

Regularity, Recognition, and Fraternal Relations

By

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Presented to A. Douglas Smith, Jr. Lodge of Research, #1949

On

December 7, 1996

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This short paper covers a blend of items recently discussed during refreshment, after a meeting of the A.D. Smith, Jr., Lodge of Research, on the general topic of "Recognition". We thought that you too might be interested in the subject. So, we developed a list of definitions, compiled our views, and packaged them together with an index of authoritative sources for further inquiry, research, and profitable discussion.

I. DEFINITIONS:

(Masonic meaning of words, phrases, and terms that will probably come into play during a discussion of Regularity, Recognition and Fraternal Relations)

ACCEPTED MASONS — In early days before Speculative Masonry, members who did not necessarily earn their livelihood by the building trades, but were accepted into the guilds.

A.F. & A.M (Ancient Free and Accepted Masons) — There is no appreciable difference from F. & A.M. (Free and Accepted Masons) or A.F.M. (Ancient Free Masons). Some Grand Lodges use the first designation, others use the second. The Grand Lodge of South Carolina uses the last.

The difference is traceable to the great schism when there were two Grand Lodges in England — The "Antients" and the "Moderns".

AMBULATORY WARRANT — One which permitted the members of a Lodge (usually a military one) to carry the Warrant with them and act under it at any place they might be stationed.

ANCIENT LANDMARKS — Fundamental laws, principles, and teachings. The Grand Lodge of Virginia has not adopted any particular "set".

ARREST OF CHARTER — The work of a Lodge is suspended and it is prevented from holding its usual communications by action of the Grand Master. It is a temporary order until the next meeting of Grand Lodge, which is the only body that can approve, revise, or make null the Grand Master's action.

CHARTERED LODGE — One which has received authority from the Grand Lodge and is entitled to representation in the G.L.

CLANDESTINE MASONIC LODGE — A group of persons uniting into a body termed a Masonic Lodge and purporting to be Masonic, but without consent of a Grand Lodge. Different from Irregular Lodge.

COMITY — Cooperation, friendliness, courtesy, politeness. Grand Lodges, while independent are in external comity with other Grand Lodges that they recognize. Subordinate Lodges which cooperate with other Lodges (in their own Grand Lodge) are in internal comity with them. All Grand Lodges and regular Lodges work together in amity to achieve harmony and peace.

DORMANT — Lodges which are not active, but which have not surrendered their charters.

EXCLUSIVE TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION — A principle that each Grand Lodge is supreme and sovereign within its own jurisdiction.

EXTINCT LODGE — One which has ceased to exist and work and whose Charter has been revoked or forfeited.

INCHOATE LODGE — A Lodge working under a Dispensation. The word stems from the Latin *inchoatus*, meaning "incomplete".

IRREGULAR MASONIC LODGE — A Lodge created legally, but continuing to work after its Charter has been revoked. Distinguished from clandestine lodge, and spurious lodge.

LANDMARKS — Ancient and universal customs of the Order which gradually grew into operation as rules of action.

LEGALLY CONSTITUTED — A Lodge working under proper authority and Charter from a Grand Lodge.

PATENT — A granted privilege evidenced by a letter, certificate, or diploma.

PROFANE — A non-Mason. The word comes from the Latin *pro* meaning "before" and *fanum* meaning "a temple". In Masonry it means those who have not been in the Temple, that is, initiated.

REGULAR LODGE — One working under a charter or warrant from a legal Masonic authority.

SPURIOUS MASONRY — Not genuine; counterfeit; false with knowledge that it is false. Distinguished from Irregular Masonry and from Clandestine Masonry.

STRIKING FROM THE ROLL — A punishment inflicted by a subordinate Lodge for non-payment of dues.

U.D — Under Dispensation; a charter not yet having been granted; probationary.

WARRANT — A commission giving authority.

II. DISCUSSION:

If you have ever traveled overseas and attended Communication in a country such as Italy, or France, you may have heard members of that Lodge referring to a Grand Orient. The term is generally synonymous with the expression Grand Lodge; however, these Grand Orients often demand more extensive conformity (submission) than Grand Lodges, frequently exercising jurisdiction over the highest degrees, which American and English Grand Lodges refrain from doing. For example, the Grand Orient of France exercises jurisdiction not only over the seven degrees of its own Rite, but also over the 33 degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite and over all other rites which are practiced in France. The Grand Orient of Italy exercises similar, wide-ranging power. You will find it interesting to note that in these two examples, the Grand Lodge of Virginia is in amity with one but does not recognize the other.

Some of our Brethren have been confused by the terms "profane" and "clandestine". They are not synonyms and have two entirely different meanings. In the Constitutions of Masonry and the Methodical Digest, we find the term "profane". This term was used in the 19th century to refer to all men outside the Fraternity. Many Masons today consider the word arrogant and presumptuous (they call it "politically incorrect"). Some Grand Lodges haven't used the term for a long time. For example, the Grand Lodge of the Philippines publicly opposes the use of the idiom. Many of our colleagues refrain from using the term in their discussions and would rather that our Brethren use an expression such as "uninitiated" or "non-Masons", when referring to persons who are not Masons.

The term "clandestine" was first used in the Constitutions of 1784 issued by the Grand Lodge of England. It meant secret, hidden, private, or concealed which can be said of many Masonic bodies. It also means underhanded, stealthy,

furtive, and sly. But, many so called clandestine bodies are open, aggressive, ambitious, and eager to defend themselves. The name is usually applied to a Masonic body that fails to secure and hold a warrant, charter, or other authority to exist issued by some superior Masonic body having the authority to grant it. Prior to the Grand Lodge era, 1717, the word clandestine was unknown in Freemasonry. Any five or six Freemasons could form either a temporary or a permanent Lodge, make Masons and do what other Lodges could do, under the doctrine of Immemorial Right. Thus, any Lodge that was opened was just and perfect. After 1723, Lodges affiliated with the Grand Lodge could be formed only after receiving a warrant from the Grand Master. This is usually considered the primary legal ground by which a Lodge could be considered clandestine.

From a doctrinal standpoint, a Lodge could be considered clandestine if it was unmindful of true Masonic creed (teachings), practice, or character. There are Lodges that do not profess a belief in Deity, or do not display a Volume of Sacred Law on the altar and may even go so far as to become exclusively Christian or even claim to be Masonic by using various names, insignia, or Craft symbols strictly as a money making scheme.

We see that people can be called profane where Lodges are considered irregular or clandestine when they haven't received a warrant from a Grand Lodge recognized by a Regular Grand Lodge. Don't be misled; just because our Grand Lodge doesn't recognize another Grand jurisdiction doesn't automatically make them clandestine or irregular. It just might mean that we do not yet recognize them. We cannot invite their members to sit in our Lodges (or we sit in theirs) because our Grand Lodges are not in amity.

Some time ago (during the war), the Grand Lodge of Japan was not recognized by other Grand Lodges around the world. It has been granted that

recognition and now its constituent Lodges and members are accepted around the world.

Another term used in the preceding discussion was "Immemorial Right". Some of you may not have heard that term either. We have all heard of Time Immemorial — that point to which the memory of man, on a particular subject, runs not to the contrary (begins). Since it has always been the privilege of Masons to meet and form Lodges almost without restrictions, the right to do so was an Immemorial right, that is the right beyond the time of written records or human memory. The necessary distinction, therefore, is between a thing which has existed from Immemorial times and a new thing arising by virtue of a right which has existed from Immemorial Times.

Men have always considered themselves to have certain inalienable rights, which have existed from time immemorial, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We formed a nation based primarily on that concept and it has worked for over 200 years.

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