

“A SEARCH FOR THE GENUINE SECRETS?”  
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Mr. Chairman, M.W. Pro G.M. brethren all, thank you for inviting me to deliver this first paper today, and thank you also for coming so early in the afternoon, - you hardly had time for a heavy lunch so hopefully there's no need to sleep anything off. Thank you also for being here when you could have been watching the football or taking your wife shopping, or whatever, - the point is that you have taken time out to be here today and this shows a certain seriousness; seriousness that created this society to delve deeper into what Freemasonry is really saying to us.

This need for a more serious look at our Craft has been pointed out by many brethren over many years and indeed today, W.Bro. Kai Hughes will talk about searching out the inner mind or soul for clues about our problems in Freemasonry today. This challenge to get to the heart of our Craft has seen some excellent papers presented to this society, - papers that were well researched and erudite and, I'm sure, well delivered, - all aiming to throw light on the nature of our Craft and, ultimately, its *raison d'être*.

Some of you may sense that there is a “but” coming up after this fulsome praise, and there is, - but I want to do it as gently as possible.

Let me put it this way. W.Bro. The Venerable Dr. Mark Dalby in an address reported in the January Masonic Quarterly, made reference to those beautifully poetic verses in Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, which the Scots use so effectively at the most crucial point of their Third Degree, and which, as he points out, goes on to say, - “Of (the) making (of) many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” So the point that I think we should bear in mind from the outset is that, any idea that spiritual insights can be uncovered in an academic or intellectual way is contrary to what Ecclesiastes tells us, and is also contrary to our own personal experience. Likewise none of the great Masters that the world has seen, such as Jesus or The Buddha, have said that spiritual understanding requires scholarship, - and neither does Freemasonry, even with its oft-quoted and significant reference to a daily advancement in masonic knowledge.

This does not of course mean that some guidance and pointing in the right direction is not valuable, - only that the point about spirituality is that, once we have the basics right, it's rather like sex, - there's not a lot of point in just talking about it.

But there is a need to clarify spiritual basics because without clarity, it is difficult to give the more spiritual parts of our ritual credibility, - and without credibility how can we really take our ritual seriously? You may of course object and say that all of our ritual is taken seriously, but in attending lodges in Africa, America, Europe, Australia and the Far East over the past 35 years, I have virtually never heard the Search for the Genuine Secrets of a M.M. referred to as a real, live opportunity, - nor even as an academic subject. How serious is that?

But clarifying even just the spiritual basics is a real challenge. As individuals we do try to be serious of course, - we do try to address all the questions that our rational mind throws up. We would love to be able to make sense of our world by working things out rationally, but we learn the hard way that neither scholarship nor rational thinking reward us with spiritual insights. The writers of our Third Degree were of course well aware that these things cannot be uncovered in a purely rational way and pointedly refer, in our Third Degree Charge, to “that mysterious veil which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate unless assisted by that light which is from above” or, if you wish, “The Rays of Heaven.” Or, as Einstein put it, - “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind (the eye of human reason) is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift.” This is hardly a difficult point to accept of course, - most of us are only too familiar with our preference for our rational mind over our intuitive mind, - our preference for our own thoughts rather than listening to our intuition, - but how can any light from above, - any delicate intuition - possibly compete with our own thoughts? Einstein of course, was at the leading edge of human thinking, and

it is interesting that the writers of our ritual were referring to the same obstacle, or rather challenge, over 200 years earlier.

So, having made the point that we are talking about the need to address the deeper spiritual nature of our Craft as a real, live opportunity with our intuitive mind rather than as a "left brain" academic subject, as both Ecclesiasties and Einstein tell us, not to mention our own Third Degree Charge, - how exactly does our Craft present us with the way forward?

Well, as we are well aware, while we are given a great deal of guidance, our ritual is not explicit about the way forward or, more correctly, it does not tell us specifically how this real live opportunity works in practice. This of course, is how it has always been throughout history. The individual has always had the opportunity to take advantage of a completely natural and personal process that brings a gradual awareness of his place in a larger Scheme of Things, - but the Veil keeps hidden how this process works in practice. This gradual awareness comes as a knowing, or gnosis in the Gnostic tradition, as distinct from the ordinary information and details that our rational mind is used to receiving in daily life, - which is not the same thing at all. (The Canonbury Conference in November will be focusing on Gnostic movements by the way.) A preference for this natural process is why Eastern religions tend to be referred to as more experiential and holistic in nature, in contrast to the more dogmatic style of Western religions that have inevitably evolved to meet the Western need for more rationality and detail.

(If you want more information about this Western need for more detail, I would refer you to the recent work of Professor Nisbett (of Harvard and Michigan) particularly his book "The Geography of Thought" in which, with substantial experimental evidence, he shows how very different is the more holistic process of mentation in the more "right brain" East where there is generally less of a "left brain" need for so much detail and certainty about things and more focus on a bigger, more holistic picture. This Western demand for more detail and proof can be called a "left brain block" inasmuch as it is effectively impossible to penetrate the Veil with rational thinking alone, - as our Third Degree Charge pointedly tells us.)

The writers of our ritual also, were clearly aware of the importance of the Veil and likewise they also avoided giving specific detail about how the spiritual process actually works in practice. They gave us rather, moral principles and guidance for life that, if followed seriously, lead us naturally into the process of gradually being able to uncover the secrets of life by ourselves. In other words, our Craft does give us the age-old process by which man can actually penetrate the Veil, - but the lack of the explicitness and detail that we have come to expect has made it difficult for us to pick up on it.

One might therefore think that the writers of our ritual could not foresee this need for at least some explicitness in the modern era. But brethren, may I ask if they could really have been any more focused when they refer to this opportunity, to the exclusion of all else, except for tiling and proving, in the opening of our Master Mason Degree?

The opening of the degree could hardly be more pointed, -

"What inducement have you to leave the East and go to the West? - To seek for that which was lost, which by your instruction and our own industry, we hope to find."

"What is that which has lost? - The genuine secrets of a M.M."

"Where do you hope to find them? - With the C."

"Why with the C? - That being a point from which a M.M. cannot err."

The master then says, "We will assist you to repair that loss and may Heaven aid our united endeavours."

Continuing this focus, as soon as the candidate M.M. is admitted we pray, "Especially, we beseech Thee to impart Thy grace to this Thy servant, who offers himself a Candidate to partake with us the mysterious secrets of a M.M." And, having worked the degree, the J.W. confirms to the W.M. that the brethren have

indeed been in Search of the Genuine Secrets of a M.M.

Brethren, this clear focus on the M.M.'s Search for the Genuine Secrets could hardly be more pointed, and yet the Search is, and has been, ignored by brethren everywhere.

I would suggest to you however, that this is hardly surprising, given that our popular Western culture has little idea of spiritual matters, - in fact, it is not so difficult to see how our popular mainstream culture of self-interest and materialism actually leads us in the other direction, - away from spirituality. But isn't that why our Craft was founded, - so that we could establish our own deeper, more enlightened culture?

The deeper spiritual nature of our Craft is at odds with the popular culture, particularly now that we are overwhelmed by a mass media which very often caters to the lowest common denominator in society. If we and our lodges cannot get away from our popular culture's lack of understanding of spiritual things however, - cannot get away from the normal thinking in the outside world - how can we possibly establish our own culture and understanding? Isn't that why we have closed doors? But if we don't make use of our closed doors, how can we create an atmosphere of credibility and mutual support that encourages brethren to actually pursue the challenging Search for the Genuine Secrets of a M.M. in practice?

But even with closed doors, how can we establish our own more enlightened culture when we have let into our lodges people who have little or no real interest in the spiritual nature of life, and therefore the spiritual nature of our Craft. We can hardly be surprised that our lodges, and Freemasonry as a whole, have ignored our original raison d'etre, as our M.W. Pro G.M. has pointed out, a little more delicately perhaps, in the past.

This of course is all rather depressing, if I may say so, - but probably inevitable, given the fact that from the time the Craft was organized, it has been science that has appeared to have all the answers and, inevitably, the credibility. Our scientists have put us on the moon, unraveled our DNA and doubled our life spans, - we have benefited so much, and we love all the rational understanding, - all those answers, details and explained mysteries. But brethren, these are all physical things, and our Search beyond the Veil involves our non-physical world. I think we are all aware that if science cannot observe and measure something, it simply doesn't want to know, - and if we want to know about the larger non-physical Scheme of Things, we are left on our own and to our particular religion, - if we have one.

As our M.M. Charge clearly shows, the writers of our ritual were only too well aware that a closed-minded science, and the acceptance of discoveries limited by the eye of human reason, was never going to be able to put us on the path to spiritual awareness, especially when it only deals with physical

phenomena. It appears that the writers of our ritual anticipated that our religions would lose their credibility in the scientific era, at least for many people, and that there would be a need for something to guide us in the right direction that was less dogmatic. They crafted their response to this challenge with insight and beauty and it behoves us to honour them greatly, even if we don't know exactly who they were.

But if the insights contained within our ritual, beautifully expressed and non-dogmatic as they are, lack credibility for us, how are we going to be able to take them seriously? What would be helpful of course, is a way of giving the M.M.'s Search credibility that allows our rational mind to be serious about it, ie. a rational way.

So may I suggest to you brethren that if we could establish that at least some men have indeed been able to penetrate the Veil then this would show, in the rational way that we need, that our M.M.'s Search for the Genuine Secrets beyond the Veil is a real, live opportunity and is not just allegorical.

But what rational evidence could there be that some men have actually been able to penetrate the Veil? Our lowest common denominator culture hardly knows that any Veil even exists. But given, for the moment, that there is what we call a Veil, some people must have penetrated it and become aware of at least something of the larger Scheme of Things beyond it. What would give us this rational credibility

that we need would be a commonality of understanding and teachings that reflected the same larger Scheme of Things from beyond the Veil. If this shared understanding came from many different individuals who had no contact with each other, this would be impossible to explain unless they were all referring to something that was actually true.

Such shared understandings might appear unlikely however, given that our culture tells us that no such commonality of teachings exists, - in fact our Western churches have traditionally told us specifically that they alone have the truth. But Western religions have always displayed a distinct lack of interest in other religions' teachings revealing little real desire to throw light on the human situation and a strong preference for a reliance on belief. Unfortunately belief has, rather inevitably, given us a history of conflict, and tends to close our mind to everything that is contrary to what is believed. This is the opposite of a Search beyond the Veil which requires an open mind and a desire, not a reluctance, to expand our awareness.

(I should mention that "credibility" has been used throughout this paper to indicate something that is convincing or worthy of acceptance, rather than belief. Faith, on the other hand, in the absence of physical or rational proof, is a valid and essential foundation for whatever religious principles are subscribed to.)

The East, with less of a need for belief generally, - less need for dogmatic detail and certainty and more interest in embracing a larger holistic picture (as Prof. Nisbett has clearly shown) has more interest in expanding their understanding, rather than limiting it. A good example of this was a Chinese Taoist expedition to Ceylon in the 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. sent to learn more about Buddhist understandings, - something that a dogmatic religion is unable to do. Another example, closer to home, was the Canonbury conference entitled "Many Faiths – One Religion" in 2004.

So if, like those 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. Taoists, we are prepared to open our minds to what other great Masters, not just our own, have said, (The Buddha, Jesus, Mani, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Lao Tsu and others) it's not that difficult to see that their guidance and explanations were based on having seen the same larger Scheme of Things. It is this commonality of understanding that provides the rational credibility that we

need in order in order to be able to accept that mankind does indeed have the ability to penetrate the Veil. We find that if we look at the original teachings for common understandings, rather than for differences, it is quite clear, while they have naturally expressed things with due regard for their local culture, that nevertheless the Masters were making direct reference to the same larger Scheme of Things.

This shared understanding among the Masters has of course been kept rather quiet over the years, and in contrast, our popular culture has embraced what we have generally been told, - that there is no rational basis for thinking that we can really find out about any larger Scheme of Things even if there is one.

But if we are able to rise above our popular culture, we have a perfectly sound basis for accepting what our Craft tells us about the M.M.'s Search and our ability to penetrate the Veil. If the great Masters in all different parts of the world, at different times in history, were able to refer to the same larger Scheme of Things, how could this be possible if they weren't referring to something real, - that is simply not rational and not possible. If we are to be rational, how can we possibly explain away this phenomenon by saying that their common understandings, spread over thousands of years and different parts of the world, was just a massive coincidence.

There are of course many others, not just the great Masters, who have penetrated the Veil, to a greater or lesser extent, but let's keep this relatively simple, - we're just trying to establish the fact that, exactly as our Craft puts before us, it is possible for an individual to access at least some of the hidden secrets of mankind.

I don't want to belabour this point, but unless we can get past the idea that it is not possible, really and genuinely possible, for an individual to find out at least something from beyond the Veil, then how can a M.M.'s Search have any real credibility for us? And without credibility, how are we ever going to be

able to take it seriously? This is of course, exactly what we have seen, - an almost complete ignoring of our Search for the Genuine Secrets of a M.M.

So, to recap very briefly, - our rational thinking, on its own, cannot get us through what we call the Veil to uncover spiritual insights, unless it is assisted by that light which is from above. That our ritual refers to this natural process as the Search for the Genuine secrets of a M.M. but that this Search beyond the Veil has been ignored because we don't understand how it works and we therefore tend to go along with a popular culture that knows little of these things. But if we can rise above the common culture, the great Masters' shared understandings give us a rational basis for the M.M.'s Search and the credibility that we need.

So, having established a little credibility in the reality of the M.M.'s Search, what does our Craft actually say about penetrating the Veil in practice?

Well, in virtually all spiritual material from ancient times, the approach that has been taken (for good and valid reasons) is simply to point out ways in which we can move in the right direction, without giving much detail about how the process actually works, or why doing certain things is important. The ancient Masters talked mostly about how we can live in such a way that the fundamentals of life are functionally addressed. They illustrated how we can, if we wish, respond to this opportunity to live life functionally, with simple stories and, more so in the Eastern tradition, with some indication of the basic rules that apply to life on Earth. But they gave us little of the how and why that we would like to have that explains how these rules actually work in practice, and why they are so important.

Our Craft also, does not tell us how things work in the Scheme of Things, or even, specifically, how we are able to penetrate the Veil. It does not tell us why painful things happen or why doing certain things like helping our neighbour or letting go of things we want, or want to avoid, is important.

Unfortunately without first having details of how we are able to penetrate the Veil it is difficult for our rational mind to take it seriously in practice, because of our "left brain block."

This is, more or less, a chicken and egg situation; unless we live our lives in the way that the Masters (and the Craft) have put before us, we are unable to access awareness and understanding from beyond the Veil, - but it's difficult for us to live our lives to the very high standards that engage this natural process, without knowing how it works first.

What I would like to suggest therefore, is that throwing a little light on how penetrating the Veil actually works might help to break this impasse and make it easier for us to take the M.M.'s Search more seriously. In other words, a rational explanation of how the process works in practice might satisfy our rational mind's need for details, and help us get our "left brain block" out of the way.

This is actually not so difficult because ultimately everything has a rationality; the problem is not that our rational mind cannot comprehend these things, - the problem is that our rational mind is unable to uncover these things on its own, - ie, the Veil cannot be penetrated by the eye of human reason unless assisted by that light which is from above.

So, perhaps a rational explanation of how we are able to penetrate the Veil in practice, would again satisfy our left brain demand for some detail, some credibility, and help us get past our "left brain block." And we do now have something that is particularly helpful in throwing light on how we can penetrate the Veil that wasn't available when our rituals were written. We have now discovered something that our ancestors would not have understood as being physical, but yet has clear physical effect. Something which bridges the gap between the physical and the non-physical. We have discovered energy in the form of electricity, radio waves and all the other frequencies of electro-magnetic energy, and in uncovering new laws of nature it is normal to be able to see something of the supernatural as well, just as we have been told, "As above, so below."

We are also familiar these days with the fact that our physical world is made up absolutely and entirely

of energy, - in the form of atoms made up of trapped electrons, protons and neutrons. We know, at least inasmuch as we've been told, that there really isn't anything actually solid around us at all, - it's all energy. During the 20<sup>th</sup> Cent. this became understood and accepted by the general public and should in no way be controversial or bizarre.

It's also not very difficult to see that we have access to other energies as well, - emotional energy is quite easy to feel, particularly when it's strong, and even less substantial mental energy is not so difficult to accept. In fact we have nothing but energy!

And we know that energy has two main characteristics, - frequency and amplitude. We also know that frequency enables us to tune in, to harmonize, - enabling us to use radio waves for communication, for example.

Is it that difficult, likewise, to see that the emotional and mental harmony that we aim for in our lodges, puts us in tune with our brothers. And if this energy that embraces others is a more harmonious level than the energy of indifference, let alone actual disharmony, is it so difficult to see that this more harmonious frequency can also tune us in to more harmonious levels beyond the Veil, - after all, if everything in the physical world is made up entirely of energy then it is not so difficult to accept that everything beyond the Veil is also made up entirely of energy as well?

But what about amplitude? - is it also that difficult to see that the strength of the energy, - the signal - is important in making contact?

The knowledge of electricity was not, of course, available to the writers of our ritual, although they may have been aware that the Indians and the Chinese had been using healing energies for thousands of years. But whether they were aware of Oriental practices or not, if energy is the basis on which everything works, they cannot have been unaware of it and must surely have given it a prominent place in our ritual.

And of course they did. What is Brotherly Love except the energy of tuning in to the interests and welfare of others, - the frequency. What is Relief except the stronger physical energy of Brotherly Love in practice? - the physical effort, or amplitude, of actually helping someone, - just as our M.W. Grand Master made a point of emphasizing at the Craft Investiture this year. And, having tuned in with a high level frequency and sufficient amplitude, what is Truth except the awareness from the higher levels of harmony that we are tuned in to beyond the Veil.

Brethren, this is not allegorical, - anyone can use this process to tune in, - this is simple energy mechanics, - it is what meditation aims at by getting the usual lower frequency physical, emotional and mental energies out of the way.

We accept, do we not, that we have a "Veil that the eye of human reason cannot penetrate", - our personal experience confirms this only too well. Can we not also accept the next bit, "unless assisted by that light which is from above?" Surely it's not so difficult to accept that connecting with "that light which is from above" involves tuning in with higher frequencies of Brotherly Love and the amplitude of physical effort, - Relief - especially when these are our three Grand Principles!

Can we not use this knowledge of energy frequency and amplitude to give our three Grand Principles the credibility that our rational mind demands, - the credibility that our three Grand Principles so richly deserve?

Some brethren may of course say that they have practiced Brotherly Love and Relief and are not aware of penetrating any Veil. The best response to that comes from G.K. Chesterton who pointedly focused on the same problem when he said, -

"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried."

The actual practice of our three Grand Principles represents this higher level of difficulty of course. But to anyone who believes that we do generally practice our Grand Principles, I would have to say that, while we generally see a certain level of decorum in our lodges, and to a certain extent brethren are on their best behaviour, the fact is that so very often, the inevitable provocation that arises reveals a lack of real Brotherly Love. Only too frequently we see the same less than harmonious reaction that we would see in the outside world, - a standard that not only falls well short of the tuning in process that requires genuine harmony, but is actually the opposite of the coming together that we are aiming for. Haven't our brethren heard about turning the other cheek, or the more subtle Eastern question "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" Brethren, the energy, the feeling, cannot be faked and, if we don't like provocations, - inevitable provocations I might add - we should remember that the real challenge is to be able to maintain feelings of warmth and harmony when it's difficult, - almost anyone can do it when it's easy. Not surprisingly then Relief, - the individual effort of actually helping someone else, particularly when we don't have to - is also often in short supply, - certainly a few quid in the collection bag is not what it's all about. And how many brethren understand that Truth with a capital T, refers to the awareness that we can tune in to beyond the Veil? - and not to the simple virtue of honesty.

The great Masters have all pointed to the importance of embracing the interests and welfare of others rather than self-interest, in a great coming together, - not just token gestures that are easy and don't involve much personal effort; remember the widow's mites and the Samaritan and all the other parables. (The need for personal initiative in our efforts of course, is why we are not a service organization.)

Trying to understand what our Craft puts before us however, is the easy bit, - the real challenge is making it work, - that's the difficult bit that Chesterton pointed out so concisely. Such a challenge is clearly not for everyone, and that is why we need to be careful who we admit into our lodges. But you may say, "If we only initiate those who are clearly interested in spiritual things, we are not going to have many candidates!" But I would beg to disagree with any such view, and not just because of all the interest we have seen in the "Da Vinci Code." What man is there with a modicum of wit and intelligence who does not want to know what he is here on Earth for? What man of middle age does not begin to wonder sometimes what will happen when he dies? If people were aware that our Craft puts before us the way, - the only way - to access this knowledge, do you not think that the right people would be interested in our Craft? I am not personally at all a supporter of the idea that the more brethren we can get into our lodges, the stronger they will be, - if those brethren have little real interest in the deeper aspects of the Craft, will they support, or undermine, what our Craft puts before us? We need quality, not quantity, - brethren who are able to take the Search for the Genuine Secrets seriously, at least by grasping what is involved, even if they cannot always put it into practice. What destroys a lodge's efforts to take these things seriously is the brother at the bar who says, "Oh, not more of that spiritual stuff."

Negative comments like this reflect the ignorance of the outside world, - the lowest common denominator - how can we raise our game and wake up to the deeper understandings that our Craft puts before us unless we move away from a popular culture that knows almost nothing of these things?

It's hardly a surprise that most of our lodges, - and we don't need to limit this to our own Constitution - have become little more than dining clubs, with a ritual that is poorly understood except for the more obvious moral aspects, - and even these basic moral aspects are so often only given lip-service in practice.

It's not a question of curtailing the wonderful fellowship and camaraderie that we enjoy, - quite the reverse; most lodges go to the trouble and expense of putting on a formal dinner in an atmosphere which is usually most conducive to both respect and enjoyment, - an atmosphere which makes it so much easier for us to have warm feelings for our brethren, uncomplicated by all the mundane concerns of the outside world. Who doesn't enjoy the wonderful feeling when we look another brother in the eye with warmth

and innocence? - let's make full use of these warm feelings, - they may be somewhat superficial, or at least, untested, but it's the beginning of the whole process! So rather than changing what we do, let's raise our standards and at the same time, see how it leads to everything else that the Craft puts before us, -

ultimately, the way to understanding the human situation that mankind has always searched for. We should not be concerned that this is something that our popular culture tells us is impossible! - many people have used the process to penetrate the Veil, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously, tuning in to higher levels of awareness with the harmonious energy of Brotherly Love and Relief. As Freemasons we should be fully aware that it is a big myth that mankind is unable to find out the secrets of life.

Brethren, there is a case here for a little more clarity and seriousness. Actually, a lot more clarity and a lot more seriousness. We readily accept a Grand Lodge Above, we have a Veil and a Search for the Secrets, - how can we possibly have anything to do with this popular myth? And yet we do, - we almost completely ignore the Search, just like the outside world.

Are we going to continue to ignore it? Are we going to continue to go along with a culture that embraces the lowest common denominator in society, or are we going to give our ritual and our Craft the credibility that they deserve? What our ritual says is in black and white, - how can we possibly call ourselves serious Freemasons if we continue to ignore our MM Degree's Search, our very *raison d'être*?

Is this being somewhat provocative? Yes, of course it is. But don't we need a little provocation to help shake ourselves up and start being serious about our M.M. Degree? If brethren continue to hear the spiritual nature of our Craft treated more as an academic subject, how can they come to realize that our Craft presents us with a real, live process? We are dealing with a completely natural process that has always worked for mankind since time immemorial, - the individual has always had the choice of applying his energy, his concern, to the welfare of others, or alternatively, putting his energy and concern into his own welfare and interests; on the one hand, the beginning of a great coming together with everything that exists, and on the other hand, simply staying separate to explore the lower energies.

Understanding or scholarship is not a part of this process in which we choose what we tune in to automatically, minute by minute, day by day, year by year. Shouldn't we now focus on how this continuous, ongoing choice in the exercise of our free-will works in practice, and with clarity and a culture of respect, encourage brethren to recognize that our Craft directly addresses the most fundamental aspect of life on Earth and of the larger Scheme of Things of which we are a part.

But is it possible, in practice, to establish clarity and respect in our lodges for the way our Grand Principles work? - it's unquestionably a challenge, but I believe that it is. Chula Lodge in Bangkok, named after King Chulalongkorn who brought Siam so successfully into the 20<sup>th</sup> Cent. by combining the strengths of the East and West, was consecrated in 2001, specifically to focus on our ability to actually use our three Grand Principles. All our initiates see this focus as completely normal and would not countenance any application for membership if the man, or brother, did not evince a serious interest in the deeper nature of our Craft. Our District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago (Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand) has also started to pick up on these things with the clear support of our District Grand Master, and recent Communications have seen well-supported seminars focusing on the esoteric nature of our Craft.

It may not be easy to communicate these things to brethren, but that surely cannot be a reason not to try. As W.Bro. Trevor Stewart says in the synopsis for his address today, "...doing nothing is not an option!" How often do we hear the refrain from a new M.M. - "Is this all there is, one, two, three - one, two, three?" We are putting before candidates the actual process by which man is able to uncover the secrets

of life, and the response is, "Is this all there is!" The standard response of course, is to encourage the brother to join the Royal Arch, but when will we come to realize, while the Royal Arch focus on the Genuine Secrets is undoubtedly apposite, that the secrets given are symbolic and that every brother has to search for them beyond the Veil, on his own, - that uncovering the secrets is up to the individual, - all that we, as an organisation, can focus on, is the process, the opportunity.

Many people are hungry to know what life is really all about, the secrets of life, and our Craft addresses this opportunity directly, - surely we should be able to encourage brethren finally, to look at our ritual

at face value and see that the M.M.'s Search is a real search, - but one that only works with some serious tuning in. With a little clarity, could we not get brethren to start opening their minds to the wealth of understanding that is under our noses? Can we not imagine that many brethren who put so much time and effort into their masonry would welcome the realization that the Craft they already love, actually offers them so very much more?

Mr. Chairman, brethren, in closing may I ask, what is our Vision? In 10 years will we still be seen as an organization that doesn't really seem to have a purpose, - apart from acting out strange rituals, and a fondness for dining and helping our own, often somewhat surreptitiously? Or will we be properly recognized as an ancient and honorable society of men who have, through the centuries, sustained the knowledge of how men can finally emerge as Intelligent Participants in life? Will we be seen as tired or timeless?

Thank you Mr. Chairman, brethren.