

An Interview with Grand Secretary Jerry W. Kopp

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To Grand Secretary Jerry W. Kopp of The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted

Masons for the chance to converse about the craft.

Scott

An Interview with Grand Secretary Jerry W. Kopp

(Part One)

Abstract

An interview with Grand Secretary Jerry W. Kopp. He discusses: geographic, cultural, and linguistic family background; pivotal moments in personal life leading into freemasonry; the “grand design of being happy” and “communicating happiness” in freemasonic theory and the freemasonic tradition; “Man Know Thyself” based in one maxim from ancient Greece, and “Three Great Principles,” namely: “Brotherly Love,” “Relief,” and “Truth”; Thales of Miletus, of the Milesian school of the pre-Socratics; Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, and a possible adaptation from Thales into the Christian tradition; principles’ influence on the engagement of freemasons with the larger Canadian culture through the three Great Principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth; and freemasons’ self-definition as a “way of life.”

Keywords: Anaximander, Anaximenes, freemasonic theory, freemasonic tradition, freemasonry, grand design, Grand Secretary, Jerry W. Kopp, Thales.

1. In terms of geography, culture, and language, where does your family background reside?¹

¹ *RWBro Jerry Kopp* (2012) in *The Alberta Freemason*, describes, in brief, some of Kopp’s background:

Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Alberta RWBro Jerry W. Kopp hails from Loon Lake, Saskatchewan, and was born on 15 March 1948 to immigrant parents from Czechoslovakia. He grew up and was educated at Loon Lake....In May 1970 Brother Kopp joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and took his training at “Depot Division” of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Training Centre in Regina. His first posting took him to Drumheller...Brother Kopp attained the rank of Sergeant and retired from the RCMP on 31

My family background. I have no masonic connections whatsoever. I am of German origin.

And I'm originally from Saskatchewan.

2. What seem like pivotal moments in personal life leading into freemasonry?²

Well, I was in the Mounted Police for 31 years, then I became friends with a couple people I worked with in the Mounted Police who were freemasons. I like what I'd seen from the two individuals, and decided to make an application.

3. The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons states their one aim, as follows, "To please each other and unite in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness."³ What equates to the "grand design of being happy" and

October 2000 with almost 31 years of service...He was transferred to Milk River in January 1978 and affiliated with Century Lodge No. 100 at Milk River. During a 10-year posting in Edmonton, Brother Kopp became active in Freemasonry by visiting many of the Edmonton and area Masonic Lodges. While in Edmonton, he was a member of the joint RCMP/Edmonton Police Service Master Masons Degree Team...Brother Kopp affiliated with Strathmore Lodge in 1991 and was Worshipful Master in 1995, 2003 and in 2011. He was the first Worshipful Master to serve a second term in the history of the Strathmore Lodge...In the fall of 1995 Brother Kopp was elected as District Deputy Grand Master for the Dinosaur District. He served this office in 1996-97 under Most Worshipful Brother Basile Costouros as Grand Master...On 1 November 2000, he was hired by the Grand Lodge of Alberta as Assistant Grand Secretary and was invested as Grand Secretary in June 2001. Brother Kopp continues to be a very active ritualist in his Lodge and in other Lodges that may require assistance.

The Alberta Freemason. (2012, January). RWBro Jerry Kopp. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/AbFM/ABF1201.pdf>.

² Freemasonry. (2015). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/order-of-Freemasons>.

³ For further information, *The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons* (2015) states:

Freemasonry is a way of life and is composed of people of all nationalities, religions, occupations and ages. Freemasons believe in truth, tolerance, respect, and freedom. Anyone may petition to be a Mason so long as they meet a few requirements. Freemasons believe in "making good men better" which implies that its adherents should seek continual improvement and growth. A maxim in ancient Greece, "Man Know Thyself", has echoes in modern ceremonial Freemasonry and implies the importance of learning about self, for by becoming a more enlightened and principled individual it is most probable that a person will in

the means of “communicating happiness” in freemasonic theory and the freemasonic tradition as per the tradition of The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons?⁴

Well, the Grand Design is God’s Will. His design is to have happy people. We teach freemasons to be of the characteristics of what God expects us to be. Communicating happiness, of course, means is to always communicate in a happy way, and forget the negative.

4. The aim continues with the phrase “Man Know Thyself” based in one maxim from ancient Greece.^{5,6} Freemasonry contains foundational principles, the “Three Great

turn be a contributing citizen to their society. It is important that a Mason be a good family member, friend, neighbor and employee. Freemasons believe in living a life of positive contribution and to the building up of self, society and the world. Masonry is not a substitute for a person's chosen faith but rather supplements faith, spirituality, life and living.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/>.

⁴ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/>.

⁵ “Man Know Thyself” comes from the tradition of ancient Greece, possibly, from the earliest philosopher in the Western tradition within the Milesian school. A man named Thales of Miletus, along with Anaximander and Anaximenes in the Milesian tradition too. Bear in mind, the Encyclopedia Britannica entry states:

No writings by Thales survive, and no contemporary sources exist. Thus, his achievements are difficult to assess. Inclusion of his name in the canon of the legendary Seven Wise Men led to his idealization, and numerous acts and sayings, many of them no doubt spurious, were attributed to him, such as “Know thyself” and “Nothing in excess.” [Emphasis added.]

Thales of Miletus. (2015). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Thales-of-Miletus>.

⁶ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

Principles,” namely: “Brotherly Love,” “Relief,” and “Truth.”^{7,8,9} What does each great principle mean in theory and practice?

“Brotherly love,” of course, is for each of us to care for each other. “Relief” is to provide whatever relief is necessary. In some cases, it might be monetary. In some cases, it might be simply to visit. And truth, we need to be truthful with each other. Now, “Man know thyself” is actually a quotation that comes out of *The Bible* in Timothy.

5. Do you think this might come from Thales of Miletus, of the Milesian school of the pre-Socratics, which pre-dates the Christian faith?

Run that by me again.

6. In the pre-Socratics, before Socrates and the Christian faith, there was the Milesian school of philosophy, which is probably the oldest in the Western tradition. There was Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. Thales thought the world was made of water. In that, some quotes are attributed to him such as “nothing is excess” and “know

⁷ According to The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons, “brotherly love” means, “Every true Freemason will show tolerance and respect for the opinions of others and behave with kindness and understanding to his fellow creatures.” “Relief” means, “Freemasons are taught to practice charity and to care - not only for their own - but also for the community as a whole, both by charitable giving and by voluntary efforts and works as individuals.” Finally, “truth” means, “Freemasons strive for truth, requiring high moral standards and aiming to achieve them in their own lives.” Other principles, or beliefs, include “truth, tolerance, respect, and freedom,” but do have partial containment in the other great principles too.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/>.

⁸ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

⁹ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

thymself.” Do you think that might be an adaptation from Thales into the Christian tradition?

I have no doubt in my mind that it has a great deal of connection. No question about it. I think that if you look at the Buddhist faith. Much of the Buddhist faith is, really when you stop and look at it, is exactly what our God, our creator, has given us, and that’s what freemasonry lives by as well.

7. How do these principles influence the engagement of freemasons with the larger Canadian culture?¹⁰ With the three Great Principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth, you provided some examples, but those remain particular examples. I mean a general stance of freemasons towards the cultures in which they happen to find themselves, and how those principles influence a freemasonic stance in the culture in which they find themselves.

Freemasonry fits into every culture, Canadian culture of whatever. It may not necessarily be accepted by all culture. It is certainly accepted by those who are acquainted with freemasonry

¹⁰ According to *What is Freemasonry?* (2015), on the relationship of freemasonry to society, it states:

Freemasonry demands from its members a respect for the law of the country in which a man works and lives. Its principles do not in any way conflict with its members' duties as citizens, but should strengthen them in fulfilling their public and private responsibilities. The use by a Freemason of his membership to promote his own or anyone else's business, professional or personal interests is condemned, and is contrary to the conditions on which he sought admission to Freemasonry. His duty as a citizen must always prevail over any obligation to other Freemasons, and any attempt to shield a Freemason who has acted dishonorably or unlawfully is contrary to this prime duty and the teachings of Freemasonry itself. [Emphasis added.]

and what freemasonry stands for, which is really a continuance of our spiritual beliefs in God and practicing and living by it. But, and again, some cultures may not accept us at all. And if they're cultures within our country, like they may be Canadians, but they may not be true Canadian culture. Somebody comes from the Middle East. They may have some differences with us. Although, we do have a lot of Muslim, particularly Muslims, who belong to our fraternity.

8. Freemasons might demarcate their practice through self-definition as a “way of life” as opposed to a religion.^{11,12} Although, freemasonry remains open to individuals from “all

¹¹ One can find an indirect description of this ideal in statements peppered throughout the thorough and concise contents of the website. For instance, *What is Freemasonry?* (2015) states:

*Freemasonry is: Kindness in the home, honesty in business, courtesy in society, fairness in work, resistance toward the wicked, pity and concern for the unfortunate, help for the weak, trust in the strong, forgiveness for the penitent and, above all, love for one another and reverence and love for God.
Freemasonry is a way of life.*

What is Freemasonry? (2015), in addition to the previous quote, says:

*Freemasonry is composed of people of all nationalities, religions, occupations and ages. Freemasons believe in truth, tolerance, respect, and freedom. Anyone may petition to be a Mason so long as they meet a few requirements.
Freemasons believe in “making good men better” which implies that its adherents should seek continual improvement and growth. A maxim in ancient Greece, “Man Know Thyself”, has echoes in modern ceremonial Freemasonry and implies the importance of learning about self, for by becoming a more enlightened and principled individual it is most probable that a person will in turn be a contributing citizen to their society. It is important that a Mason be a good family member, friend, neighbor and employee. Freemasons believe in living a life of positive contribution and to the building up of self, society and the world. Masonry is not a substitute for a person's chosen faith but rather supplements faith, spirituality, life and living.*

Finally, the same article describes the difference between the freemasonic way of life and religious way of life, especially with regards to their compatibility – freemasonry and religion, as follows:

Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion. It has no theology and does not teach any route to salvation. It deals in a man's relationship with his fellow man not in a man's relationship with his God. Although every lodge meeting is opened and closed with a prayer and its ceremonies reflect the essential truths and moral teachings common to many of the world's great religions, no discussion of religion is permitted in Masonic meetings. The one essential qualification means that Freemasonry is open to men of many religions and it expects and encourages them to continue to practice his religion and to regard its holy book as the unerring standard of truth. The Bible will always be present in a lodge but as the organization welcomes men of all faiths, it is called the Volume of the Sacred Law. Thus, when the Volume of the Sacred Law is referred to in ceremonies, to a non-Christian it will be the holy book of his religion and to a Christian it will be the Bible.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

¹² The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

nationalities, religions, occupations and ages.”¹³ [Emphasis added.] What sets freemasonry apart from religion and alternate ways of life?^{14,15}

First of all, each mason is to practice his faith. Whether he is Hindu, Christian, or whatever have you, we are set apart in that we're not a religious organization. We teach the principles that God has given us, but we're very much spiritual. Now, having said that, in many cases, we find that our brethren who may not have been religious in their life may have been strengthened by being a freemason and then becoming a religious person. You know, it strengthens the belief of God and his principles. Because we focus in more on the teachings of God than perhaps some of religious, really.

¹³ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

¹⁴ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

¹⁵ Freemasonry. (2015). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/order-of-Freemasons>.

(Part Two)

Abstract

An interview with Grand Secretary Jerry W. Kopp. He discusses: *The History of Freemasonry* by Otto Klotz in 1868, March 15 and the ideal freemason, and “Entered Apprentice,” “Fellow of the Craft,” and “Master Mason,” and those higher in the organizational structure of authority, power, and influence; Grand Secretary of The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons duties and responsibilities; other core positions in freemason lodges in Canada; the purpose for the structural and membership hierarchies for the freemasons; and Grand Master Message from MW Bro. Chris Batty, the Grand Master of Alberta, and the solutions to the three problems, identical to Batty’s, proposed by the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 for individuals and collectives.

Keywords: Chris Batty, Entered Apprentice, Fellow of the Craft, freemason, freemasonry, Grand Master, Grand Secretary, Jerry W. Kopp, Master Mason, Otto Klotz, Premier Grand Lodge.

9. In *The History of Freemasonry* by Otto Klotz in 1868, March 15, Klotz enunciates the ideal of freemasonry in the individual in the “Ideal Freemason,” as follows:

If you see a man who quietly and modestly moves in the sphere of his life ... The man who is free from superstition and free from infidelity; who in nature sees the finger of the Eternal Master ... The man who towards himself is a severe judge, but who is tolerant with the debilities of his neighbour ... The man who, without courting applause, is loved by all noble-minded men, respected by his superiors and revered by his subordinates ... If

*you, my Brethren meet such a man, you will see the personification of brotherly love, relief and truth ...*¹⁶

It continues in similar fashion to enunciate the varieties of attributes contained in this ideal freemason.¹⁷ With respect to attempts to reach this high moral standard, what aspects seem the easiest and the most difficult to achieve for freemasons including “Entered Apprentice,” “Fellow of the Craft,” and “Master Mason,” and those higher in the organizational structure of authority, power, and influence?^{18,19}

¹⁶ According to the The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons website, in the *History of Freemasonry*, M.W. Bro. Otto Klotz on 1868, March 15, wrote:

If you see a man who quietly and modestly moves in the sphere of his life; who, without blemish, fulfils his duty as a man, a subject, a husband and a father; who is pious without hypocrisy, benevolent without ostentation, and aids his fellow man without self-interest; whose heart beats warm for friendship, whose serene mind is open for licensed pleasures, who in vicissitudes does not despair, nor in fortune will be presumptuous, and who will be resolute in the hour of danger; The man who is free from superstition and free from infidelity; who in nature sees the finger of the Eternal Master; who feels and adores the higher destination of man; to whom faith, hope and charity are not mere words without any meaning; to whom property, nay even life, is not too dear for the protection of innocence and virtue, and for the defense of truth; The man who towards himself is a severe judge, but who is tolerant with the debilities of his neighbour; who endeavors to oppose errors without arrogance, and to promote intelligence without impatience; who properly understands how to estimate and employ his means; who honours virtue though it may be in the most humble garment, and who does not favor vice though it be clad in purple; and who administers justice to merit whether dwelling in palaces or cottages. The man who, without courting applause, is loved by all noble-minded men, respected by his superiors and revered by his subordinates; the man who never proclaims what he has done, can do, or will do, but where need is will lay hold with dispassionate courage, circumspect resolution, indefatigable exertion and a rare power of mind, and who will not cease until he has accomplished his work, and then, without pretension, will retire into the multitude because he did the good act, not for himself, but for the cause of good! If you, my Brethren meet such a man, you will see the personification of brotherly love, relief and truth; and you will have found the ideal of a Freemason. If you, my Brethren meet such a man, you will see the personification of brotherly love, relief and truth; and you will have found the ideal of a Freemason.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/>.

¹⁷ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/>.

¹⁸ The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

¹⁹ One should bear in mind the importance of the differences involved in the common - mistaken based on assumptions and assertions - conception of the freemasonic traditions and the purposeful representation to the external world, the general public, as delineated in the Grand Master Message, in which the Grand Master of Alberta, MW Bro. Chris Batty, states:

First of all, we, as individuals, should be living again by God's principles, and doing all of this brotherly love, relief, and truth, without having to brag about it, to bring attention to "hey, look what good I've done," we just do it. And if somebody happens to notice us, that's the way it is. But we do not try to bring any attention to ourselves as to what we're doing. And that's the way our upper echelon in freemasonry should also act.

They're not superior to anybody. Everybody's on the same level. They should practice that, and there is no superiority. If I was to present with, say, King Hussein, who may well be, may have been, a mason, in other words, him and I would talk on the same level, brother to brother. There would be no airs on. He may well be the King of Jordan, but we still talk on a level and treat each other with respect and so on.

10. You earned the position of Grand Secretary of The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons.²⁰ What general duties and responsibilities come with this station?

Becoming a Freemason does not give you any particular power, or the ability to understand the secrets of the universe, but it does provide a set of principles and doctrines, and the environment where a man can practice important life skills.

Freemasonry embraces men of all religions and faiths. We do not discuss religion or politics in any of our meetings. We must understand that the tenets and principles of Freemasonry are not aligned to everyone. It is, therefore paramount that we ensure that men who come to our doors are doing so for the right reasons.

If Freemasonry interests you and you wish to associate with like-minded men, men of honour, men of integrity, men who are loyal to their fellow man, if you are a seeker of deeper knowledge, self-improvement or you wish to participate in doing the good act for the benefit of mankind. Then Freemasonry will be there for you.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). Grand Master Message. Retrieved from http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/gm_message.html.

²⁰ For some history into The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons, on its foundation, the website, after description of the difficulties involved in the endeavour, states:

Oh my gosh, first of all, I'm the administrator for the organization here in Alberta. Each province has a Grand Lodge. So each Grand Lodge has a Grand secretary. I'm here to monitor all of that lodges that we have to ensure that they follow the constitutions and regulations, and their own by-laws. And if there is something that goes askew, I remind them that their by-laws state that they're not able to do this. And so I set them straight. I offer any interpretations of the constitution and regulations, and maybe some of the ritual work that we do. My responsibilities are that, exactly that.

But my further responsibilities in the Grand Lodge is that each of the lodges pay a per capita, and we also receive monies for charities. I monitor two big charity funds, which are registered charities. And I look after, in the neighbourhood of, 3.5-4 million dollars, which we put out for education, for children in need or students in need. It sounds like we got lots

It would be a sad occasion, even today, if the Grand Lodge of Alberta did not receive at its Annual Communication a delegation from its Mother Grand Lodge.

History rolls on and political changes do come. It now became expedient to divide the huge North West Territories into smaller political sections. Thus the Government of Canada on the first day of September 1905 carved out two new provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Alberta must now separate itself from the Grand Lodge of Manitoba and separate they did. Five months following the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Alberta the First Annual Communication was held in Medicine Hat on February 20, 1906. At this meeting R.W. Bro. Oswald Kealy was elected and installed as Grand Master.

From these beginnings, Alberta was a new and quickly growing Province, truly serving as a hub for the settling of the Canadian west, as eastern Canadians, Americans and new citizens from throughout the Commonwealth and continental Europe came in waves to the Great Prairie in search of opportunity, freedom, fortune and hope for a better life and station for their heirs and descendants. And nowhere more so, than in early Alberta, was Freemasonry more apparently refreshed by the amalgamation of the diverse Masonic rites and cultural customs brought by the founders of these new communities. Among the wealth of customs, traditions and cultural attachments that came with them, was of course the continuance of the great Order of Freemasonry and more lodges sprang up like wild roses to the foundations we have in this day and age. So may it continue until time shall be no more. And in the latin that emblazes our Grand Lodge crest AUDI VIDE TACE may we HEAR, SEE, BE SILENT. [Emphasis added.]

of money, but we have money that's tied up in what is called bereavement. It is willed to us by families. That money has to be invested, and it stays invested, and the only money that we can extract off of that investment is the monies that we gain through interest, and we disperse that through university bursaries in the neighbourhood of \$5,000 per student up to \$220,000. Our main focus on that is to look after those students in need. A family that makes \$300,000 a year is not in need, but there are. The one thing that I noticed that there are a lot of single parents out there, single mothers that have 2-3 children. Very intelligent children with the mom's income of \$35,000-40,000 she can't afford to send them to university. So this is where the masonic higher education bursary comes in. When the child intends to go to university, he submits his application and the application is considered, and we vet out from anywhere between 200-400 applicants, suitable candidates, to receive the \$5,000, which is in the neighbourhood of 40 bursaries.

11. In terms of their titles and functions, what other core positions exist in freemason lodges in Canada?

I guess the Grand Treasurer is a core position. A cord position probably could mean the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, and the Wardens, and then you have different committees and different boards. And it varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions might have a board of general purposes, or a board of directors, or they may even be where the principal offices of the Grand Lodge are the board of directors. It is complicated from one jurisdiction to another.

12. Freemasonic collectives divide in lodges, districts, and halls.²¹ Ranks exist among the earliest to the lattermost membership of the freemasons too. What purpose do these structural and membership hierarchies serve for the freemasons?

Well, how can I put this, it's probably much the same as the hierarchy in the RCMP. Let's use the RCMP for instance, they have detachments. In the detachment, they have a commander. If the detachment is big enough, they may have commanders that are under commanders. They might be shift supervisors. Freemasonry is the same thing. Each lodge has its master of the lodge. They have a secretary, and they have a treasurer, and and they have different positions.

Once you get to be the master, you are what they call a worshipful master, a worship brother, okay. You are always a brother no matter what, okay? But it is a title while you hold that position, and you can carry the worshipful title onto after you are out of office, only out of respect.

Then we go to the district level, the district, in the province of Alberta, we're divided into 14 districts. There are districts as small as having 4 lodges. We have districts that have as many as 14 lodges. There's a district deputy that oversees that district on behalf of the overall

²¹ In the *Lodges and District* section of the The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons website, it states:

The Grand Lodge of Alberta A.F & A.M. is divided into 14 administrative Districts each headed by the representative of the Grand Master with the title of District Deputy Grand Master. Included are two Research Lodges. Please view below information on each District and corresponding Lodges within.

commander for freemasonry in Alberta, who is the Grand Master. Of course, the Grand Master has a Deputy Grand Master underneath him, much the same as a Police Chief has a Deputy Police Chief. The district Deputy helps clarify points for the lodges within the districts, much like I do as the Grand Secretary.

13. In the Grand Master Message from MW Bro. Chris Batty, the Grand Master of Alberta, Batty asserts three main problems in current society are identical to those in 1717, the year of origin or formation of the Premier Masonic Grand Lodge, as follows:

- *The greatest fear we have is to stand and speak in public.*
- *The greatest challenge in the work place is the people problems.*
- *The greatest challenge in marriage is the ability to effectively communicate with each other.²²*

What solutions does freemasonry propose for these problems for individuals and collectives (lodges, districts, and halls, and their respective societies such as Canada)?

It's applying God's principles, in many respects, and as many of us know, God's words can be twisted around by people. That's one of the greatest challenges. I used to manage people. There's people that had problems with some of the directives. Standard directives, that's a people problem.

²² The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). Grand Master Message. Retrieved from http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/gm_message.html.

As a matter of fact, those that have joined freemasonry sometimes become good speakers, and may never have been a speaker in their life. For instance, myself, 35-40 years ago, I was afraid to stand up in front of a classroom. Now, I can stand in front of a stadium filled with 18,000 people if I have to. It's given me that confidence.

With respect to marriage, I guess I'm a poor one to talk because I'm divorced. (Laughs) But I think that the ability to effectively communicate with each other is a breakdown in many, many of our marriages – failing to communicate. And we emphasize, in freemasonry, the need to communicate and continue to communicate.

Communicate with each other, communicate with our spouses, and communicate with our friends. That's about it, communicate. And I think we all know that. Through the media, through the social media; as a matter of matter of fact, now, in my opinion has become one disconnect to the verbal communications with one person to another in our society. In other words, we'd rather text each other than talk to each other. Probably, you as a young fellow should know that pretty well. (Laughs)

...This is true. (Laughs) I try to limit use. I have more productive things to do...

(Part Three)

Abstract

An interview with Grand Secretary Jerry W. Kopp. He discusses: falsehoods about the freemasons; truths to dispel the falsehoods; means of solicitation in relation to the freemasons; greatest lesson for the public to know about the freemasons; freemasons and the Catholic church; their current disagreement; differences between the freemasons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; atheists and agnostics in relation to the freemasons; and conspiracy theories.

Keywords: agnostics, atheists, Catholic Church, conspiracy theories, falsehoods, freemasons, Grand Secretary, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jerry W. Kopp, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, truths.

14. ...What falsehoods exist about the freemasons?

I think falsehoods are that we're devil worshipers. We're a cult. We're involved in conspiracies. It goes on and on. The first thing is the public needs to understand what we stand for. We stand for delivering and living by the principles of God. We're not anything against God. We're not into devil worshiping or any of this. Conspiracies and overthrowing governments, we do not even have time to organize ourselves as far as I'm concerned.

Conspiracies, it takes a great deal of intelligence and time, and we're all working people. We don't have the time for that kind of stuff.

15. What truths dispel them?

Well, I think how to get rid of it is to let people of the public know what we really stand for. We stand for the individual – we give the lessons through our initiations and degree work, that you as an individual “you need to live this way” and the way that God meant us to be. Now, I can tell you that, but it’s your responsibility. There’s a saying, “We take men and make them better men.” That to me is a fallacy. I give you the lessons. And it’s now for you to follow through. I cannot improve you if you do not follow the lessons.

It’s like taking the horse to the water. You can take them to the water, but you can’t make them drink. And it’s the same with freemasonry. I can give you the lessons. Our priests, bishops, and so on, can give the lessons, but now it’s our responsibility to go out and live by those lessons, to practice those lessons that we have been given. Does that make that clear?

16. Yes, I will draw one analogy. I request interviews with other Grand Lodges’

representatives, e.g. Manitoba, and so on. On some of the websites, I noticed the use of the phrase “making good men better...” Your solution to that is to draw it back to the individual’s own responsibility to manage themselves to become that better person.

The lessons are there and provided. That goes to a larger point about the freemasons that differs from the Jehovah’s Witnesses or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. As far as I know, they will come to your door and solicit you. To the freemasonic lodges, it remains up to the individual to request possible consideration in joining.

You got it *right* on the mark. We do not solicit. They have to come to us. If you want to become a freemason, you come and talk to me, or anyone that is a freemason. And we will take the information, and you know, we may do some inquiries in the community, “What is this man like?”

Whatever have you, and we’ll say, “Okay, if you want to continue on with this pursuit, we’ll give you some documents.” And then we’ll run it past the membership in the lodge and giving proper notice that we’re going to ballot on an individual, and if the ballot is approved, then we will proceed with the ceremonies that require you to become a full-fledged mason in the hope that you’ll carry on with the principles.

17. What remain the greatest lessons for the general public to learn about the freemasons?

I think the greatest lesson that we have is to live by God’s principles, God’s plan, and it is a way of life. It is – God has given us the tools, and here is the way of life, and we all need to live by that. When we talk about living by those lessons, we have to set aside if there is any prejudices with respect to race, creed, color, religion, you name it. We need to all work together, and live together, and make this a happy world.

18. An uneasy relationship exists between the freemasons and the Roman Catholic

Church.²³ The Roman Catholic Church does not agree with freemasons. What seems like the source of this tension and outright rejection to you?

²³ *What is Freemasonry?* (2015) states:

I think it goes back to some of the Papal Bulls. I think it goes back to some of the misunderstanding. I don't think there are people within the Roman Catholic Church, or other churches as far as that goes, that understand what our teachings are. We have, in the past – and you know, let's put it this way, there have been Roman Catholics and Roman Catholic Priests, and Roman Catholic Bishops that have been freemasons.

We know that. I know, having spoken to a Roman Catholic Priest from Spokane, Washington here in Calgary, I mentioned to him that I'm a retired mounted policeman, but that I'm in another job. And I said, "I don't know if you'll agree with me and the job that I've got, but I'm the Grand Secretary with the freemasons." And he jumped with jolly. He thought the freemasons were the greatest guys going.

What I think it is, I think there are some people – I don't know how you want to put it – they always want to put a myth, or something negative, toward any organization that isn't spun off from a church. With them not understanding what we stand for, that's where the issue is, and we have people that will say, "Well, you cannot belong to the church anymore because

Because of their belief in universal principles and freedoms Freemasons have been prosecuted and seen historically as threats by tyrants and despotic dictators. Intolerance towards Freemasons even emanated at one time from the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Various Roman Catholic Popes have published condemnations of Freemasonry, starting with Bull, In Eminenti, by Pope Clement XII, on 28 April, 1738. Although Roman Catholic Canon Law does not specifically mention Freemasonry, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Roman Catholic Church still views association as a serious sin. Furthermore, Freemasonry had been outlawed in Germany by Hitler and the Nazi's during WW II, by Mussolini in 1925, by Franco in Spain in 1941, suppressed by the Communists of Russia, Romania and Hungary, and in Iran by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. The countries where Freemasonry openly exists are in counties that are tolerant and more or less democratic.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

you're a freemason." And the individual doesn't know what a freemason is. I think there's a lack of education out there with respect to freemasons.

19. Where does this current disagreement lie?

Well, I don't know with the current Pope, what his position is. I can tell you that John the 23rd had no problem with the freemasons. I can tell you Pope Paul, I don't remember what his number was, he was after John, there was nothing really mentioned. John Paul, I don't know what his position was, but I know that Pope Benedict had a total disrespect, a total dislike for the freemasons. Prior to him becoming Pope, he wrote a big paper about freemasons, and saying, 'They're evil.' – and whatever have you.

I would suggest that the current Pope, I like the current Pope, the disposition that he has, and the thinking that he has, we probably fall right in line with him. Is it because he's a Jesuit? I don't know. I'd like to learn more about the current Pope. Eventually, maybe, we'll see something come out from his office as to the, you know – but it's hard to say, but I do know Pope Benedict didn't like us.

20. Something, as far as I can discern, unique to the freemasons emerges out of their insistence on the free will of the individual to inquire or join the freemasons.²⁴ A far

²⁴ *What is Freemasonry?* (2015) states:

Every man comes, of his own free will and accord, with his own individual needs and interests. One man may join so that he can associate with other men who believe that only by improving themselves can they hope to improve their society. Another man may join because he is looking for a focus for his charitable inclinations. And yet another may be attracted by a strong sense of history and tradition. Many join simply because they knew a friend or relative who was a freemason and they admired that man's way of living his

different approach than Jehovah's Witnesses or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, where these groups tend to come door-to-door. How does this emphasis on the freedom of the will for the individual to inquiring or joining freemasonry link to its fundamental principles?

It probably – the fact that you come of your own free will and accord is one. The fact that the Creator has given you leeway of allowing yourself to be free and think for yourself, and to do whatever you see would be correct in the eyes of the Creator. That you don't necessarily need to be guided by God's will constantly. I don't know what else I can say. You're not controlled. That's the bottom line: you're not controlled. And you're not being pestered to join the fraternity, much as you say with the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of the Latter-Day Saints.

Interestingly enough, the Church of the Latter-Day Saints, they do have freemasons. Utah is a good example of it. There are many Mormons in Utah, and, well, there are a lot of masons down there. And I know a few Mormons that are freemasons, they're good masons. They'll tell you there's nothing against the teachings of freemasonry that goes against any aspects of the Church of the Latter-Day Saints.

life. All who join and become active discover a bond of brotherly affection and a community of mutual support; a practical extension of their own religious and philosophical beliefs.

The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). What is Freemasonry?. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/freemasonry.html>.

Now, I'm not aware of any Jehovah's Witnesses being in freemasonry, but, maybe, one day there will be. And as long as he believes in a Supreme Being, or God - God or a Supreme Being, it doesn't matter. God is the Supreme Being, Supreme Ruler, or Supreme Architect, he is it.

21. What status do those of, for instance, an atheistic or agnostic stance hold within the freemasonic tradition?

We do not accept people that are atheists. We make that quite clear. They have to believe in a Supreme Being or God. They have to believe in God, or, again, the Supreme Being.

22. Conspiracy theories and theorists glom onto freemasons. Sometimes without distinctions between the Scottish Rite, Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (the "Shriners"), Order of the Eastern Star, the Order of DeMolay, the Order of Builders, the Order of Job's Daughters, the Order of Rainbow, and others, or even a modicum of connection to the natural world. What seems like the foundation of this phenomena to you?

Well, I don't belong many of these organizations. But I do see them -- that their principles are the same. They probably do an extension of the teachings of God. They might go into another area. They might go into the building of King Solomon. They might go into an area - there's the Red Cross of Constantine, which is an invitational body. You have to be a Christian. They teach on the Christian side. So basically, what we're looking at in

freemasonry, is the teachings are – fall in light with The Bible or the holy writings. It doesn't matter what religion you're dealing with.

Eventually, freemasonry extends into Christianity in the order. But these are bodies that in the base of freemasonry, which is craft masonry, which I'm in. For further teachings, for further development of the Creator, God's teachings, are taught in all of these other bodies. Maybe not so much in the Shrine, they're kind of the happy-go-lucky boys. They all have to belong to the craft. The way their constitution and regulations read right now. Whether they'll ever be a separation, I don't know. I don't think they really teach a whole lot of lessons about the Creator. They're kind of a charitable organization.

They're a charity organization, and that's they're main focus.

Again, conspiracy theories, it's only speculation on the part of those that don't understand the various bodies freemasonry, or the extensions, or its orders. I don't see where there's any, any conspiracies at all with any of these orders. Again, there's armchair quarterbacks that sit back and try to come up with theories that try to discredit somebody. That's what these conspiracy people do. They'll say, "They're devil worshipers." Which they've done with Shrine and others. If they understood the scope of their teachings, I think they'd change their views.

23. Symbols perform important functions in ritual magic for numerous organizations

including the aforementioned.²⁵ How do Freemasons incorporate unique symbols into their initiations and rituals? (Of course, this will not implicate divulgence of the non-secret society's secrets.)

It's interesting. If we go back to the stone mason times, before there was speculative freemasonry, we had stone masons, which was the operative. There was a hierarchy in there. And the hierarchy, of course, existed through experience. Now, some of the people that were hired on as entered apprentice might not have been, or couldn't read, linguistics where they were illiterate. They may have been illiterate. So, first of all, in any of these stone masons, it's interesting, when they were building these cathedrals the word "law" actually derived from the operative masons.

On the cathedral or temple, they had a lean-to, or something similar to that, against the building they were building, and that was called the "lodge." What happened in that lodge? That was a gathering place for those employees. It was social area for those employees. It was an area where they received instructions. And they had devotional aspects in the lodge. They went out on job sites, and did evotionals before taking lunch, you name it. That's the name "lodge" comes from.

²⁵ As listed in question 18, it says, "Scottish Rite, Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (the "Shriners"), Order of the Eastern Star, the Order of DeMolay, the Order of Builders, the Order of Job's Daughters, the Order of Rainbow."

Now, the lessons that were taught to some of these illiterates, and they would already be starting to say, “Okay, you know, the square is -- means square actions. Square, ninety degrees, and they’ll put interpretation of the Creator on there, that when you approach somebody beyond the square, be square.” In other words, be honest; so if you saw the square, it would remind you also of your spiritual or your faith, to say, ‘Oh, I see the square. That means I need to square. Oh, yea, I got to think about being honest, being on the *level*.’” In other words, we’re all on the level. We’re all born on the level.

So they gave into the, on the speculative side, meaning to each of the symbols that were incorporated into the building of any of these cathedrals or temples. And that’s where the symbolism comes from. And, of course, now, we’re talking about passage. You wouldn’t want to hire a guy that’s an entered apprentice, and go on to the 9th floor of the temple to do the fine works. He hasn’t been skilled enough to do that. Get what I mean?

In other words, he can cut a 2x4, but he cannot make it look fancy yet because he hasn’t got those skills. Or, let’s go to modern times, we send somebody off to school to get his training in electrical work. Now, we’re not going to take that trainee and go down to the petro-Canada building and wire up the building. And put him in charge because he doesn’t have the skills yet. So how do we stop anybody from going and getting into that area? I see. Now, we’re going to use, in the operative sense, maybe, a grip and password. And that basically goes back to biblical times as well.

The movement of people in the Middle East, they could tell people by how they pronounced certain words, and if they could pronounce a certain word, you could go, “Oh, he cannot pronounce that certain word. He can’t be one of ours.” And so, that’s where the pass-words and pass-grips come from. They were secret to those in the trade. They were secret to those qualified to work on the 9th floor. So if he goes up there, and he didn’t know the word or the grip, he didn’t on the floor to go onto that 9th floor.

(Part Four)

Abstract

Interview with RW Bro. Jerry W. Kopp. He discusses: the incorporation of symbols into initiations and rituals; Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund, and the philanthropy's fulfillment for individuals and lodges of freemasonry; attributes of the Grand Architect of the Universe or the Supreme Being; alignment of freemasons with The Grand Architect of the Universe or Supreme Being; and the near and far future for the 5,000,000 active freemasons.

Keywords: freemasons, Grand Architect of the Universe, Grand Secretary, initiation, Jerry W. Kopp, philanthropy, rituals, Supreme Being, symbols, The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons.

24. The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons conducts charitable functions for the public. For instance, in the area of education, the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund provides funds for these.^{26,27} What does philanthropy and magnanimity fulfill for individuals and lodges of freemasonry?

²⁶ The Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund states, "The Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund was founded by a Resolution passed at the Grand Communication of 1957 under GM Ross Sheppard, to be the official Outreach Charity of the Grand Lodge of Alberta."

Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. (2015). Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.mhebf.com/>.

²⁷ A summary description of its philosophy in relation to the public through the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund says, "Do the good act, not for yourself, but for the cause of the good." The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. (2015). The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons. Retrieved from <http://www.freemasons.ab.ca/>.

It goes right back to the initial here, where you described part of a charge. It's, "Do you see a man who quietly and modestly moves through the sphere of his life?" We don't want notoriety. We will just do the good for the benefit of the society. And our charity work is the same way. We do it quietly with no fanfare, no recognition. Although, I think in some ways, that philosophy has changed somewhat. In that, we do take the opportunity for some photo sessions to show the community that somebody has benefitted from the Masonic Higher Education Bursary. Or the Masonic Foundation, where a lodge said, "You know, the hospital needs a machine that lifts patients out of the bed and puts them in the bath tub, but the hospital cannot afford them."

So the lodge engages in a fundraiser, and then they go to the Masonic Foundation to double-up those funds, and purchase one of those units. And we also have another charity that's totally within the organization, totally within the organization. It doesn't have any connection with anybody outside. It is not a recognized charity. It is not involved in the government. It's just within, and that's our personal money is put into an account and when we find a brother of a lodge that has suddenly come on financial hard times – for whatever reason. It may be that he got in a car accident and lost his job, so we can give him some financial support, temporarily.

So that's a type of thing. And you go to other countries, and I take a look at New Zealand and Australia. They have philanthropies down there that, you know, they have hospitals -- not hospitals, like senior complexes. They had schools at one time for children in need, no necessarily for freemason's children – for all children. That's the thing with the Higher

Education Bursary or the Masonic Foundation. We cannot, under government law, limit that access to those kinds of funds to masons only; otherwise, we cannot be a recognized charity. It has to be open. It has to be available to everybody. Many of our students have no masonic connections.

And I think that's good, that's excellent. That's beauty of the freemasons.

25. The Grand Architect of the Universe or the Supreme Being holds great weight in freemasonic theory. According to The Grand Lodge of Alberta Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons, what are the attributes this entity?

What are the attributes? I'd say He's given us lots of rules, if you are of a Christian background and then he's given us the Ten Commandments. If you're of another faith, there's six commandment, two commandments, and I think greatest of them all, of which applies to all religions, is you treat others the way you expect to be treated. And the thing is with the description of God, many religions do it as well, he is the Great Architect, the Grand Geometrician, who else can be? Where would all of this intelligence stem from? From God, that's our interpretation. That may not necessarily be the interpretation of another religious group or an atheist. An atheist may not necessarily agree with us.

But we look at God as the greatest, give him any title you want: Supreme King, you name it. He is it. He's the guy that has designed everything in front of us, and we live in, and what have you. He has given us the universe.

26. How might an individual freemason align themselves with The Grand Architect of the Universe through fraternity, ritual, service, and general worship?

We've basically said it all in all the previous questions. We continue to say that live by the principles of God: be in harmony with each other, use the rituals, which are an extraction of much of the work is in our written, sacred, writings. And our service, of course, is a natural phenomenon, in that we help each other. And the general worship being, of course, if you're of a religious person to continue with your faith and practice your faith, but above all to believe in God and spirituality.

27. What near and far future seems most probable for the current 5,000,000 active freemasons?

Well, I think in a lot of respects we have a lot of work to do. I think that many -- I'm a speaker. So I do a lot of speaking on freemasonry and try to energize people in freemasonry. There's the old saying, "A lodge needs to give the best bang for the buck." And so, when you go to a lodge meeting, we don't just want to hear minutes, accounts, have lunch, and then go home. We need to have teachings. I do a lot of that. I teach and I try and motivate people to, you know, get them involved, and to get them to read books that are of importance, i.e. the sacred writings, your ritual, and books that are -- describe freemasonry.

I think you've listed quite a few books or references here that -- as a matter of fact you listed references that I haven't seen before. Are you studying for a doctorate degree by any chance?

(Laughs)...

...Well, I'm an undergraduate (Laughs)...

...Well, you've got some references here, and highly intelligent references...

...Oh, that's very kind, thank you...

...Well, I think freemasonry in its current condition is going to see a decline in its membership. We're going to see a further decline in some countries we see increases in membership, but we're going to see a further decline worldwide until we come to the realization that we need to give something in lodges that enthuses the membership. And, you know, our churches, our places of worship, are in the same trouble as we are as freemasons. We're not giving a good-enough session to maintain interest in our churches and our lodges. And we need to grab onto that.

And once we start to motivate people to think that way, think and get the close connection between our principles and God's principles, I think a lot of people don't understand that. Really, what I'm saying is; that, although we have many people that aren't freemasons that don't understand anything about freemasonry and are quick to make judgment, we also have

freemasons within the organization that don't understand freemasonry at all. I suppose they become a burden to us. I mean, you know, they're in it for the wrong reason.

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