

The Sins of the Fathers

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FORWARD

When I began to study Freemasonry with a critical eye, it meant that I had to look back at my own father, grandfather and their fathers before them for almost two hundred years. They were honest men, church men who took our faith, our family and our country seriously, fighting in its many wars. Generation after generation, each son followed after his father and entered into membership in the Lodge. That line ended when I stepped out of the DeMoLay to join the Mormon Church.

The Mormon church told me that Masonry was a society of secret combinations and “works of darkness. I was forbidden to continue membership in the DeMoLay and later, as an active Mormon, I would not seek to follow my father into the Lodge. Years later, after I became a born again Christian, while I was at a service in a Baptist church teaching on the LDS Temple ritual, I discovered from an angry church Deacon that the ritual of the blue Lodge level of the Masonic Lodge was the actual foundation of the LDS temple ritual. I knew that if what he said was true, I would have to expose the roots of Masonry to the same light of truth that I was bringing to

bear on Mormonism. That was easier said than done.

When one goes out to investigate a secret society, there are certain things you discover immediately. First, there is precious little original, or first source material available, and second, you mustn't believe much of what you do find. Of course, that is the way 'secret' things work.

I found that while there were many articles available extolling the virtues and good works of the Masonic fraternities, there is virtually nothing published that would give me the first inkling of the actual working of the Lodge and everything the Masons did write vehemently denied any religious undertones to their activities.

I went to the Seattle Public Library and found numerous titles on microfilm. However, when I went to the shelves, I discovered that every title that promised information of an internal nature was missing. Several books were listed in a special collections section where the books could not be checked out. The reader must use such books under a controlled environment. However, much to the amazement of the Librarian but adding to my own growing suspicions, those few books were nowhere to be found.

They had disappeared. I soon discovered that the Seattle Library was not alone in this regard. Someone had systematically removed any sensitive material from public access, on a national basis. The results were the same at any Public Library in any city I visited over the next 10 years.

I began to frequent several used bookstores, where I knew the owners picked up books from estate sales. It was reasonable that some of these elderly men whose libraries would be acquired in this manner would have belonged to the Lodge and would have some of the esoteric books I sought. I hit pay dirt. However, I had to visit quite regularly since once these books made it to the shelves, they would be quickly reclaimed by the Lodge, at whatever price was asked. They were trolling through the same stores looking for those same books.

I stumbled on several private Masonic libraries, met a few former Masons who gave me their own small collections and was surprised when I was able to make just one wonderfully large purchase through a Masonic Fraternity supply house. My library expanded to hundreds of key volumes and thousands of articles and pieces of Masonic paraphernalia. The job was no longer one of searching for material, but one of absorbing the complex

inner workings of the craft.

At the same time, I went through a similar review of Christian material pertaining to the Lodge and with just a few key exceptions found the church woefully unprepared to deal with the subject. I also didn't understand that absolute pain and anguish through which this book would be birthed. I'm not counting the death threats and the several attempts I have personally experienced while researching the book. I'm speaking of the thousands of hours of reading, the thousands of interviews, the hundreds of public meetings and confrontations. I'm speaking of the hundred different times I have been forced back into my research as the Holy Spirit has shown me that I had still more to learn, more to unearth.

Little did I realize as I matured through this process, that I saw the book I planned to write and the one the Holy Spirit wanted me to write were two entirely different works. I finally decided to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

After all these years of intense research and study, the great expose of Freemasonry that I had planned to write still lies within all those esoteric

Lodge Books, Monitors, Guides and Manuals I have read and stored on my library shelves. It remains in the hundreds of file folders where data I have gathered in every kind of form is crammed into several four-drawer legal file cabinets.

I became sidetracked from that monumental endeavor as I became more immersed in the fruits of the system rather than continuing in its study. In these ten years or so, I have become significantly involved in many hundreds of individual lives, families and churches severely damaged or destroyed in that process of “good men becoming better” and the experience has established a far different perspective in my heart.

This book is a novel. However, its story is a true composite of some of the many real live stories in which I have been a participant. The names are changed enough to bear absolutely no resemblance to anyone living or dead and if any one of the names I used accidently ended up as your name, please forgive me. The town of Badger Lake is my own invention. The State of Montana was chosen because no part of this story took place there and because I love the Gold West Country around Dillon where I placed the town.

When any character in the novel is speaking on behalf of the Freemasonic fraternity, I have tried to make his words and tone realistically match those I read of real Masons giving real testimonies either in person or in actual Masonic magazines and periodicals. In several cases, I have used mixed fragments of actual statements with some literary license. I wanted every one of those statements to be as authentic as possible. In one case, I mention a senator, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Montana attending a meeting as Masonic brothers. That is true and came from a Masonic news story published in the August, 1990 Scottish Rite Journal.

In reciting actual ritual content and action, I have again drawn from several Sources. The Lodges in each State or Grand Lodge jurisdiction usually differ in a modest degree when it comes to such things. I therefore used as my base and standard, the 1974 edition of Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor, which is the official Freemason's guide to the Symbolic Degrees.

However, I again mixed in some of the variations that I took from the official Monitors from the Grand Lodges of the States of Washington,

Nevada, Georgia and Arkansas. The material on Job's Daughters came from the 1975 Ritual and Monitor published by the Supreme Guardian Council of the Order and several Masonic News articles.

The material on the funeral came from my own personal experience in attending the funeral of a dear friend who was also a Mason and the official Masonic Burial Service Ritual, by Robert Macoy, published in 1983. The material on the initiation of the Royal Ambassadors came from the manual entitled, Royal Ambassador Ceremonies/ Dramas and Recognitions, published by the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1988.

I am telling you all this up front, because I want you to know first, that I am writing with authenticity and scholarship in the matter and second, that this is supposed to be a work of fiction, a novel and you need to just sit back and enjoy reading it that way, without flipping pages back and forth checking for footnotes.

Throughout the story, I have struggled to keep my finger on the root problem in Freemasonry, which is that it truly is a form of religion that has

its own creed, religious instruction and ritual that is Universalist in nature and must surely separate its real Christian members from full service to Christ. When a father or a husband bows his knee at an altar where Baal and Zoraster have equal recognition and power as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in a Lodge where the precious name of Jesus is specifically removed so as not to offend, that father and husband has bowed his knee to Baal and his family and his church will reap the fruit of that submission.

Herein lies the matter of the Lodge. It is spiritually alarming that the sins of the fathers have left an access door open to the adversary in the lives of Masonic families and churches. Those doors can and must be closed forever. I pray that this novel will give the reader, especially every pastor who reads it, the insight, direction and motivation to take whatever personal and corporate action is needed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my father

J. Edward Decker Sr

My Dad fought me tooth and nail when I began revealing the true core of Freemasonry. He had been a Mason for almost his entire adult life, as had all the men of his family since 1805.

He didn't speak to me for almost two years. Then, the Masons poisoned me while I was on a ministry to Scotland. That was enough. My dad walked out and away from the craft and renounced his membership. It was like tons of dark things lifted off him. He lived out the remaining years of his life in peace, a different man, a man of whom I was immensely proud.

He took things in stride. He lost his eyesight to macular degeneration and never complained once. Cancer ravaged his body, but his sense of humor was still at work on his deathbed. My father was a lifelong arm wrestler. Yes, Arm Wrestler. He was powerfully strong in his youth and was still taking down construction workers in his later life. I could never

beat him in all those years.

I joked with him one time and said that I would wait until he was in his deathbed and then I would finally get to beat him once while he was still alive. He always laughed at that and reminded me of it often.

I was out of town when the call came that he was at the hospice and dying. I raced through airports and made it about 36 hours before he passed away. After getting to his side and hugging and loving on him for a while, I smiled and quietly said, *“Dad, do you want to arm wrestle?”*

He croaked out a laugh and said, *“Son, we are not going to do it. I know I can still beat you and I don’t want you to go through the rest of your life knowing that you couldn’t beat your elderly father arm wrestling, even on his death bed.”*

Dad was a writer and a welder. He wrote comedy back in the good old days of radio for men like Henry Morgan, Bob and Ray, Wendy Barry, Herb Shriner and others. He wrote for Early TV, for programs like Studio One..

He was an obsessive grammarian. Most kids got a rap on the knuckles for eating with their elbows on the table. I got them for using the wrong grammar. Dad kept the direct line phone numbers all three of the local TV evening news programs on speed dial and heaven help the newscaster who messed up in the grammar department. My father was also a poet after the Ogden Nash manner and the local newspaper published his poems on a regular basis for many years. They almost all dealt with local people and events.

He was also a tutor at the local middle school, helping students write stories. He was honored as a special volunteer one year at a special ceremony at the school. Several of his pupils walked him out onto the stage and stood with him while they shared stories about his love for story telling and for them, too.

Dad enjoyed watching [actually, listening] to Public TV and had a good friend in one of the broadcasters and local men, Greg Palmer. Greg had a sense of humor that paralleled Dad's. Greg suggested that Dad be part of a project called, Death: The Trip of a Lifetime. Greg had been all over the world, working on this project for both a film and a book. Dad was thrilled.

He never compromised during the making of the documentary. It was raw dying and suffering and still showed the power of Dad's and Mom's love and it so was heartbreaking but real that no one left a single taping without tears.

A few months after dad's passing and the release of his film and book, I called Greg to thank him for giving my dad a purpose outside his suffering during those months. Greg was stunned to hear my voice and literally was speechless. You see, my dad and I have deep, unique voices.. and sound exactly the same on the phone. Greg thought my dad had played the last big joke on him and called him from heaven.. Greg also passed away a bit ago and I guess he and dad are chuckling over something up there.

He never was a wimp. Even while blind, Dad and Mom would walk through town and stop for lunch at the Senior Center and visit with people along the way. They would often hike up the street to the Triple XXX Root Beer stand and get a fish sandwich and a Root Beer Float.

One day, as they were crossing the street at a cross walk, a car sped past them, almost knocking them down. Dad took his white/red blind person's cane and slammed it down across the trunk of the car with a resounding slap.

The driver screeched to a stop and leaped out of the car in a fit of road rage, He ran back toward Mom and Dad, fists raised and screaming bad things. Dad turned toward the sound, raised that cane like a bat and said, "Anne, point me at him, point me at him." The guy got close enough to see that Dad was an elderly blind man and quickly turned, ran back to his car and drove away as fast as he could.

Well, that was my dad. He and mom lived together for over 65 years until the day they took him to the hospice. I dedicate this book to him and his memory. In those last moments of his life, Dad saw Jesus with his eternal eyes and went to heaven with a smile as bright as the sun.

His last words? We are at his side when he squeezed my hand and that of my wife Carol with the great strength of his youth and with a powerful

voice, said, "So long, fellows."

INTRODUCTION

When the average American thinks of the Masonic Lodge, the thoughts are often of Children's Burn Centers, Hospitals and the Shrine Circus, where handicapped children are often carried to the front row seats in the strong arms of weeping men who are wearing the Red Fezes of their fraternity.

Rarely do we see a parade without these same Shriners driving up and down the parade route in their little cars and motorcycles, wearing clothes out of the Arabian nights, bringing laughter to the little children lined up along the sidewalks.

On an occasion of poor timing years back, I had the occasion to have booked a room in the same hotel where a national Shriners convention was being held and had a sleepless night as these men seemed to bounce off the walls of the hallways enjoying their night of relentless fun.

On more serious occasions, such as the laying of public building cornerstones or at the funeral service of a Lodge member, these same men,

dressed in somber attire, wearing their ornate sashes and brass-medallioned chains of office and ceremonial aprons, will perform with solemn dignity the rites handed down through centuries of ritual secrecy

The Freemasonic Lodges are often thought of as a dying breed of fraternal and social groups that sprang into existence to feed the needs of a rural and early industrial America. “Live and let live”, I am told. “These are just some old people living out the past with pomp and ceremony.” The Seattle Times, in a special report that gave credence to that thought, said that the average age of a man joining the Lodge is 38. It reported that the great growth of Freemasonry during and after World War II has meant that now its members are dying off. In 1981, just over 1,200 new members were inducted in Washington, but 1536 Masons died. (Seattle Times, 10/1/82, section D, page 1, A Rare Look At The Masons, Frederick Case)

Today, much effort is being spent at the national, state and local levels to create ways to make Freemasonry more acceptable and desirable to the general public so that the trend can be reversed. The experts are trying to bring the Craft public with a new, Happy Face.

Yet, once you get past the good-old-boy fraternal side of the Craft, the funny hats and slippers of the Shriners and the sheltered reputation of the local, Blue Lodge Masonic groups, there is something beyond the colorful mask, an aura of mystery, power and intrigue, complete with undertones of conspiracy and backroom politics.

As ever present as Masonry hangs on the edge of the public eye, we see it as even more subtly present in the Christian Community. Except for the ritual funeral service for the Masonic dead, and an occasional march from the Lodge to a selected Church for services, the Lodge leaves it to the individual member to select and attend the church of his choice.

On the other end of that, however, is the church on whose Board sits a majority from the Lodge, or whose Deacons or Elders share Lodge secrets that are in keeping with their higher allegiance to the Lodge sworn by blood oath, an aloofness from the rest of the Church body. These are good men who attend regularly and are often the financial backbone of many small congregations.

One Pastor shared with me of his frustration with Freemasonry in his

small, rural church. He put it this way, “As faithful as these men are, I always feel at Board meetings that there is a second agenda which is not open to me. It’s like they get their marching orders from the Lodge on how to conduct the business of the church. They are good men, but they seem to operate with some higher knowledge than the rest of us. There is no submission to the authority of the church and its other members. It’s like their church involvement is just another part of that hidden second agenda.”

On closer inspection, there has been something else different about these men. The factory worker in the plant would never dare to greet the owner on the assembly line, but in the work of the Lodge, that same man would proudly stand elbow to elbow with the factory owner himself. Bank President, Grocer and Farmer, all bow together in submission to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge. President, Senator and Federal Judge could walk arm in arm with the blue-collar workers of America! Masonry seemed to be the answer to the American dream.

It was upon this platform that Masonry grew in the early Nineteenth Century. Already having taken root from French and English Masonry, and a definite factor in the radical steps of tearing colonial America away from

English rule, the superstructure had already been built in the late Eighteenth Century. Masonry was an American kind of organization. It was a 'cross your heart and hope to die' kind of a group where you could trust the guy next to you with your life and every member swore an oath to do just that.

Where did the Masons actually come from and what are these secrets all about? The order has claimed descent from the builders of the Egyptian pyramids, the Temple of Solomon and most assuredly, they claim descent from the stonecutters and artists who built the grand cathedrals of Europe.

The Masons teach that these men were required to learn certain hand signs and grips to identify their level of trade skill, as they travelled from country to country, working their trade. That makes a lot of sense. The trade group eventually became a fraternity and its secrets those of the trade. Eventually, non tradesmen were allowed the privilege of fellowship, thereby creating both Operative and Speculative divisions of the symbolic degrees of Masonry. Today, the usual title in the local Lodges is that of Free and Accepted Masons

It was in 1717 that the First Masonic Grand Lodge was formed in

London. It is obvious that there were loosely connected Lodges prior to that time for them to even have had the reason to form such an organizational unit. Not much hard evidence exists, however, that gives any credence to modern Masonry's claim for a organizational lineage that goes back much further.

Freemasonry came to the United States while it was still a territory of the Crown. Masonic history gives great detail to its involvement in the making of America. The colonies' movers and shakers were most often found within the fraternity. In his early years, Benedict Arnold was a welcome visitor at any Lodge, but after he became America's most notorious traitor, his name was obliterated from Lodge records.

In 1754, a congress of the colonies was held in Albany New York. Benjamin Franklin, a member and a Freemason, introduced a plan for a perpetual Union of the colonies and on July 4th, 1754 his proposal failed by only one vote of being ratified by the colonies.

One great event that fired the imagination of the American zealots and hastened the Revolution was The Boston Tea Party. Three British ships lay

in that harbor laden with tea. It occurred on the night of December 13, 1773. At a large Masonic meeting, it was decided that the tea should not be landed. When the decision was announced, Samuel Adams, the great patriot, arose and gave the word. That word was answered from outside with a war-whoop and at a signal from John Hancock, the Mason and Paul Revere, the Mason and a questionable band of Indians, actually the members of the Boston Masonic Lodge, left the tavern wherein they met and cast the tea overboard.

On April 18, 1775, British troops were sent to arrest Samuel Adams and John Hancock for treason. Joseph Warren, the Mason, rang the alarm bells of Boston and Paul Revere, the Mason, rode to Lexington and fame and called the Minutemen to arms and thus began the Revolutionary War.

On April 19, 1783, eight years to the day after the war began, George Washington, the Mason, Commander in Chief, proclaimed that the war was ended and a treaty of peace signed. The Revolution was fought and won under the First Continental Congress, with Peyton Randolph, a Mason, at its head. John Hancock, the Mason, was President of the Second and Third Congresses. The Third Congress, almost all Masons, adopted the

Declaration of Independence.

And that Declaration was written upon a white Lambskin, a Mason's Apron. Thomas Jefferson, a deist and a Mason, was a member of that Continental Congress and was the Chairman of the committee that wrote and presented the Declaration of Independence.

In every corner of American history, the bubble is burst. We recently celebrated the 100th year birthday of the greatest statue on earth, the Statue of Liberty, a supposed gift of the French to commemorate the Franco-American union. I noticed an intense effort on the part of the Masons to raise funds for its restoration. In checking further, I discovered that its sculptor was the French Freemason, Frederic A. Bartoldi.

It was financed through Masonic efforts and dedicated by the Paris Lodge, Alsace-Lorraine, Bartoldi's home Lodge, a gift from the French Masons to their American brothers. It was received and its cornerstone laid on August 5, 1884 by the Grand Lodge of New York, which Lodge also recently rededicated the restored lady of the harbor.

Another bit of historic trivia has bothered this writer for some time. We have grown up with our heroes of the Alamo. We all know the story, that is, the published story. Truth is often stranger than fiction and the records in this case bear evidence that the Mexican General, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, in his attempt to crush the Texas Revolution, reduced the 140 defenders (48 were Masons) to six people, including fellow Mason, Davy Crockett.

On March 6, 1836, Crockett and the other five went forward and surrendered to fellow Mason, Santa Anna, giving him the Masonic sign of distress. Santa Anna had them executed where they stood. Captured by Sam Houston, another Mason, at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, Santa Anna gave the Masonic sign of distress on his own behalf, and it was accepted by Houston with whom he negotiated the Articles of Independence for Texas. Santa Anna was released eight months later to continue his barbarism in Mexico where he ruled from 1839 to 1845. (William Denslow, 10,000 FAMOUS FREEMASONS, Maco Publishing, Richmond, Va 1957, Vol 1, page 267; Vol 2, page 257; Vol 4, pages 96-97..)