1770. The landlady, Mrs. Bell, discovered the 'secrets' and rituals of the Lodge.

The notice claimed that Mrs. Bell was the first women ever to obtain the secrets of Freemasonry and was prepared, for a modest fee, to make them known to all her sex. (Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects 1987. 102)

The case of Mrs. Bell is used by some Masons as a reason why women should not be allowed to enter Freemasonry, as other enterprising women may also offer to sell off their secrets. Women are excluded from Freemasonry even today, citing that they would not be able to maintain the secrets of the order.

On a more serious note, there is a reported case that one woman, Elizabeth St Ledger, who was threatened with death when she discovered her father meeting with a group at their home in 1710 and overheard the meeting. The penalty for such an act was death and even her own brother was said to have argued that she be put to death. However, those within the Lodge secured her silence by bringing her into the Lodge as a member.

There are some other stories of women coming into Freemasonry in various ways, but none of them official. Our modern society is attempting to right the situations of the past and have made moves to overcome the racial issues of the past correcting the imbalance. Freemasonry is a place where issues can be discussed and given a platform for resolving such diverse issues. It is clear that Freemasonry could also be a platform where gender issues could be discussed and many issues resolved. A platform which is so obviously the bastion of male society would signal a significant change if it were opened to women with equal status with an equal share in the input and development of Lodge activities.

#### **4.5 POPULAR LITERATURE ON FREEMASONRY**

In the past ten years there have been many new publications offering sensational evidence on the links between Freemasonry and the life of Jesus Christ., this is done through supposed links through organisations such as the Knights Templar. The attempts have been made with flimsy evidence and broad assumptions, to link Jesus to a particular group or family, evidence and assumptions, which created a mythical Jesus Christ who fits into the particular author's theories. The authors of *The Messianic legacy*, (Baigent et al) insist

that Jesus was not crucified but lived on and had children of his own. In the same publication they put another theory forward for consideration, that he did in fact die and the leadership of the church was taken over by his brother James, who became the real leader of the Nazarene community. Both of these hypotheses exclude any possibility of Jesus Christ being the divine revelation of God. There are very few individuals within Freemason who would give any credence to this publication, and there is no official Masonic support for the theories put forward. Yet many outside Freemasonry will use these publications as evidence of the anti-Christian sentiment of Freemasons in general.

There are also attempts to link Jesus and John the Baptist to the separatist Jewish Essenes community, developing a history and a life for Christ before his Biblical announcement and then beyond the Biblical record of his crucifixion, death and resurrection. Books such as 'The Second Messiah' written by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas (who claim to be Freemasons) attempt to take the reader on a mythical ride through history, with little supporting evidence or research of their supposed factual findings. Such findings which take the reader from the period of Jesus' activity to fourteenth century France where one witnesses the downfall of the Christian Knights Templar by the order of the French King Philip 1V, and the torture and murder of the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar Jacques De Molay, who was executed during the period of the fourteenth century Inquisition. Ultimately a group of Knights Templar escaped the persecution (taking scrolls which are believed to be from the Temple in Jerusalem) to find refuge in Scotland, direct descendants of this group are the Sinclair family of Scotland, who, it is claimed by Knight and Lomas, (1997: 55) are the direct descendants of Jesus Christ. The connection between

the Knights Templar and the Christian faith is further embroidered when Knight and Lomas quote the Masonic historian Arthur Waite:

Arthur Waite observed that there is a Masonic tradition that says that Jesus was schooled in special knowledge, and that he conferred initiation on his apostles and disciples, dividing them into several orders, and placing them under the direct authority of St John. The doctrine containing knowledge of the mystic and hierarchic initiations of Egypt, as transmitted by Christ, came into the keeping of Hugh de Payne, the first master of the New Temple, in 1118, who was then invested with apostolic and patriarchal powers, therefore becoming the lawful successor to Johannite Christianity (Knight and Lomas 1997:212).

If this comment is taken to its literal conclusion one can understand that the Church in Rome would react to such statements. This would indicate that within Freemasonry, through the order of the Knights Templar, there was a patriarchal power that proposed to take its line of authority from the apostle John which would be in opposition to the Patriarchal power of the authority from the apostle Peter, the source of the Papal authority.

To support their claim the authors systematically attempt to discredit any and all religious organisations. They attack the established Christian church and the basis of the Christian faith and Jesus Christ, who is diminished to no more than a leader of a cult or a civil-rights activist in Roman occupied Palestine. While claiming to be Freemasons they go to the opposite extreme of any Freemason, and demand a right to condemn all faith and belief in the divine revelation of God through Jesus Christ, an action totally contra to all Masonic principals and teachings. The only source from where they may find some support would be through the Grand Orient Lodge of France, and organisation which no longer has support from traditional Freemasons.

The vast majority of Masons who read this material recognise the fantasy of many of the claims, and the authors, although in many case claiming to be Freemasons do not necessarily express the view of Freemasons in general.

Freemasonry over the decades has been associated with every cult and sect imaginable, this is due to the over exaggerated stories about the inner workings of Masonic Lodges, and the fact that Masonic Lodges are not open for public observation opens Freemasons up to criticism. Yet those within Freemasonry say they are dedicated to God and Christian Freemasons dedicated to God through the revelation of Jesus Christ. David Stevenson describes a Freemasons feelings regard his faith when saying that it is as,

“being filled with an intense piety and sense of spiritual quest whereby man could seek to distance himself from the material world and becomes embraced with divine power and virtues” (Stevens 1990.83).

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

Although there are some clear points of criticism regarding Freemason’s exclusion of women, the fact is that many of the issues raised about Freemasons, their Lodges and activities have arisen largely through a lack of knowledge of the activities of Masons. This could have been overcome if Freemasons had been more open in their activities, giving greater access to activities within the Lodge. This may have prevented many of the accusations made against them. However, any serious investigation has always been met with support and openness from senior Lodge members.

The conclusion regarding Freemasons is founded on the in-depth reports of governments and churches over the past sixty years. There are no findings that would point to the organisation being a threat, or being evil in itself. The opposite is evident with the structures of Freemasonry, where it is clear that it offers the structure for a dynamic system of dialogue among people of various cultures. Further investigation of how these structures and the principles found within them can be used for the growth and development of others within a changing nation such as South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **A ROMAN CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO FREEMASONRY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Freemasonry was not outwardly criticised by the Roman Catholic Church until it was believed that the men who belong to Freemasonry may be outwardly critical of the church. The church authorities believed that they were the only body that could direct an individual's life and guide the thought processes of members of the church. There were many Roman Catholics involved in Freemasonry, but when the decision was made that Catholics should not belong to organized groups outside those provided by the church the response to Freemasonry was abrupt and violent.

#### **5.2 RESPONSE OF AUTHORITY**

The Roman Catholic Church responded to the Reformation with the Catholic Reformation, holding on to all that had gone before and rejecting outright any possibility of change. The counter Reformation was not designed to promote a change of the belief of the Roman Church, but rather to reiterate that the Roman Church was the only true church of God, established on earth through Jesus Christ, who in turn appointed Peter, to whom the leadership of the church claimed direct heritage in the form of the Pope or Vicar of Rome. In a forceful attempt to reject the changes encountered in the Reformation, Rome reasserted its authority on the Christian community, and in doing so the Roman Church

reacted against free thinking, which they perceived threatened the authority of the established hierarchy.

In reiterating their authority the Roman church adopted the doctrine that free associations of any kind were in themselves evil. Pope Pius IX had a hatred of anything that gave people an inner freedom. That included every action of society, what they said, what they wrote, and even what they thought. He was convinced that God had ordained him for one reason, that being to condemn and destroy any such freedom within society. (Haywood 1943:32) All non-church associations or societies were seen as a threat to the established church, thus any Roman Catholic who belonged to such society was commanded to leave the particular Lodge or face excommunication from the church. This later affected the Roman Catholics who were Freemasons. Large numbers of Roman Catholics attended the Lodges in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; the famous Catholic rebel Daniel O Connell was himself Worshipful Master of a Lodge in Dublin.

H.L. Haywood (1943: 29) commented on this when studying the link between Freemasonry and Roman Catholics, saying, that:

Among the very earliest of Lodges were many Roman Catholics; here and there where lodges composed wholly, or almost wholly, of brethren of that church and were called 'Roman Lodges'. The most famous of these Roman Catholic Masons was the orator and liberator, Daniel O'Connell who was made a Mason in Lodge No. 189, Dublin, 1n 1799, and became Worshipful Master in the following year.

Condemnation of free associations and in particular Freemasonry, was expressed in the Papal Bull of Pope Clement X11 in 1738. This Bull was entitled 'Condemnation of Freemasonry and all other secret societies'. There was a constant effort to prevent any

association with groups outside the influence of the Roman Church. In 1825 Pope Leo XII attacked Freemasonry, in particular what had become known as “Roman Lodges”. It was in Pope Leo’s Bull that Freemasonry was defined as a sect for the first time, a sect that was to be avoided at all cost.

There has been consecutive Bulls condemning Freemasonry within the Roman Catholic Church, and many of the legends and myths surrounding Freemasonry have come from authors who attempt to give support to this condemnation. It is agreed, and it has been discussed that there are organisations that take on the name of Freemasonry that can be branded as being anti-religious, and in particular anti Roman Catholic. However traditional Freemasonry established in South Africa is based on English, Scottish, Irish and Netherlandic Freemasonry which had its roots in the Christian Church, and has developed over the past century to include only those who have a belief in God.

Freemasonry has no grievance towards the Roman Catholic faith, its leadership or members, or any other faith, for to do this would be impossible for it has never stopped to proclaim its firm belief in the rights of all individuals for absolute freedom of opinion and equality among all.

It denies the right of one faith to *tolerate another*. To tolerate is to permit: and to permit is to refrain from prohibiting; and so a right to tolerate would imply a right to forbid. If there is a right to tolerate then every faith has it alike. One is no wiser in the eye of Masonry, superior to the other, nor can each tolerate the other (Haywood 1943:121).

That is the teaching expressed among Freemasons, that each individual is to believe and put his faith in a personal living God. Spirituality beyond the individual's personal interest, bringing all humanity together.

### **5.3 SEARCHING FOR A FAITH FOR ALL OF SOCIETY**

During the seventeenth century there were many individuals who became frustrated with the effects of the Reformation, and then the Counter Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church. The certainty of their faith had been disrupted and the foundations destabilised.

There was a search for a stronger foundation for their faith, and in their search they rejected the recent past and turned to the distant past in a search for knowledge and understanding of their own creation and purpose. This took them to the lost esoteric knowledge of the Egyptians, where it was believed that a society was found to have true knowledge which had been passed down through the generations and was influenced by Greek Platonic and stoic philosophy. It was believed that through the development of this lost religion one would once again unite humanity in one faith. It was believed that this would give humanity the opportunity to develop their spiritual quest distancing oneself from the natural world and move closer to the spiritual world and gain knowledge of our creator.

The supposed magical mystery religion of the Egyptians was linked to Christianity and made comparable with it by the fact that it was herald to certain prophecy of the coming of Christ and parallels with Christianity. This made it acceptable as an imperfect forerunner of the true faith (Stevenson 1990:83).

For others the Egyptian religion was in fact the true religion and Christianity a corruption of it. However, the reasoning behind both principles was that the individual could turn their backs on established religious dogma and turn to an intense personal religion within Hermeticism, and find a way to bring religious conflict to an end.

This new religion, it was believed, would bring humanity back to its spiritual purpose to become one with the creator. This enlightenment and spiritual rebirth of mankind coincided with the development of secret societies. The Masonic secret societies of Scotland developed just as the great esoteric hermetic movement was spreading across Europe. There is no doubt that a link can be found between the development of this structured search for new knowledge and the development of freemasonry in Scotland. Many of the Masonic rituals refer to a search of a lost secret which when found will give the mason spiritual enlightenment. However as the individuals within the Christian church reclaimed their trust in the church, masonry developed within this newly enlightened church community.

This does not mean that Freemasonry is now controlled by Isis worshipers and worshipers of the sun god Ra. But rather those Freemasons as members of the community also investigated their religious roots.

One could say that our modern society is reacting in the same way as this sixteenth century society, whereby the established church is believed to have failed the community, and individuals are attempting their own search for fulfilment in their religious quest.

Today many individuals look to the past, but again not to the recent past, but beyond the known established church to sources within Christianity which appears to appeal to those on a search for a deeper understanding of their own spirituality and the involvement of all of God's creation in the development of humanity.

Within the first Christian communities there was an acceptance of other peoples and their cultures, which enabled them to join together and strengthen the church. It was only in the early seventh and eighth centuries when the church divided, and the Roman Church established dominance, bringing with it suffering to those who would not conform. The pattern appears to be that if the church fails the people, then the people will go on their own quest to draw closer to the creator of all things, and attempt to bring unity within society. This may be seen as anti- church or even anti-Christian by the established bodies. But is this not the same reaction of the famous Reformers such as Calvin, Luther and the great Humanist, Erasmus, to name but a few.

#### **5.4 SUMMARY**

Established Church organisations throughout history have needed to maintain a level of control over their respective members, at times to care for the individual member's welfare, to ensure that the sheep do not stray from the faith. However there has also been a close link between Church and State organisations and much of the Church's authority has been through its influence on large numbers of people. As the numbers of church members decline, then any organisation which attempts to influence individuals will be seen as a

threat, one to be confronted at any cost. Freemasonry opened areas of opinion to people, to which they never previously had access. Meeting with individuals from different Christian groups and other faith groups may have broadened the mind of those individuals, but it was seen as a threat to the established church. If a group of men can meet and form a nation through the principal of Freemasonry, which is the case with America, then surely there is every possibility that Freemasonry can be a basis of support in any other developing nation?

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE JEWISH CONECTION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

There have been many groups associated with Freemasonry, yet none have been given more prominence in recent history than the Jewish groups within Masonic Lodges.

In London during the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth century many Jewish immigrants turned to Freemasonry for contact with like thinking business associates. They found within Freemasonry an acceptance of their way of life and a link to Christian society without prejudice towards their religious beliefs.

#### **6.2 ATTACKS ON JEWISH FREEMASONS**

Many authors who attack Freemasonry do so on the grounds that they are defending society against a Jewish world plot. The attacks are not on the principles of Freemasonry but rather the accusation that Freemasonry is a front for a takeover of world political institutions by Jewish leaders.

Attacks on Freemasonry by authors such as Within, (1972). Morgan, (1953) and others are a blatant attack on Jewish people. Within (1972: 10) quotes one Joseph de Maistre in support of his argument,

Joseph de Maistre who was, one knows, a Freemason of high grade, noted the influence exercised by Jews. In 1811, examining the cause of the French Revolution, in a letter written to his King from St Petersburg, he says: 'The power of this sect *oriented by Jewry*, to bewitch Governments, is one of the most terrible and most extraordinary phenomena that have been seen in the world.

Using the platform of a so called Christian defence against Freemasonry is no more than a racist attack on a community of people who were being tortured by society during the whole of the first half of the twentieth century. This hate campaigning against Jews was directed towards the place that they found refuge within society, Freemasonry. Therefore Freemasonry became the centre of secret societies aiming at world domination. From this came real organisations that did attempt to establish a world order like the Bavarian law Professor Adam Weishaupt's Illuminati, a group with no official links towards or within recognised Freemasonry.

### **6.3 ANTI-SEMITISM**

During the Second World War (1939-1945) anti-Semitic groups found an easy target in Freemasonry, and many men in Freemasons Lodges within Germany gave their lives rather than betray their fellow Masons. Bernard Ray, Nazi supporter and anti-Mason, who also supported the governments hatred for Jews was given the task of developing the propaganda machine against Freemasons and their links with Jews, and to show how jointly they were responsible for the breakdown of German society. Something that was feared and hated by such an evil regime must have had some good within its ranks, a good which the evil of the Nazi party feared so much that it destroyed the total structure of freemasonry within Germany.

#### **6.4 SUMMARY**

Many of the attacks on Freemasonry over the past two centuries have been aimed at the assumption that Freemasonry is a front for organisations that are plotting world domination. Many authors believe that this domination will be by Jewish organisations that control Freemasonry. As Freemasonry is an all embracing organisation there will be Jewish men within its membership, and many of these men will be influential business men, many who have joined for the fraternal friendship found within Freemasonry and a way to practice their philanthropic activities within society. There is no evidence that Lodges are controlled by any religious or cultural group and this is evident by those meeting together in the Lodge.

## CHAPTER 7

# CAN FREEMASONRY HELP CHRISTIANS WITH ISSUES SUCH AS TOLERANCE AND RACIAL HARMONY?

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The constitutions of Freemasonry are based on tolerance of individuals from differing ethnic and religious backgrounds, mainly formed during an era of intolerance and Christian uncertainty. The structured Masonic Rituals were formed and generally recognised in 1717. The King James Bible, held as the guiding light of the Protestant Church with the attitude of the time being reflected in the opening statement (still published today) in the King James Bible taken from the address to the king:

So that if, on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish Persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instrument to make God's holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be malign'd by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil.

This is the environment of intolerance that enabled Freemasonry to establish a following across the whole of Europe. There were and are, those within society who want to maintain a system of tolerance for all people. One Masonic scholar, the late Colin Dyer, developed a theory on the foundation of Freemasonry:

“The context of Dyer's argument is the religious and political turmoil of the seventeenth century, the period was one of growing intolerance in both politics and religion. No forum existed where men of different views could meet in harmony. Opinions became polarised and divisions over matters of belief were so acute that families, friendships, and eventually society itself were torn apart by the English

Civil War in 1642. Despite this there were still men who believed passionately in tolerance and the free exchange of views. They saw a need for an organisation in which men of widely differing opinions and beliefs could meet together in harmony and work to promote the ideal of tolerance in a troubled and fragmented world” (Hamil and Gilbert 1993.24)

This is the basis of the finding of a fraternal order that would not tolerate division based on religious and political bigotry, while continuing to stay firmly rooted in their belief in God and total commitment to their own loyalty of three greater principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. This system of tolerance was taught in a way that was a common practice in the seventeenth century, through allegory and symbols. This was to be a foundation of tolerance and building of character for the development of a better world, and the symbols and allegory used for developing men in this endeavour was the building of King Solomon’s Temple.

It is the basis of this tolerance and love within Freemasonry that should be investigated and developed further in the environment of South Africa, as a country in a period of dynamic change, with a history of intolerance, misunderstanding and at times a lack of trust. With a firm belief in God, and a willingness to embrace people with different views and opinions, the structures are available for a wider inclusion of all people in the development of a nation.

## **7.2 TOLERANCE AND HARMONY**

A minister of the Church of Scotland, Dr James Anderson, drew up the first book of Constitutions for Freemasons which was published in 1723. The details of the book were

based on Anderson's own Christian faith and ethics. Yet the principal did not exclude men from other beliefs. Anderson's constitution was adopted by the other Masonic groups, one of the first being the Masonic Grand Master of America, Benjamin Franklin. Later this became the basis of all constitutions throughout Freemasonry, including South Africa. Anderson's landmark document declared boldly:

that those of different religions should, within the Lodges companionable atmosphere, be able to associate and discuss new ideas. Leaving all men to their own religions to be good men and true.

For all of Freemasonry holds dear the principals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity offered for all men no matter where they are in the world.

The structure of Freemasonry is based on a relationship of harmony, one of the reasons that Masons are encouraged not to discuss particular religious beliefs, or political persuasions is for that very reason. The Masonic principal and ethic is based on the action of love and care for their fellow man and is shown by the actions they take towards each other and the community in general. The Masonic principle is that all members should strive to maintain a harmonious relationship, and when they meet it is in a state of unity and caring for others. With this principle in mind there is a true sense of comradeship among Lodge members, a true levelling of the playing field for the labourer and the executive, of all colours and creeds. Freemasonry accepts the people, not their particular religious teaching or politic bias, and in accepting the individual, there is then time to learn about that person. When people meet within a structure that does not intimidate they open up and express their feelings regarding their way of life and community in general, this can be called the communion of Freemasonry, a true bringing together for spiritual and

physical nourishment. In this way all members can express their care for each other in a way that does not offend or criticise their personal faith system.

Gordon Guthrie, a South African Freemason (who also professes a deep love of his Christian faith) and his wife Gertrude have run the St Luke's healing centre in Cape Town, for many years. Guthrie's passion for people is only surpassed by his expression of love for God. Within masonry and his religious circles he lives a life which is a witness to God and God's love. He lives a life expressed by his willingness to care for others, which is reflected through his Freemasonry and his Christian church activities. He lives a life that is a witness to the grace of God and God's love is shown through his actions:

I have come to a conclusion" he said, "that it is not a question of converting others to my religion, but inspiring them through the dynamic of my faith to find the true spirit of the Father" (Guthrie 1991:15).

His witness is practical and not condescending or critical of others, but rather a living faith within his sphere of influence. He is a Christian first and utmost, a Freemason seen by others as a 'man among men'. Guthrie claims that the true message of Jesus Christ has the power to unite God's people into one family, without a rejection of other faiths through arrogance or self-righteousness and smallness of vision.

### **7.3 A FREEMASON AND A CHRISTIAN**

The question has been asked, 'can a person who is a Freemason be a Christian?' Most Freemasons living in South Africa will say they are Christians, and that they are members

of one or other of the traditional mainline churches in their local community. These men want to belong to their local church and also actively participate in the church's activities. They are encouraged, through their Lodge membership, to maintain a relationship with their faith community. They are also encouraged to be active in promoting a family orientated way of life. This is reflected when a person indicates an interest in Freemasonry, as it would be normal practice to discuss the prospective membership with the proposed candidate's wife; if the candidate's wife objects then the person would not be permitted to enter the organisation. If a person had any conflict between their faith and Freemasonry he would be encouraged to rather reconsider rather than cause conflict within one's own church environment, keeping to the Masonic principle of harmony for the individual and the Lodge. Freemasonry does not teach that it can be in any way a substitute for church membership or personal religious beliefs, and from a Freemason's perspective he can belong to a local Lodge and maintain his faith without conflict with the other.

Many Freemasons attend annual Masonic church services as a witness to their faith, showing by their actions and way of life that they are a witness to the love of Jesus Christ. Freemasonry is not, as some have claimed, an organisation which believes in salvation by works, but rather practice the teaching of the apostle James in that faith without works does not profit the man. (James 2:14)

Since its official establishment Freemasonry has maintained a close relationship with the Christian Church. Church organisations initially encouraged membership and worked

closely with Freemasons and their organised structures. This is indicated by many of the names taken for Masonic Lodges over the past near three centuries. Names such as St Mary's Chapel (Number one Lodge in Edinburgh). (McArthur 1999). The Lodge of St John the Evangelist. St Luke, St Stephen, St Andrew, St James and St David's Lodge give a clear indication of the Christian involvement in the founding of Freemason's Lodges. Many of the references used in the literature presented in Freemason's Lodges are, unashamedly, taken from the Old and New Testament texts of The Holy Bible (The Volume of The Sacred Law). These references are used when building a Lodge, (both literally and physically when adding a new member to the building of the fellowship) and also reference to the actions a Freemason should take within their respective community. These references refer to God as the head of all things when building one's own life, "and have ye not read the scripture. The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the cornerstone" (Mark 2:10). "And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity these three; but the greatest of these is Charity" (1 Corinthians 13:13). The relevance of these particular texts is that they are also found in the literature for the introduction of members to Lodges, encouraging them to care for themselves as people, but also to recognise that they have a responsibility to their community, not only to talk about what should be done, but also follow the example of Jesus Christ and give of themselves for the good of others.

While encouraging men to live up to their Masonic principals, the Bishop of Croyden is reported to have said in the report to the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church. "Let it not be lip service but also with the service of your hearts." It is evident that for a Freemason to say that he is a Christian is a statement made by many Freemasons. They say it freely and

often with great pride, hoping that their faith and Christian way of life can be seen as a light for others. There is no conflict of interest perceived by members of Freemason's Lodges who are professing Christians. This said, there is a clear difference between this and a person who belongs to a Christian community standing up in that community and saying; 'As a Christian I am a Freemason'. Why? The answer to that can be found in the basic Masonic principal taught to all Freemasons, 'that it is well to maintain the peace rather than disharmony' even within one's church environment. Many Masons do not discuss their involvement in Freemasonry, not because they are being secretive, but rather because of the barrage of animosity generated in certain church circles against Freemasonry.

There is a fear generated in some church groups creating an atmosphere which has resulted in the situation, that if a person admits to being involved in Freemasonry it is tantamount to being in league with the devil himself. The growth of Charismatic independent church groups outside the mainline traditional churches has stimulated many attacks upon Freemasonry within the past two decades. Many of the accusations are made on misinterpretation of the facts, sensationalism, and lack of knowledge and often fabricated tales of events that have never been a part of Freemasonry. It is a poor reflection on many of these religious organisations that they have never attempted to develop dialogue with Masonic organisations. Rather they resort to attacking individuals with bizarre threatening behaviour and accusations of actions which would never have a place in any of the constituted Lodges in South Africa.

Much of the information taught by these church organisations, regarding Freemasonry, is a mixture of myth, and fabricated sensationalism, and because there is no attempt at honest dialogue with Masons, in an environment where both parties can gain an understanding, then many are left with the choice of either leaving the church or leaving Freemasonry, a decision that many find very difficult, yet are forced to make by the animosity found in some church organisations. Whatever these communities do not understand, and when the behaviour of others does not conform to their idea of society and the Creator, their rather simplistic answer is that these people or groups should be destroyed before they can influence others in society. Many church groups reject Freemasonry purely on the grounds that Freemasons are prepared to recognise men of other faith groups on an equal level. The very fact that a Freemason will not condemn another person's faith is in its self enough to condemn the whole of Freemasonry. These church groups are often seen to attack anything that does not conform to their personal interpretation of the Bible. They see a division in the world of good and evil and all things outside their interpretation is seen as evil and needs to be driven out of a persons life before they can have a true relationship with God. As Freemasonry is an all embracing organisation it may be seen as a disruptive system, which encourages other faiths to mix with Christian church members, yet in Freemasonry members are always left to interpret their faith in the way they feel brings truth to them. Freemasonry would see the attack on individuals as evil and unjust and a failure within society where rigid religiosity is used to manipulate an individual's life. Therefore, the answer given from many church organisations within South Africa, when asked the question; 'Can a person be a Freemason and a Christian' would be a resounding 'No!'

The argument that Freemasons are in league with anti-Christian organisations is absurd and unproven. Much of the critical literature is based on unproven statements and rumour often stemming from the totally anti-religious quasi-Masonic organisation of the Grand Orient Lodge of France, which has openly stated that it has no link with any faith, nor does it profess a belief in God. It must be said that Freemasons have done themselves much harm by their perceived secrecy in meetings. Much of the excellent work done in society by Masonic Charities has gone un-noticed mainly due to the anonymous actions of the organisation. There has been some attempt over the past five years to rectify the situation by being more open with the actions performed by Freemasons; hopefully this will stimulate future dialogue

It is obvious that to be a Freemason and a Christian could cause conflict, and an individual may be forced by circumstances he finds himself in, to make a choice. Those within Freemasonry welcome a Christian member within the Lodge. However, if this is to cause conflict for a person within their church or home environment, Lodge members will understand if a person felt compelled to leave on those grounds. When confronted with these options there are Christian Freemasons who leave their Lodge, but there are some who leave their respective churches and maintain their links with Freemasonry. When a brother leaves Freemasonry based on his religious convictions, Masonic constitutions recognise his right to do so, offering the opportunity to return at a later date if his convictions permit him to do so. Most churches respond with a much harsher attitude, and if the individual chooses to maintain Masonic links many churches will not permit him to

maintain his church membership, and this often results in the loss of a faithful member of that community.

The only real way to overcome this situation would be to encourage dialogue between the antagonistic church bodies and Christian members of Freemasonry. This would encourage questions, which could be answered by those who are in touch with the reality of the situation, in order to clear any misunderstanding and misconception either party may have. This dialogue however would need to be conducted in an attitude of grace and not based on preconceived ideas encouraging honest and open discourse.

#### **7.4 SUMMARY**

There is obviously much to be learned from the structures and constitution of Freemasonry. From its inception the goal appears to have been to give men a platform for communication without prejudice based on their political or religious preference. It also encouraged people from different social backgrounds to meet and discuss issues within society. The stone-wall approach of some church organisations towards Freemasonry prevents a development of closer ties, which if developed could ultimately benefit all within society. The church would benefit by the stability of those within Freemasonry, and Freemasonry would benefit from the acceptance, freeing them to be more open and when not constantly on the defensive being free to offer more to all within the community.

## **CHAPTER 8**

# **CAN FREEMASONRY HELP CHRISTIANS IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY TO DIALOGUE WITH OTHER RELIGIONS?**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is clear from the previous discussion that Freemasonry can help bridge many of the perceived gaps between religious communities. Although it is claimed by Freemasons that Freemasonry is not a religion; it can clearly offer a place for religious groups to gather without feeling intimidated. It is when groups get together that the differences are overshadowed by the similarities of each faith, and how groups are often struggling with the same questions and the same issues. The question is, do the individual leaders within faith organisations want to build the bridge? Or is there a fear of losing one's own identity through such dialogue?

### **8.2 THE BASIS OF DIALOGUE**

Freemasonry is not a religious order or sect, yet its foundations are based on religious truths that are found in all beliefs where there is a true love of God and God's creation.

The principles of Freemasonry are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity ie. the right to have liberty of opinion in one's faith, equality among all men and the sharing of fellowship without intimidation. In the documentation received by Freemasons in South Africa the Volume of the Sacred Law is referred to. This will be the Holy Bible in a typical Lodge in

South Africa, attended by a large majority of professing Christian men. The Bible is always placed in a central place in the Lodge and all obligations by a candidate are taken upon the Bible. When a candidate is not a Christian, the candidate he may choose to take his obligation on a creed that will secure the same emphasis as the Holy Bible does for a Christian. Thus those of different faiths will join together and make the same obligations, embracing God in their way and attempting to make some sense of their lives with the rest of God's creation, irrespective of the dogma and sphere of influence within one's own community.

The principle being that a belief in The Great Architect of the Universe and His revealed will shall be an essential qualification for membership. The famous Scottish father of Freemasonry, William Shaw, was a Roman Catholic yet the Lodges he established were loyal to the Crown. Another principal of Freemasonry is that members will always be loyal to the government of the country they reside, and not be party to any insurrection or political activity that is against the political system of that country and the established Protestant Church in England and Scotland. In a society that encouraged hatred of people from different faiths, it was refreshing to learn that men of different faiths would meet together expressing unity with others who believed in God. Shaw developed the principles and ethics found in all future Freemasons' Lodges, which excluded religious domination and preference within the Lodge, while accepting the existence of a theistic belief in God, that is The Great Architect of all things, a truth found in the Christian faith by Christian Masons. It is thanks to this system that men could meet, associate with each other and

share ideas for the development of their societies without the resentment and bigotry found in the established churches of the day.

Although many modern Freemasons go to great lengths to point out that Freemasonry is not a religion, they would be wrong to dismiss its religious foundations, format and context. Isaac Newton claimed that Freemasonry is not 'a' religion but is Religion. His actual words were printed in the Dutch Reformed review on Freemasonry printed in 1942 on Freemasonry and the state:

it is true that Freemasonry is not a religion, but it is Religion, a worship in which all good men may unite, that each may show the faith of all.

Newton's statement is the key to all Freemasonry, where the historical roots are founded on the belief that the All-Embracing Creator is in all men, and can be found in all men. For modern Masonry to try and distance itself from these early established principles and beliefs would be a tragic error of judgment, to react to pressure groups who faith to see the important role Freemasonry has, and can still have, in our pluralistic society. The dilution of the religious basis and unity in Freemasonry will make it of little value in the developing of understanding between different cultures' and religious groups' understanding. The very fact that Freemasons could develop in various religious communities in a period of division is the basis of Freemason's value to the rest of society.

The point of Freemasonry either being or not being a religion is still debated today. The official standpoint of modern Freemasonry is that it is not a religion; however, there are those within Freemasonry who would debate this point.

There is an element of spirituality within Freemasonry that is directed towards all of God's creation; it is not in its self a religion, but one cannot fail to agree that Freemasonry is religion in all its many forms, the activity of the spirit reaching all humanity. Freemasonry may answer many questions posed by people today regarding the unity of faiths, JC Dupuis (1991: 200) posed the question;

Do the non-biblical scriptures mediate the deity of the spirit in the religious life of others? How do these writings nourish and sustain their religious experiences? How do they invite the members of these religions to the obedience of faith that saves?

Although it is argued that, as Freemasonry does not encourage open debate on an individual faith, these questions could not be answered within its structures. However, the very fact of a close encounter experienced with fellow human beings, within a personal and intimate environment gives all individuals the opportunity to learn from each other, and learn to understand the way others lead their lives and how other racial and religious groups respond to others in close working and social environments. It is in this learning experience of equal opportunity and tolerance that individuals draw closer to each other and the similarities bond them together. The differences encountered are approached in a way that enables each member to be free of any intimidation or threat. Although the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour may be regarded as untenable within a pluralistic community, Freemasons respect the uniqueness of the individual faith; one has no need to compromise one's beliefs to suit the belief of another. A person can still witness to the saving grace of Jesus by attempting to live the way Jesus lived, and by their actions be a witness to the love of Christ. It is by this action of love for his brother that an individual will show the love of Christ. The universality of Jesus Christ is sound doctrine

within a Masonic environment. As a Mason one can still be a Christian and be inspired by Jesus Christ without an antagonistic approach towards other believers. Dupuis writes, (Dupuis 1991:215) that Jesus is seen as the one that best responds to human aspirations, through him the perfect type of paradigm of human relations with God is found. E Troeltsch sees in Jesus Christ the purest revelation of the religious world. As a Christian the purest revelation is found through Jesus Christ. As a Freemason one would need to attempt to share this but also attempt to understand another's perfect revelation of the living God and creator of all humanity, for it is indeed one God who created all for salvation. Many Christians reject the possibility of communicating with fellow human beings through other faiths; Jesus Christ never had such an approach to humanity. When he came into the world He spoke to all people. Communities who have been taught about Jesus within the context of their own environment have experienced rapid growth within their church communities. With an understanding of the roots of the communities, and the Christian faith brought within, there has been a true experience of God. With this approach within the Christian communities of Korea there has been massive growth. Dr Paul Yoggi Cho of the Full, Gospel Church has over 150000 members experiencing a true communion with God. 'The fruit of the Spirit?'

There is a thought within the Christian church that the only role of the church is to go out and win souls for the church, constantly seeking new members and building up the numbers. Vaughn Roberts (1970) expresses concern regarding this approach. Speaking in an address, the view was expressed that other thinkers felt that the church role was to enter into serious dialogue regarding the serious issues within society, encouraging all of

humanity to live in a harmonious relationship as part of Gods creation. The question is put. 'Are these two ends ultimately irreconcilable?'

It is the very point of Freemasonry that answers the concerns outlined by Roberts. They are not irreconcilable, but rather are the basis for the fellowship found within Masonry and Masonic ritual. There should be an attempt by the religious bodies to investigate the foundations of Freemasonry and see what reconciling influence there can be found within its historical roots and the Masonic principals of brotherly love, relief and truth.

### **8.3 SUMMARY**

The complex issue of interfaith dialogue is compounded in South Africa because of the historical divide based of the colour of a person's complexion. It is not just a religious issue, but rather a socio-religious issue. In South Africa where 71% of the population professes to have some link with the Christian Church, there has been a dividing force which has prevented any form of mutual development. Christian groups need to start understanding their own diversity; it is then that they will have a greater understanding of individuals from other faith groups. The structures, ethics and ethos within Freemasonry could be a driving force in the development of that understanding.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **THE GRAND ORIENT OF FRANCE AND OTHER INFLUENCES ON SOUTH AFRICAN FREEMASONRY**

#### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

Many of the derogatory remarks about Freemasonry do have some truth in them, however they stem from the quasi-Masonic organisation of The Grand Orient of France, which has clearly stated that they do not propagate a belief of a Supreme Being. They allow membership of those of an atheistic persuasion. The Grand Lodge of England cut them off when they eliminated belief in The Great Architect of the Universe. It is because of this very fact that other main line Masonic organisations do not recognise this organisation. Another reason why the English Lodges in particular do not recognise this “Masonic” Organisation is because of their involvement in politics and the manipulation of political situations within France throughout the nineteenth century.

#### **9.2 POLITICAL POWER BASE**

The Grand Orient of France was among the first to propagate the principle of a united Europe and the forming of the United States of Europe through the League of Nations [Now the United Nations](Within, 1972:18).

This so-called Masonry has no relationship to traditional Freemasonry and its main aim is believed to be political power. Their god is termed the Creative Principal. Which is the

earth, and they look upon God the Creator as a myth. Within, claims that British Freemasonry is not part of this organisation, British Masons, he says, are esoteric, non-political, philanthropic and believers in God as the Great Architect of the Universe. For this reason in 1878 British Lodges broke all relationship with the Grand Orient of France. It is worthwhile noting that the political and military might of Germany was used to establish an united Europe in the 1940's, this failed. However, the development of a common market in Europe and the latest influence of a common currency, prove that the principle of a united Europe is being developed. Whether some all-powerful organisation with anti-Christian thus anti-God philosophies is driving this, or if it is the natural development of European society one does not know, and any argument around this subject is purely speculative. However the continued false statements levied at Freemasonry in general will keep alive the myth or truth of an organisation such as the Illuminati and the Grand Orient, structured for one purpose, that being world domination.

Many of the Grand Orient actions are used today to support the argument that a Christian should not belong to Freemasonry. There is no indication that any of the traditional Lodges stemming from English, Scottish, and Irish or Netherlandic Freemasonry have any links or sympathy for the Grand Orient of France, who in their very actions have rejected God, and in doing so any link with the Christian faith and belief of Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Much of this reaction was found within post revolutionary French society. It was a reaction towards clerics within that society and within Freemasonry at that time. Vidler found that the reaction towards the church also caused reaction towards Masonry:

Opinions differed,” he said, “about how far hostility to the church had focused in the Masonic lodges. Many of the clergy belonged to them; they did not yet stand for the fierce anti-clericalism which subsequently became a mark of continental Freemasonry” (Vidler. 1972.13).

By continental Freemasonry the reference is to the Grand Orient of France, which was ultimately not only anti-cleric, and anti Christian, but rather anti any faith if they had a belief in a supreme being, other than that created by man himself.

### **9.3 AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON COLONIAL FREEMASONRY**

In South Africa, the European church influence was strong. However American settlers responded in a different way to the South African settlers and saw themselves free from their colonial ties, and ties to any particular denomination. They adopted the frame of mind of freethinking men and women, whose faith was in the foundation of the New World. Masonic organizations of America were established by those same free thinking individuals and were frequented by the very first President, George Washington, and many other Presidents even within this last decade.

### **9.4 RELIGION AND POLITICS**

Haywood (1943: 40) states his feelings from within modern America. “In America we find it difficult to believe that Almighty God could station himself to the narrow limits of a single religion”. This was no more than the feeling within the whole of that society at that time, the free thinkers of the nineteenth century had developed a ‘New World’ in America a new world that was not going to restrict people based on their religion. And after much

heartache, they would not be restricted based on their race. Freemasonry supports the American constitution, which teaches that all men have the same rights, that the people are sovereign with freedom of choice and liberty of opinion of the individual.

Within American society many of the men searching for freedom for men and women from the class structures of Europe were Freemasons. The famous ‘Boston Tea party’ is said to have been perpetrated by a group of Freemasons. They met and planned their attack on the British ships because they had been refused access to the lucrative tea market; and had their tax increased. People involved included Samuel Adams, and Paul Revere, Masons and supporter of liberty and freedom. During the attempts to free America from the colonial grasp George Washington’s inner circle of trusted men were, like himself, all Freemasons. (Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects. Time Life Books 1989.81)

Within many communities of the United States of America Freemasonry is involved in the social upliftment of the community. A Masonic organisation named the Shriners are dedicated to raising funds for crippled children’s hospitals, open and free for all children no matter what their race or creed. A practical input to the community giving all children the opportunity for health care, the vast majority of these children and their families have never had a relationship with Freemasons, and may even be unaware that the Masonic Lodges in America build and finance such hospitals. One can only believe that God’s grace is with them and His spirit is working within them, for is this not the message of divine unselfish love that Jesus Christ came to teach humanity?

Freemasons in South Africa also attempt to bring relief to communities and people in need and have been the main supporters of the Avril Elizabeth home for children, again not Masonic children, but all children. They also support cancer societies, guide dogs for the blind and are a main contributor to The Nelson Mandela Children's fund.

### **9.5 PRINCE HALL FREEMASONRY**

Two of the first officers of the American Methodist Episcopal Church in America in the mid-eighteen hundreds were the black Americans Richard Allen (an ex slave) and Absalom Jones, who both travelled throughout the South of America preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their missionary work brought them great fame among their own people. From a Masonic viewpoint they also brought together one of the largest Masonic organisations within the Southern States. Both men were the driving forces behind the establishment of what became known as Prince Hall freemasonry after one of its founders Prince Hall (A name not a title). Allen and Jones developed the Lodges based on the lodges of Ireland, England and Scotland and at first there were a few white masons who supported them in their early endeavours. These devout Christian men had close ties with the Army Lodge 441 of the Irish constitution.

These deeply religious men saw the benefit of bringing together like thinking men, to help them establish communities, and to give the poorest of people support within their sphere of influence. At first the Grand Lodge in London gave them some recognition, but as the racial divide widened in the later part of the eighteenth century the white lodges ostracized

them. The platform of Prince Hall Freemasonry gave black civil rights workers the opportunity to meet in secret, as the organisation already met in secret, and the leaders of the communities would be able to travel to their Lodge meetings without hindrance. Eventually the Prince Hall Freemasons became independent of any other Masonic organisation and have established some 5000 lodges throughout America with over 300,000 members. It is in the latter part of the twentieth century where the Prince Hall Lodges are again gaining recognition from the mainstream of Freemasonry, an indication of the healing within society as a whole being reflected in this dynamic body of men. It also brings a lesson that even when humanity does not recognise the power of each individual, our creator will find a way to unite individuals. The divide may have been wide, yet each had knowledge shared through Freemasonry.

## **9.6 SUMMARY**

The Grand Orient of France have had some part in influencing political situations in France, and may have some influence in the changes in Europe. There is however no connection between the actions of the Grand Orient and traditional Freemasonry as practiced in the large majority of the Lodges in Southern Africa. Although many of the actions and statements of The Grand Lodge Orient are attributed to Freemasonry in general, there is no similarity between the two organisations.

There is a dynamic within Freemasonry, which draws people together, which is witnessed by the events influenced by Freemasons around the world. Not established to dominate, but rather to give all individuals the opportunity to express their view on world situations

and local issues. Due to this involvement they will inevitably change things within the microenvironment of their communities. This will ultimately have some effect on the macro world environment. For some this will be seen as threatening. The Phylaxis Society of America dedicate much of their time to investigating world links within Freemasonry through their '*Public Affairs Office and Masonic Information Centre*' In 1999 they reported on the links between Prince Hall Freemasons and Nelson Mandela:

Nelson Mandela the soul of South African's freedom movement, during one of his visits to the United States, then Grand Master William Parker Jr. of the M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Southern California, met with him in his hotel suite to present a gift from the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Georgia and North Carolina and at the time "dubbed" him a Prince Hall Freemason. What that means is a guess, (Public Affairs Office and Masonic Information Centre, 1999:12)

Other Prince Hall Freemasons met with Mandela to offer support for the development of a new South Africa. Prince Hall Freemasons include Rev Jesse Jackson, who is also known for his stance against the previous South African political system.

If one reflects on the isolation of people such as Mandela it was fortuitous that he did have such support. This cannot be seen as religious influence or political control. This is one group of people who have a history of slavery attempting to help free another and for that help and support gratitude is expressed.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **CONCLUSION**

Reactions from society to Freemasonry have been evident for at least the past three hundred years. Modern Freemasonry is no exception; it is the microenvironment of the whole of society. As Freemasons teach and practice tolerance there will always be those who are less tolerant. They will of course attack the body of Freemasonry which they see as disruptive, and for some, an evil presence within society. However, it is clear that Freemasonry and the fraternal body of Masons do have something enriching to offer to religious communities who are looking for a place of common ground, to offer society, in particular a society which is searching for a new identity, to re-establish disenfranchised individuals who may have drifted away from a particular faith. The established structures of Freemasonry, if opened to all, could be used to bring people together in an environment of trust, without fear of rejection.

The environment of Freemasonry encourages forgiveness and encourages an environment where individuals are embraced and not judged, but rather are nurtured into future fellowship with others. Freemasonry has a historical record of investigation into the human psyche and the growth and development of God's creation, of research into knowledge of ourselves and how God has created all of humanity for a purpose, not an individual purpose but rather a collective purpose bringing all of humanity together.

As Cardinal Human commented:

So true Masons say regarding the Craft; the belief in God is 'the elementary, august and sovereign truth'. This is the rock on which our English and Afrikaans Lodges from the beginning have been squarely based (Dutch Reformed Church report).

Many Christian men and women may again find their faith and love of Christ Jesus within the realms of Freemasonry, and in doing so are encouraged to discuss the needs of others in a new way developing a society of tolerance. Encouraging others to search for a Light that is found within all people, deep within each and every one of Gods creation.

The goal of the research has been to establish a basis of dialogue with other religious groups by using the infrastructure and the teachings found within Freemasonry. It is evident that further research and investigation could bring about a structured basis for further action, which could lead to a structured system, offering a framework for such religious dialogue.

The encouragement from within Freemasonry is to further develop a fraternity that is all embracing, offers individuals from all social, religious and ethnic backgrounds a place of mutual unbiased fellowship.

The investigation within this dissertation highlights the basis of dialogue and the infrastructures that are available. However, the fact that many of the structures are in their very nature exclusive to those who are within the established structure and that this structure is male dominated would cause some difficulties. The Masonic organisation

would need to be more accessible before the infrastructure could offer the evident benefits to a developing society. There are lessons to be learned from within the structures of Freemasonry, and Freemasons have much to offer society as a whole. It is hoped that further research would offer an established basis for Freemasons to interact with religious groups in a structured manner, opening all the benefits of wisdom and knowledge found within the many structures of Masonry.

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## APPENDICES

**SOME FAMOUS PERSONALITIES IN FREEMASONRY**

This short list of some of the individuals who were Freemasons is given with the profession, or position, of each individual to indicate the vast variation in the type of personalities within Freemasonry throughout the world. Although from various ethnic and social backgrounds they all found a place of common interest.

<b>Aldrin, Col. Edwin ‘Buz’ (Born 1930)</b>	<b>Astronaut</b>
<b>Allende, Salvador (1908 – 1973)</b>	<b>Doctor and President of Chile</b>
<b>Andrade, Edward Nevil Da Costa (1887 – 1971)</b>	<b>Physicist</b>
<b>Appleton, Sir Edward Victor (1892 – 1965)</b>	<b>Physicist, Nobel prize in 1947</b>
<b>Armstrong, Louis (1900 – 1971)</b>	<b>Jazz Musician</b>
<b>Arne, Thomas Augustine (1710 – 1778)</b>	<b>Composer</b>
<b>Ashbee, Charles Robert (1863 – 1942)</b>	<b>Architect</b>
<b>Ashmole, Elias (1610 – 1692)</b>	<b>Antiquarian</b>
<b>Astor, John Jacob (1763 – 1848)</b>	<b>Financier</b>
<b>Ataturk, Mustapha Kemal (1881 – 1938)</b>	<b>President of Turkey</b>
<b>Austin, Stephen (1793 – 1836)</b>	<b>Pioneer</b>
<b>Autry, Gene (Born 1907)</b>	<b>Actor</b>
<b>Baily, Edward Hodges (1788 – 1867)</b>	<b>Sculptor</b>
<b>Ball, Walter William Rouse (1850 – 1925)</b>	<b>Mathematician</b>
<b>Banks, Sir Joseph (1743 – 1820)</b>	<b>Botanist</b>
<b>Bartolozzi, Francesco (1727 – 1815)</b>	<b>Artist</b>
<b>Basie, William ‘Count’ (1904 – 1984)</b>	<b>Jazz Pianist</b>
<b>Belzoni, Giovanni Baptista (1778 – 1823)</b>	<b>Engineer</b>
<b>Benes, Eduard (1894 – 1946)</b>	<b>President of Czechoslovakia</b>
<b>Berlin, Irving (1888 – 1989)</b>	<b>Composer</b>
<b>Blucher, Gebhardt Lebrecht (1742 – 1819)</b>	<b>Soldier</b>
<b>Bolivar, Simon (1783 – 1830)</b>	<b>Known as the ‘George Washington’ of South America</b>
<b>Botha, Louis</b>	<b>General and Prime Minister</b>
<b>Brand, Christoffel</b>	<b>First speaker of the Cape legislative Assembly</b>
<b>Brand, J.H.</b>	<b>President of Free State (1864 – 1888)</b>
<b>Bruce, James (1730 – 1794)</b>	<b>Explorer</b>
<b>Burke, Edmund (1729 – 1797)</b>	<b>Statesman</b>
<b>Burns, Robert (1759 – 1796)</b>	<b>Poet</b>
<b>Burger, T. F.</b>	<b>President of Transvaal</b>
<b>Republic 1872 – 1877)</b>	
<b>Campbell. Sir Malcom (1885 – 1948)</b>	<b>Motorcar racing driver</b>
<b>Chalmers, Thomas (1780 – 1847)</b>	<b>Theologian</b>
<b>Cherubini, Luigi (1760 – 1842)</b>	<b>Composer</b>

<b>Chrysler, Walter P (1875 – 1940)</b>	<b>Car Manufacturer</b>
<b>Churchill, Sir Winston (1874 – 1965)</b>	<b>British Prime Minister</b>
<b>Cole, Nat (Nathaniel) King (1919 – 1965)</b>	<b>Singer</b>
<b>Cranstoun-Day, Thomas.N.</b>	<b>District Grand Master. (Cape)</b>
<b>Crockett, David (1786 – 1838)</b>	<b>Frontiersman</b>
<b>Dempsey, William Harrison ‘Jack’ (1895 – 1983)</b>	<b>Boxer</b>
<b>De Mist, Jacob Abraham</b>	<b>Politician &amp; First Deputy</b>
	<b>Grand Master of Netherlandic Constitution of South Africa</b>
<b>Diefenbank, John George (1895 – 1979)</b>	<b>Prime Minister of Canada</b>
<b>Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan (1831 – 1912)</b>	<b>Novelist</b>
<b>Dunant, Jean Henri (1827 – 1910)</b>	<b>Humanitarian (Founder of the Red Cross)</b>
<b>Eboue, Felix (1884 – 1944)</b>	<b>African Politician and Soldier (ex Slave)</b>
<b>Edward VII (1841 – 1910)</b>	<b>King</b>
<b>Edward VIII (1894 – 1972)</b>	<b>King (Abdicated in 1936)</b>
<b>Fleming, Sir Alexander (1881 – 1955)</b>	<b>Bacteriologist</b>
<b>Ford, Henry (1863 – 1947)</b>	<b>Car Manufacturer</b>
<b>Franklin, Benjamin (1706 – 1790)</b>	<b>Statesman, Scientist and Philosopher</b>
<b>Faure, D.P.</b>	<b>Churchman</b>
<b>Goblet D’alviella, Eugene (1846 –1925)</b>	<b>Belgian Statesman and Historian of Religions</b>
<b>Guillotine, Joseph Ignace 1738 – 1814)</b>	<b>Physician</b>
<b>Hall, Prince (1748 – 1807)</b>	<b>Methodist Minister</b>
<b>Ismail, Pasha (1830 – 1895)</b>	<b>Viceroy of Egypt</b>
<b>Johnson, John A ‘Jack’ (1878 – 1946)</b>	<b>World Boxing Champion</b>
<b>Jolson, Al (1886- 1950)</b>	<b>Singer</b>
<b>Kipling, Rudyard (1865 – 1936)</b>	<b>Writer</b>
<b>Kitchener, Horatio Herbert (1850 – 1916)</b>	<b>Soldier</b>
<b>Langenhoven,J</b>	<b>Minister of Religion and</b>
	<b>Author of “Die Stem”</b>
<b>Lipton, Sir Thomas (1850 – 1931)</b>	<b>Merchant</b>
<b>Macadam, John Loudon (1756 – 1836)</b>	<b>Engineer</b>
<b>Menninger, Karl A (born 1893)</b>	<b>Psychologist</b>
<b>Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (1756 – 1791)</b>	<b>Composer</b>
<b>O’Connell, Daniel (1775 – 1847)</b>	<b>Politician</b>
<b>Peale, Norman Vincent (Born 1898)</b>	<b>Minister of Religion</b>
<b>Pope, Alexander (1688 – 1744)</b>	<b>Poet</b>
<b>Pretorius, M.W.</b>	<b>President of Transvaal</b>
	<b>Republic (1855 – 1863)</b>
<b>Pushkin, Aleksander (1799 – 1837)</b>	<b>Poet</b>
<b>Reitz,F.W.</b>	<b>President of the Free State</b>
<b>Rothchild, Nathan Meyer (1777 – 1836)</b>	<b>Financier</b>
<b>Roberts, Lord</b>	<b>Field Marshal</b>
	<b>(Commander-in-Chief</b>
	<b>South Africa)</b>
<b>Ruter, Johannes Andreas</b>	<b>Chief Justice</b>
<b>Saint-Martin, Louis Claude De (1743 – 1803)</b>	<b>Philosopher</b>
<b>Scott, Robert Falcon (1868 – 1912)</b>	<b>Explorer</b>

<b>Scott, Sir Walter (1771 – 1832)</b>	<b>Novelist and Poet</b>
<b>Sellers, Peter (1925 – 1980)</b>	<b>Actor</b>
<b>Smith, Joseph (1805 – 1844)</b>	<b>Founder of Mormons</b>
<b>Southey, Richard</b>	<b>Colonial Secretary (Cape)</b>
<b>Viljoen, Ben</b>	<b>Boer Commander</b>
<b>Vivekananda, Swami Nerendramah Datta (1863 – 1902)</b>	<b>Ascetic</b>
<b>Washington, George (1732 – 1799)</b>	<b>First President of America</b>
<b>Wellington, Arthur (1769 – 1852)</b>	<b>Duke</b>
<b>Wilde, Oscar O’Flahertie Wills (1854 – 1900)</b>	<b>Dramatist</b>
<b>Wood, Rev John George (1872 – 1889)</b>	<b>Naturalist</b>
<b>Zigfield, Florenze (1869 – 1932)</b>	<b>Producer</b>

**WORD LIST**

- All-embracing
- Anglican
- Anglo-Boer War
- Holy Bible
- Blue Lodge Funeral
- British Empire
- Cabalistic Jews
- Cape Town
- Catholic Reformation
- Christianity
- Civil Rights
- Colonisation
- Communication
- Constitution and Law
- Degrees (first, second and third)
- Dialogue
- Divine Creator
- Dutch Settlers
- Dutch Reformed
- Eastern Star
- Egypt
- England
- Esoteric
- Ethnic
- Faith
- France
- Freemasons
- Funeral
- GAOTU
- Global
- Globalisation
- Government
- Grand Lodge
- Grand Master
- Grand Orient
- Great Architect
- Holland
- Holy
- Illuminati
- 
- Irish
- Islam
- Jesus Christ
- Judaism
- Knights Templar
- League of Nations
- Lodges
- Mark
- Memory
- Mother Lodge
- Muslim
- Nazareth
- Netherlandic
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- Papal Bull
- Pope
- Pentecost
- Pluralistic
- Prayer
- Pretoria
- Presidents
- Presbyterian
- Prince Hall Freemasonry
- Protestant
- Pentangle
- Ra
- Racial
- Reformation
- Rosicrucian
- Royal Arch
- Scotland
- Second Messiah
- Secrets
- Secret Societies
- Spirit
- Theism
- Unity
- Universalism
- Women

## SUMMARY

Although there are many myths and stories about Freemasonry it is evident that many of the individuals involved have their roots in Protestant Christianity. In a South African context, the Freemasons Lodges were established by colonial settlers in the nineteenth century. Freemasonry was recognised as an organisation of individuals who cared for the community and in doing so encouraged all groups to be involved in local issues and personal development.

According to Anderson (1738) Freemasonry is the central meeting place for all humanity. It is a place for personal understanding and development, with a deep sense of love for The Divine Creator. It is not the intention of Freemasonry to synchronise all sacred writings as this would only be an attempt to eradicate the uniqueness of each individual's faith and deeply held beliefs. Freemasonry encourages diversity, but demands the love and compassion, which, from a Christian perspective is expressed by and through Jesus Christ.

Freemasonry in the eighteenth century was clearly a Christian organisation; many of the symbols and prayers were based on Christian beliefs regarding God, who the Freemasons name The Great Architect of the Universe. In the last century this has developed into an all-embracing organisation, which includes all people from all religious and ethnic backgrounds, the only requirement being belief in a Supreme Being.

There are many leading Religious and Political leaders who have been associated with Freemasonry and have been leading lights in the development of social systems within

their communities. It is the systems within Freemasonry that can help a developing, changing nation such as South Africa, offering a place where all people of diverse backgrounds can come and have the freedom to develop within a multi-cultural society.

The so-called lost secrets within Freemasonry are based on the care and development of all individuals, who share a common understanding of the needs of humanity. This is not based on an individual's ethnic or religious background, but rather on the willingness of individuals to learn from each other. The systems within Freemasonry offer such a platform for development and with willingness from those within Freemasonry could offer a place of healing and growth.