

Why Free Masonry is Incompatible with Orthodox Christianity

by Fr. Gregory-Lazarus Murphy

Orthodox Christianity believes that the Holy Church is Jesus Christ; the Holy Church is the visible Body of Jesus Christ, which is present here upon earth through the direct and miraculous power of God wrought on the Day of Pentecost. This is to fulfill the words of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ: "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the Age." (Matt. 28:20)

The individual parishioner of each local church is a member of Christ's Body through participation in the Divine and Holy Sacraments. Therefore, in these years between Pentecost and the Second Coming, the faithful, pious, Sacramentally-active Christian exists in this world as BOTH the physical individual AND the mystical Body of Jesus Christ (in the same manner as the Eucharistic Gifts exist simultaneously as BOTH bread & wine AND the Body & Blood of Jesus Christ).

Sacramental membership in The Holy Church, therefore, is the ONLY way to have full communion with God, and is the ONLY means to achieve righteousness and salvation. A man cannot be "good" unless he is sanctified by the Blood of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – both of these are only available through the faithful and pious partaking of the Sacraments of the Holy Church.

- Therefore, any organization or fraternity that diminishes the Divine nature of the Church cannot be compatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Any organization or fraternity that teaches that the Church is merely a humanly devised organization is incompatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Any organization or fraternity that diminishes the Divine nature of the Sacraments is incompatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Any organization or fraternity that equates the Divinity of God the Holy Trinity with any other god, divine principle, or religious faith is incompatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Any organization or fraternity that believes its own teachings are superior to the teachings of the Holy Church for the salvation and perfection of man is incompatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Any organization or fraternity that teaches that the Holy Scriptures are incomplete, or manmade, or contains error is incompatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Any organization or fraternity that says their Brotherhood is superior to the Sacramental Communion of Jesus Christ with the fellowship of the saints is incompatible with the Orthodox Faith.
- Thus, any organization or fraternity that thinks to place itself as equivalent with the Holy Church, or thinks that it contains teachings and practices that are equivalent with the Holy Church, or that believes itself to be of any benefit over and above the sacred Scripture, Canons, and Sacraments of the Church for the salvation of mankind is not just in grave error, but is in danger of judgment: *"Woe to them! For they have followed in the steps of Cain, and they have scurried after the error of Balaam thinking that they will receive an advantage, and they have rebelled against God like Korah and are themselves destroyed."* (Jude 1:11)

Since the teachings of the Masonic Lodge include all of the above assertions, it is impossible for a person to be an honest and faithful member of both the Masonic Lodge and the Holy Orthodox Christian Church. "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT PRESENTS DIRECT QUOTES FROM REPUTABLE (FOOTNOTED) SOURCES ON THE TEACHINGS AND BELIEF OF THE MASONIC LODGE. THE DIVINE WORDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE FOLLOWS. IT CAN BE CLEARLY SEEN THAT THE CLAIMS OF THE MASONIC LODGE ARE IN OPEN AND DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE WORDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AND THE FAITH OF PIOUS ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS.

JESUS CHRIST

MASONRY:

In his private petitions a man may petition God or Jehovah, Allah or Buddha, Mohammed or Jesus; he may call upon the God of Israel, or the First Great Cause. In the Masonic Lodge he hears petition to the Great Architect of the Universe, finding his own deity under that name. A hundred paths may wind upward around a mountain; at the top they meet.

(Carl H. Claudy, "Introduction to Freemasonry" p. 38)

The Light could not unite with darkness. It but put on the appearance of a human body, and took the name of Christ in the Messiah, only to accommodate itself to the language of the Jews...He suffered in appearance only... the person of Jesus having disappeared...

(Albert Pike [33rd degree Mason] 'Morals and Dogma' p. 567)

Theologians first made a fetish of the impersonal omnipresent divinity; and then tore the christos from the hearts of all humanity in order to deify Jesus, that they might have a God-man peculiarly their own.

(J.D. Buck, 'Symbolism of Freemasonry: Mystic Masonry and the Greater Mysteries of Antiquity' (Chicago, Illinois: Ezra A. Cook Publications, Inc., 1925), page 57.)

The true disciple of ancient Masonry has given up forever the worship of personalities... [A]s a Mason his religion must be universal: Christ, Buddha or Mohammed, the names mean little, for he recognizes only the light and not the bearer. He worships at every shrine, bows before every altar, whether in temple, mosque or cathedral, realizing with his truer understanding the oneness of all Spiritual Truth...No true Mason can be narrow, for his Lodge is the divine expression of all broadness. There is no place for little minds in a great work.

(Manly P. Hall, 'The Lost Keys of Masonry' (Richmond, Virginia: Hall Publishing Company, 1924), pages 94-95.)

Buthos* and His Thought, uniting with **Wisdom**, made her fruitful by the Divine Light, and she produced a perfect and an imperfect being, **Christos**, and a Second and inferior **Wisdom**, Sophia-Achamoth, who falling into chaos remained entangled there, became enfeebled, and lost all knowledge of the Superior Wisdom that gave her birth.

Communicating movement to chaos, she produced Ialdabaoth {*a lesser god, a demiurge*}, the Demiourgos, Agent of Material Creation...Ialdabaoth produced an angel that was his image, and this a second, and son, on in succession to the sixth after the Demiourgos...

Ialdabaoth, to become independent of his mother, and to pass for the Supreme Being, made the world, and **man** in his own image; and his mother caused the Spiritual principle to pass from him into **man** so made; and henceforward the contest between the Demiourgos and his mother, between light and darkness, good and evil, was concentrated in **man**.

And the image of Ialdabaoth, reflected upon matter, became the Serpent-Spirit, **Satan**, the Evil Intelligence. Eve, created by Ialdabaoth, had by his Sons children that were angels like themselves. The Spiritual light was withdrawn from **man** by Sophia, and the world surrendered to the influence of evil; until the Spirit, urged by the entreaties of Wisdom, induced the Supreme Being to send **Christos** to redeem it. Compelled, despite himself, by his Mother, Ialdabaoth caused **the man Jesus** to be born of a Virgin; and the Celestial Savior, uniting with his Sister, Wisdom, descended through the regions of the seven angels...and entered with his sister into **the man Jesus** at the baptism in Jordan.

Ialdabaoth, finding that **Jesus** was destroying his empire and abolishing his worship, caused the Jews to hate and crucify Him; before which happened, **Christos** and Wisdom had ascended to the celestial regions. They restored **Jesus** to life and gave Him an ethereal body, in which He remained eighteen months on earth, and receiving from Wisdom the perfect knowledge {... Gnosis}, communicated it to a small number of His apostles, and then arose to the intermediate region inhabited by Ialdabaoth, where, unknown to him, He sits at his right hand, taking from him the Souls of Light purified by **Christos**. When nothing of the spiritual world shall remain subject to Ialdabaoth, the redemption will be accomplished, and the end of the world, the completion of the return of Light into the Plenitude, will occur. *{bold font added for clarity to distinguish the characters in this tale}*

(Albert Pike, Chapter 26, or the 26th Degree, "Prince Of Mercy, or Scottish Trinitarian", p. 562-3.)

{*NOTE: For an Orthodox Christian explanation of the heresy of Valentinianism (and the pagan diety, Buthos) by St. Irenaeus, see:
<http://www.mycrandall.ca/courses/grphil/philrel/IrenaeusLecture.htm>}

CHRISTIANITY:

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the Life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me.

John 14:9

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father.

John 10:30

I {Jesus Christ} and the Father are one.

Acts 4:12

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name {but Jesus} under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Isaiah 52:10

The Lord {God the Father} has bared his holy arm {i.e., Jesus} before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Revelation 17:14

They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

Hebrews 2:9

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Revelation 1:5

And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Hebrews 4:14

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

1 John 4:14

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

Hebrews 6:20

Where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Mark 8:31

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Hebrews 9:26

For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Matthew 11:27

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

GOD

MASONRY:

...Since every man's conception of God must be proportioned to his mental cultivation, and intellectual powers, and moral excellence. God is, as man conceives Him, the reflected image of man himself.

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma," 14th Degree, p. 234)

The only personal God Freemasonry accepts is humanity in toto...Humanity therefore is the only personal God that there is.

(J.D. Buck, "Mystic Masonry," p. 216)

The Absolute is Reason. Reason IS, by means of itself. It IS because IT IS. If God IS, HE IS by Reason.

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma," 28th Degree. p. 737)

Men have to decide whether they want a God like the ancient Hebrew Yahweh, a partisan tribal god, with whom they can talk and argue and from whom they can hide if necessary; or a boundless, eternal, universal, undenominational, and international Divine Spirit, so vastly removed from the speck called man, that he cannot be known, named or approached. So soon as man begins to laud his God and endow him with the most perfect human attributes such as justice, mercy, beneficence, etc., the Divine Essence is depreciated and despoiled...The Masonic test is a Supreme Being, and any qualification added is an innovation and distortion...Monotheism violates Masonic principles, for it requires belief in a specific kind of Supreme Deity.

Coil's Masonic Encyclopaedia (95: 516-17)

JAHBULON ["Jah {Jehovah}" + "Bul {Baal}" + "On {Osiris}" = "GOD"] – In this compound name an attempt is made to show by a co-ordination of divine names...the unity, identity and harmony of the Hebrew, Assyrian and Egyptian god-ideas, and the harmony of the Royal Arch religion with these ancient religions. This Masonic 'unity of God' is peculiar.

It is the doctrine that the different names of gods as Brahma, Jehovah, Baal, Bel, Om, On, etc., all denote the generative principle, and that all religions are essentially the same in their ideas of the divine.

(Coil's Masonic Encyclopaedia [95: 516] and the 'Masonic Ritual and Monitor [58: 226])

CHRISTIANITY:

Isaiah 37:16

O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.

Isaiah 40:28

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Revelation 1:8

I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Jeremiah 10:10

But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation.

Jeremiah 51:15

It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.

Jeremiah 23:24

Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.

Isaiah 44:6

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

Genesis 1:1

In the Beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Exodus 3:14

God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM...

2 Chronicles 6:14

O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no god like Thee in heaven or on earth...

Isaiah 42:8

I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give my glory to another

Deuteronomy 4:39

Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

I John 5:7

For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word {Jesus}, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Acts 17:24-26

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

Revelation 19:6

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Amos 5:8

He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the Lord {Adonai} is his name.

Isaiah 43:15

I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.

THE HOLY BIBLE

MASONRY:

...the literal meaning (of the Bible) is for the vulgar only.

(Albert Pike, "Digest of Morals and Dogma," p. 166)

Masonry makes no profession of Christianity...but looks forward to the time when the labor of our ancient brethren shall be symbolized by the erection of a spiritual temple...in which there shall be but one altar and one worship; one common altar of Masonry on which the Veda, Shastra, Sade, Zend-Avesta, Koran and Holy Bible shall lie...and at whose shrine the Hindoo, the Persian, the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Mohammedan, the Jew and the Christian may kneel...

("The Kentucky Monitor." Fellowcraft Degree, p. 95)

The removal of the name of Jesus and references to Him in Bible verses used in the ritual are slight but necessary modifications.

(Albert Mackey, "Masonic Ritualist." p. 272)

The Bible is used among Freemasons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed. Therefore, whatever to any people expresses that will [of God] may be used as a substitute for the Bible in a Masonic Lodge. Thus, in a Lodge consisting entirely of Jews,

the Old Testament alone may be placed upon the altar, and Turkish Freemasons {Muslims} make use of the Koran. Whether it be the Gospels to the Christian, the Pentateuch to the Israelite, the Koran to the Mussulman, {Muslim} or the Vedas to the Brahman, it everywhere Masonically conveys the same idea – that of the symbolism of the Divine Will revealed to man.

(Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, vol. 1, pg. 133)

The Second Landmark is the Volume of Sacred Law, open in the Lodge. But the Bible is not, in freemasonry, more than one of the Great Lights, and never has been, for the reason that Masons are not required to believe its teachings... The stern fact is that we are constantly admitting Hindus, Chinese, Mohammedans, Parsees and Jews, not one of whom believes in the Bible, and this forces the conclusion that Masonry regards the Bible only as a symbol.

(Masonic Record, June 1926 in an article by Bro. T.H.R. entitled 'What are our Landmarks')

CHRISTIANITY:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Jeremiah 23:29

Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

Psalms 19:7-11

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Psalms 12:6

The Words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Isaiah 8:20

...if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

Hebrews 4:12-14

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden

from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 2:1

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

Revelation 22:18-19

I {Jesus Christ} testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to them, may God add to him the plagues which are written in this book. If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, may God take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.

John 5:39

You {the Jews} search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me {Jesus Christ}.

THE LODGE vs. THE CHURCH

MASONRY:

The dunces who led primitive Christianity astray, by substituting faith for science, reverie for experience, the fantastic for the reality; and the inquisitors, who for so many ages waged against Magism (magic and sorcery), a war of extermination, have succeeded in shrouding in darkness the ancient discoveries of the human mind.

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma," 14th Degree, p. 732)

Masonry is the descendent of, or is founded upon, a divinely imparted religion which long antedates the prime date of creation as given in our Bible. It is all that remains to us of the first world religion which flourished in an antiquity so old that it is impossible to affix a date. It was the first unified religion... To this, such symbols as the pyramids, both in Egypt and South America, bear witness... The ancient mysteries were temporary custodians of the ancient truth and closely allied to the Masonic work of today... the relation of the Mysteries to Masonry has oft been recognized, and the golden thread of living continuity can be traced through them to modern Masonry. The Mysteries...are all parts of that ancient thread which has its origin in that primeval religion which terminates today in masonry.

(Foster Bailey [33rd degree Mason], "The Spirit of Freemasonry" 30-2)

There he stands without [outside] our portals, on the threshold of his new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness and ignorance. Having been wandering amid the errors and covered over with the pollutions of the outer and profane world, he comes inquiringly to our door, seeking the new birth, and asking a withdrawal of the veil which conceals divine truth from his uninitiated sight.

(Albert Mackey, The Manual of the Lodge, pg.20)

As some of us prefer to put it, Masonry is not a religion but Religion – not a church, but a worship, in which men of all religions may unite.

(Joseph Fort Newton 'The Religion of Masonry' p 10 & 11)

The truth is that Masonry is undoubtedly a religious institution, its religion being of that universal kind in which all men agree.

(Albert Mackey [33rd degree Mason and Secretary General of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree Scottish Rite], 'Textbook of Masonic Jurisdiction' p. 95)

So broad is the religion of Masonry, and so carefully are all sectarian tenets excluded from the system, that the Christian, the Jew, and the Mohammedan, in all their numberless sects and divisions, may and do harmoniously combine in its moral and intellectual work, with the Buddhist, the Parsee, the Confucian, and the worshiper of Deity under every form.

(T. S. Webb 'Masonic Monitor' p 285)

The religion of Freemasonry is not Christian.

(Albert Mackey [33rd degree Mason and Secretary General of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree Scottish Rite], 'Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry' 618)

Blue Lodge Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible; if it did, it would not be Masonry, it would be something else.

(Chase's Digest of Masonic Law p 207)

The whole process [of initiation] should be made one of the most crucial experiences of the candidate's life, one that will change him to the center of his being. It is like the moral and spiritual change which comes over a man who passes through the religious experience known as 'conversion' or 'regeneration.' Masonic initiation is intended to be quite as profound and revolutionizing an experience. As a result of it, the candidate should become a new man.

(H. L. Haywood 'The Great Teachings of Masonry' p 30 & 31)

Masonry is regarded as the direct descendant, or as a survival of the mysteries...of Isis and Osiris in Egypt.

(Robert Freke Gould, History of Freemasonry 1:13)

Freemasonry is the survivor of the ancient mysteries – nay, we may go further and call it the guardian of the mysteries.

(Bro. J.S.M.Ward. 'Freemasonry and the ancient gods' p 347)

The signs, symbols and inscriptions date from...the Sumerian civilizations..., Chaldea [Babylon], Assyria, Greece, Rome and even in Mexico and Yucatan... Some rites of the Scottish rite of Freemasonry of our Mother Jurisdiction have been in existence from time immemorial. For we teach the same grand truths, the same sublime philosophies...as those adepts of the ancient mysteries taught in their esoteric rites.

(Henry C. Clausen, 'Messages for a Mission' [the Supreme Council 33rd Degree, A & ARFM, Mother Jurisdiction of the World, 1971] 5-7.)

The interpretation of the symbols of Freemasonry from a Christian point of view is a theory adopted by some, but one which I think does not belong to the ancient system. The

principles of Freemasonry preceded the advent of Christianity. If Masonry were merely a Christian institution, the Jew, the Moslem, the Brahman and the Buddhist, could not consistently partake of its illumination. But its universality is its boast. In its language, citizens of every nation may converse; at its altar men of all religions may kneel; to its creed disciples of every faith may subscribe.

(Albert Mackey, [33rd degree Mason and Secretary General of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree Scottish Rite], 'Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry')

Freemasonry certainly requires a belief in the existence of, and man's dependence upon, a Supreme Being to whom he is responsible. What can a church add to that, except to bring into one fellowship those who have like feelings?... That is exactly what the Lodge does.

(Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, pg.512)

Does Freemasonry have a creed...or tenet...or dogma...to which all members must adhere? Does Freemasonry continually teach and insist upon a creed, tenet and dogma? Does it have meetings characterized by the practice of rites and ceremonies in, and by which, its creed tenet and dogma are illustrated, in myth, symbols and allegories? If Freemasonry were not religion, what would have to be done to make it such? Nothing would be necessary, or at least nothing but to add more of the same... That brings us to the real crux of the matter. The difference between a Lodge and a church is one of degree and not kind. Some think because it [the Lodge] is not a strong or highly formalized or highly dogmatized religion, such as the Roman Catholic Church...it can be no religion at all. But a church of friends {Quakers} exhibits even less formality and ritual than does a Masonic Lodge.

(Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia,pg.512)

CHRISTIANITY:

2 John 1: 9-11

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

Colossians 1:17-20

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Ephesians 5:23, 25

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 1:22-23

And he {God the Father} put all things under his {Jesus} feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Romans 16:17

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

Ephesians 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1 Timothy 3:14-15

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

1 Peter 2:5

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

SALVATION & REDEMPTION

MASONRY:

These three degrees (1st, 2nd, 3rd) thus form a perfect an harmonious whole, nor can it be conceived that anything can be suggested more, which the soul of man requires.

(Daniel Sickles, "Ahimon Rezon or Freemason's Guide." p. 196)

If we with suitable true devotion maintain our Masonic profession, our faith will become a beam of light and bring us to those blessed mansions where we shall be eternally happy with God, the Great Architect of the Universe.

(Daniel Sickles, "Ahimon Rezon or Freemason's Guide." p. 79)

...salvation by faith and the vicarious atonement were not taught as now interpreted, by Jesus, nor are these doctrines taught in the esoteric scriptures. They are later and ignorant perversions of the original doctrines.

(J.D. Buck, "Mystic Masonry." p. 57)

Freemasonry has taught each man can, by himself, work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation.

(J. S. M. Ward 'Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals' p 187)

CHRISTIANITY:

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Romans 10:9

Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Romans 3:10

As it is written. There is none righteous no not one.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:22

The righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.

II Corinthians 5:21

For He hath made Him {Jesus} to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

I Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Acts 16:30-33

Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

Mark 16:16

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 17:30

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent

Matthew 7:13-14

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

SATAN/LUCIFER

MASONRY:

The conviction of all men that God is good led to a belief in a devil...

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma." 19th Degree, p. 324)

...there is no rebellious demon of Evil, or Principle of Darkness coexistent and in eternal controversy with God, or the Principle of Light...

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma," 32nd Degree, p.859)

When later he [the Mason] is given Light, it means really that he is taught the principles of Occultism.

(Arthur H. Ward. 'Masonic symbolism and the Mystic Way' 149-150)

Lucifer, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable, blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish souls? Doubt it not!

*(Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, p. 321, 19th Degree of Grand Pontiff.)*

The day has come when Fellow Craftsman must know and apply their knowledge. The lost key to their grade is the mastery of emotion, which places the energy of the universe at their disposal. Man can only expect to be entrusted with great power by proving his ability to use it constructively and selflessly. When the Mason learns that the key to the warrior on the block is the proper application of the dynamo of living power, he has learned the mystery of his Craft. The seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands, and before he may step onward and upward, he must prove his ability to properly apply energy. He must follow in the footsteps of his forefather, Tubal-Cain*, who with the mighty strength of the war god hammered his sword into a plowshare.

*(Manly P. Hall, 33rd Degree, K.T., *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry or The Secret of Hiram Abiff*, Forward by Reynold E. Blight, 33rd Degree, K.T., Illustrations by J. Augustus Knapp, 32nd Degree, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, p. 48.)*

{*NOTE: In the "Masonic Quiz Book," the candidate is asked this question: "Who was Tubal Cain?" Answer: "He is the Vulcan of the pagans."}

*(William P. Peterson, Editor, *Masonic Quiz Book: "Ask Me Brother"*, Chicago, Illinois, Charles T. Power Company, 1950, p. 18, 88, 131, 213; also found in John Yarker, *The Arcane Schools: A Review of their Origin and Antiquity: With a General History of Freemasonry and Its Relation to the Theosophic Scientific and Philosophic Mysteries*, Belfast, Ireland, William Tait, 1909, p. 30; also found in A. R. Chambers, Editor, *Questions and Answers*, 1972, p. 237; also found in Malcom Duncan, *Duncan's Ritual of Freemasonry*, New York, David McKay Company, Inc., n.d. 3rd Edition, p. 94.)*

That which we must say to the crowd is, we worship a god, but it is the god one adores without superstition. To you, Sovereign Grand Inspector General, we say this and you may repeat it to the brethren of the 32nd, 31st and 30th degrees – the Masonic religion should be by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine.

If Lucifer were not god, would Adonay* -- whose deeds prove cruelty, perfidy and hatred of man, barbarism and repulsion for science – would Adonay and his priests calumniate him? Yes, Lucifer is god, and unfortunately Adonay is also god; for the eternal law is that there is no light without shade, no beauty without ugliness, no white without black, for the absolute can only exist as two gods, darkness being necessary for light to serve as its foil, as the pedestal is necessary to the statue, and the brake to the locomotive. Thus, the doctrine of Satanism is heresy, and the true and pure philosophical religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonay; but Lucifer, god of light and god of good, is struggling for humanity against Adonay, the god of darkness and evil."

{*NOTE: "Adonay" is one of the names that Hebrews and Christians use when referring to the Lord God Almighty.}

*(Recorded by A.C. De La Rive, *La Femme et Lenfant dans La Franc-Maconnerie Universelle*, Page 588. Cited from *The question of freemasonry*, [2nd edition 1986 by Edward Decker pp12-14])*

CHRISTIANITY:

Revelation 19:6

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord {Adonai} our God the Almighty reigns."

Amos 5:8

He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the Lord {Adonai} is his name.

John 8:44

Ye are of your father, the devil...he is a liar, and the father of it.

James 4:7

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Ephesians 6:11-12

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Isaiah 14:12-15

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Revelation 12:7-9

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

2 Corinthians 11:14

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Ezekiel 28:17

Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

Luke 10:18

And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

John 8:44

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Ezekiel 28:14

You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Jude 1:6

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

Ezekiel 28:15

You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 20:10

And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Ezekiel 28:1-26

The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God: "Because your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god— you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you; by your wisdom and your understanding you have made wealth for yourself, and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; by your great wisdom in your trade you have increased your wealth, and your heart has become proud in your wealth.

Matthew 25:41

Then he will say to those on his left, Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Jude 1:9

But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

SECRECY & DECEPTION

MASONRY:

Secrecy is indispensable in a Mason of whatever degree.

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma," 4th Degree, p. 109)

The Blue Degrees are but the portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine that he understands them...their true explication {explanation/understanding} is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry.

(Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma," 30th Degree, p. 189)

Masonry, like all the religions, all the mysteries, Hermeticism* and alchemy conceals its secrets from all but the adepts and sages, or the elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve to be misled, to conceal the truth, which it calls light, from them and to draw them away from it.

The blue degrees (that is the craft degrees) are but the outer courts or portico of the temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them, but it is intended that he shall imagine he understand them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry. The whole body of the Royal and Sacerdotal Art was hidden so carefully, centuries since, in the High Degrees, so that it is even yet impossible to solve many of the enigmas they contain. It is well enough for the mass of those called Masons, to imagine that all is contained in the Blue degrees; and whoso attempts to undeceive them will labour in vain, and without any true reward violate his obligations as an Adept.

Albert Pike's Morals and Dogma 104,105 & 819

{*NOTE: For an explanation of "Hermeticism" see the following website:
http://www.witchcraftandwitches.com/related_hermeticism.html }

You must conceal all crimes of your brother Masons...and should you be summoned as a witness against a brother Mason be always sure to shield him... It may be perjury to do this, it is true, but you're keeping your obligations.

(Ronayne, "Handbook of Masonry." p. 183)

Freemasonry is usually referred to by outsiders as a secret society. We have generally objected to this characterization, claiming that we are not members of a secret society, but rather of a society with secrets... Webster's dictionary would agree with the general public, however, defining the term "secret society" as any of various oath-bound societies having a secret ritual and so on. The Craft certainly fits this definition... Well, why do Masons keep secrets? It is not enough to say that we have traditionally always done so, or that we are obliged to do so. These answers simply push the question further back into Masonic history. The maintenance of secrecy is one of the first duties to which a man who becomes a Mason agrees. After the Symbolic Degrees, the first degree conferred in the Scottish Rite, Secret Master, and the last, Master of the Royal Secret, both indicate by their names that secrecy is a vital part of the Rite. A matter deemed so important by those

who created the Masonic ritual is definitely worth further examination by all of us... When next we are challenged by an outsider on the “old-fashioned” nature of belonging to a secret society, there is no need to make excuses for it. Masonic secrecy is not merely an ancient tradition, it is a vital characteristic of our fraternity that we should cherish and protect. No less than the democratic tradition of the secret ballot, we should be prepared to defend our right and duty to keep secret that which is uniquely ours as our Masonic legacy to those who will follow us.

(Dr. Roger M. Firestone, 33; This article originally appeared in The Scottish Rite Journal, which is published by the Supreme Council, 33, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States.)

THE SECRETS OF FREEMASONRY

One of the things people are most curious about is the secrets in Freemasonry. Masons often claim that “Freemasonry is not a secret organization, but an organization with secrets.” As former Masons, we can assure you that you are not missing much when it comes to what is really considered Masonic secrets, because the only real secrets in Freemasonry are the “modes of recognition,” which include due guards, signs, tokens (which are the handshakes or secret grips), and passwords. Everything else is pretty much fair game to be revealed.

Entering the Lodge for the first time, however, most Masons will refuse to divulge anything and will “forever conceal, and never reveal any of the art or arts, part or parts, point or points of the hidden mysteries of Freemasonry, which they have received, may be about to receive, or may be hereafter be instructed in, to any person unless it shall be to a worthy Brother Mason.” This is, in part, the result of the fear so indelibly embedded on one’s mind when they enter the Lodge for the very first time – being “received on the point of a sharp instrument piercing their naked left breast, which is to teach them that as this is an instrument of torture to the flesh, so should the recollection thereof be to their minds and consciences, should they ever reveal the secrets of Freemasonry unlawfully.”

What’s more, after taking the bloody oath that reinforces this fear, the candidate is told that “the penalty of their oath (or obligation) is not literal, but instead, symbolic of what an honest man would rather undergo than to violate his solemn vow.” Yet, by then it is too late, the fear factor has already been well instilled. So, it turns out to be a “catch-22,” either you fear that some overzealous Mason just might hold you accountable by fulfilling the penalty on behalf of the Craft, or else your pride and honor are at risk of being destroyed. In either case, most Masons choose to take the safest route and keep their mouths shut entirely, rather than risk either consequence.

However, as Ex-Masons for Jesus we fear (reverence) God not man, and therefore we’re not obligated to an oath which was rendered to us under false pretenses. As far as we are concerned, the oaths which we took are null and void. God has released us from them. Leviticus 5:4-6 makes it clear that when something is hidden from a man (in this case, the fact that the teachings of the lodge violate God’s Word) and he takes an oath thoughtlessly, he is guilty of sin. When he recognizes it as sin (which we have) he may be released from it by confessing it as such and claiming the promise found in 1 John 1:8-9: “If we say that we have

no sin, we deceive ourselves. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” As for the Levitical demand for a sin offering, praise God that He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, as full payment for our sin debt, once and for all!

The day we made that confession, renounced Masonic teachings, and claimed the promises of God, was the day He set us free from the obligations and deceptions of Freemasonry. While Masons may want us to feel guilty and remain in bondage through obedience to the men of the lodge by not bringing to light what you are about to see, we prefer to be obedient to God, and do not want to leave you in the dark about anything concerning our firsthand knowledge of Freemasonry. Christians are honorable by honoring Jesus and following His example. Unfortunately, Freemasonry doesn't even acknowledge Jesus Christ our Lord.

(http://formermasons.org/issues/the_secrets_of_freemasonry.php)

CHRISTIANITY:

Exodus 20:16

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Leviticus 19:11

Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

Psalms 101:7

No one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no one who utters lies shall continue before my eyes.

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.

John 18:20

I {Jesus} spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple...and in secret have I said nothing.

Romans 12:17

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Colossians 3:9

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Revelation 21:8

...all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

BLOOD OATHS

MASONRY:

I...do hereon most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will always hail, ever conceal and never reveal any of the arts, parts or points of the secret arts any mysteries of ancient Freemasonry which I have received, am about to receive, or may hereafter be instructed in... binding myself under no less a penalty that that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken out and burned to ashes, the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven...

(from Oath of Obligation, Entered Apprentice/1st Degree, and the Oath of Obligation, Master Mason/Third Degree)

...In willful violation whereof may I incur the fearful penalty of having my eyeballs pierced to the center with a three-edged blade, my feet flayed and I be forced to walk the hot sands upon sterile shores of the Red Sea until the flaming Sun shall strike me with a livid plague, and may Allah, the god of Arab, Moslem and Mohammedan, the god of our fathers, support me to the entire fulfillment of the same.

(from the Oath of Obligation, Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine ["Shriners"])

...[W]henever a minister prays in the name of Christ in any of our assemblies, you must always hold yourself in readiness, if called upon, to cut his throat from ear to ear, pull out his tongue by the roots, and bury his body at the bottom of some lake or pond.

Of course, all this must be done in secret, as it was in the case of that notorious man [William] Morgan, for both law and civilization are opposed to such barbarous crimes, but then, you know you must live up to your obligation, and so long as you have sworn to do it, by being very strict and obedient in the matter, you'll be free from sin.

(Masonic Handbook, page 74)–{quoted by C.F. McQuaig, The Masonic Report (self-published, 1976), page 3. Captain William Morgan, alluded to in this quote, left Freemasonry after thirty years of membership, and exposed the organization in his book, Illustrations of Masonry (Ezra A. Cook Publications, Inc., 1926). Following his mysterious disappearance, his body was later found at the bottom of a lake in upstate New York. Twenty years later, Henry L. Valance confessed to being one of the three men selected by lot in the Masonic Lodge of Batavia, New York to carry out Morgan's murder}.

FIRST DEGREE – MASONIC ENTERED APPRENTICE OATH

To all of which I do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, without any hesitation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind in me whatsoever; binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out, and with my body buried in the sands of the sea at low-water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willfully violate this, my solemn Obligation of an Entered Apprentice. So help me God and make me steadfast to keep and perform the same.

SECOND DEGREE – MASONIC FELLOWCRAFT OATH

To all of which I do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, without any hesitation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind in me whatsoever; binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart and vitals taken

thence, and with my body given as a prey to the vultures of the air, should I ever knowingly or willfully violate this, my solemn Obligation of a Fellow Craft. So help me God and make me steadfast to keep and perform the same.

THE THIRD DEGREE – MASONIC MASTER MASON’S OATH

To all of which I do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, without any hesitation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind in me whatsoever; binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken thence, and with my body burned to ashes, and the ashes thereof scattered to the four winds of Heaven, that there might remain neither track, trace nor remembrance among man or Masons of so vile and perjured a wretch as I should be, should I ever knowingly or willfully violate this, my solemn Obligation of a Master Mason. So help me God and make me steadfast to keep and perform the same.

MASONIC SHRINERS OATH TO ALLAH AND MOHAMMED

The oath of the Shrine concludes as follows: “...in willful violation whereof I may incur the fearful penalty of having my eyeballs pierced to the center with a three-edged blade, my feet flayed and I will be forced to walk the hot sands upon the sterile shores of the Red Sea, until the flaming sun shall strike me with livid plague, and may Allah the God of Arab, Muslim and Mohammedan, the God of our fathers support me to the entire fulfillment of the same, Amen, Amen, Amen.”

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/mas/md/md02.htm>

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/mas/md/md03.htm>

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/mas/md/md04.htm>

CHRISTIANITY:

Exodus 20:13

Thou shalt not kill (murder).

Leviticus 19:12

You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.

Matthew 5:33-37

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

James 5:12

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

A HYMN TO JESUS CHRIST & THE CHURCH

And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created through him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him,

provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

(Colossians 1:9-23)

[This document of comparative statements has been prepared by the V. Rev'd Fr. Gregory-Lazarus Murphy]

OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH ON FREEMASONRY:

CHRISTIANS MUST DISAVOW MASONRY

THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT

The Bishops of the Church of Greece in their session of October 12, 1933, concerned themselves with the study and examination of the secret international organization, Freemasonry. They heard with attention the introductory exposition of the Commission of four Bishops appointed by the Holy Synod at its last session; also the opinion of the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens, and the particular opinion of Prof. Panag Bratsiotis which was appended thereto. They also took into consideration publications on this question in Greece and abroad. After a discussion they arrived at the following conclusions, accepted unanimously by all the Bishops.

"Freemasonry is not simply a philanthropic union or a philosophical school, but constitutes a mystagogical system which reminds us of the ancient heathen mystery-religions and cults—from which it descends and is their continuation and regeneration. This is not only admitted by prominent teachers in the lodges, but they declare it with pride, affirming literally: "Freemasonry is the only survival of the ancient mysteries and can be called the guardian of them;" Freemasonry is a direct offspring of the Egyptian mysteries; "the humble workshop of the Masonic Lodge is nothing else than the caves and the darkness of the cedars of India and the unknown depths of the Pyramids and the crypts of the magnificent temples of Isis; in the Greek mysteries of Freemasonry, having passed along the luminous roads of knowledge under the mysteriarchs Prometheus, Dionysus and Orpheus, formulated the eternal laws of the Universe!

"Such a link between Freemasonry and the ancient idolatrous mysteries is also manifested by all that is enacted and performed at the initiations. As in the rites of the ancient idolatrous mysteries the drama of the labors and death of the mystery god was repeated, and in the imitative repetition of this drama the initiate dies together with the patron of the mystery religion, who was always a mythical person symbolizing the Sun of nature which dies in winter and is regenerated in spring, so it is also, in the initiation of the third degree, of the patron of Freemasonry Hiram and a kind of repetition of his death, in which the initiate suffers with him, struck by the same instruments and on the same parts of the body as Hiram. According to the confession of a prominent teacher of Freemasonry Hiram is "as Osiris, as Mithra, and as Bacchus, one of the personifications of the Sun."

"Thus Freemasonry is, as granted, a mystery-religion, quite different, separate, and alien to the Christian faith. This is shown without any doubt by the fact that it possesses its own temples with altars, which are characterized by prominent teachers as "workshops which cannot have less history and holiness than the Church" and as temples of virtue and wisdom where the Supreme Being is worshipped and the truth is taught. It possesses its own religious ceremonies, such as the ceremony of adoption or the masonic baptism, the ceremony of conjugal acknowledgement or the masonic marriage, the masonic memorial service, the consecration of the masonic temple, and so on. It possesses its own initiations, its own ceremonial ritual, its own hierarchical order and a definite

discipline. As may be concluded from the masonic agapes and from the feasting of the winter and summer solstices with religious meals and general rejoicings, it is a physiocratic religion.

"It is true that it may seem at first that Freemasonry can be reconciled with every other religion, because it is not interested directly in the religion to which its initiates belong. This is, however, explained by its syncretistic character and proves that in this point also it is an offspring and a continuation of ancient idolatrous mysteries which accepted for initiation worshippers of all gods. But as the mystery religions, in spite of the apparent spirit of tolerance and acceptance of foreign gods, lead to a syncretism which undermined and gradually shook confidence in other religions, thus Freemasonry today, which seeks to embrace in itself gradually all mankind and which promises to give moral perfection and knowledge of truth, is lifting itself to the position of a kind of super-religion, looking on all religions (without excepting Christianity) as inferior to itself. Thus it develops in its initiates the idea that only in masonic lodges is performed the shaping and the smoothing of the unsmoothed and unhewn stone. And the fact alone that Freemasonry creates a brotherhood excluding all other brotherhoods outside it (which are considered by Freemasonry as "uninstructed", even when they are Christian) proves clearly its pretensions to be a super-religion. This means that by masonic initiation, a Christian becomes a brother of the Muslim, the Buddhist, or any kind of rationalist, while the Christian not initiated in Freemasonry becomes to him an outsider.

"On the other hand, Freemasonry is prominently exalting knowledge and in helping free research as "putting no limit in the search of truth" (according to its rituals and constitution), and more than this by adopting the so-called natural ethic, shows itself in this sense to be in sharp contradiction with the Christian religion. For the Christian religion exalts faith above all, confining human reason to the limits traced by Divine Revelation and leading to holiness through the supernatural action of grace. In other words, which Christianity, as a religion of Revelation, possessing its rational and superrational dogmas and truths, asks for faith first, and grounds its moral structure on the super-natural Divine Grace, Freemasonry has only natural truth and brings to the knowledge of its initiates free thinking and investigation through reason only. It bases its moral structure only on the natural forces of man, and has only natural aims.

"Thus, the incompatible contradiction between Christianity and Freemasonry is quite clear. It is natural that various Churches of other denominations have taken a stand against Freemasonry. Not only has the Western Church branded for its own reasons the masonic movement by numerous Papal encyclicals, but Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian communities have also declared it to be incompatible with Christianity. Much more has the Orthodox Catholic Church, maintaining in its integrity the treasure of Christian faith proclaimed against it every time that the question of Freemasonry has been raised. Recently, the Inter-Orthodox Commission which met on Mount Athos and in which the representatives of all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches took part, has characterized Freemasonry as a "false and anti-Christian system."

The assembly of the Bishops of the Church of Greece in the above mentioned session heard with relief and accepted the following conclusions which were drawn from the investigations and discussions by its President His Grace Archbishop Chrysostom of Athens:

"Freemasonry cannot be at all compatible with Christianity as far as it is a secret organization, acting and teaching in mystery and secret and deifying rationalism. Freemasonry accepts as its members not only Christians, but also Jews and Muslims. Consequently clergymen cannot be permitted to take part

in this association. I consider as worthy of degradation every clergyman who does so. It is necessary to urge upon all who entered it without due thought and without examining what Freemasonry is, to sever all connections with it, for Christianity alone is the religion which teaches absolute truth and fulfills the religious and moral needs of men. Unanimously and with one voice all the Bishops of the Church of Greece have approved what was said, and we declare that all the faithful children of the Church must stand apart from Freemasonry. With unshaken faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ "in whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His Grace, whereby He abounds to us in all wisdom and prudence" (Ephes. 1, 7-9) possessing the truth revealed by Him and preached by the Apostles, "not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in the partaking in the Divine Sacraments through which we are sanctified and saved by eternal life, we must not fall from the grace of Christ by becoming partakers of other mysteries. It is not lawful to belong at the same time to Christ and to search for redemption and moral perfection outside Him. For these reasons true Christianity is incompatible with Freemasonry.

"Therefore, all who have become involved in the initiations of masonic mysteries must from this moment sever all relations with masonic lodges and activities, being sure that they are thereby of a certainty renewing their links with our one Lord and Savior which were weakened by ignorance and by a wrong sense of values. The Assembly of the Bishops of the Church of Greece expects this particularly and with love from the initiates of the lodges, being convinced that most of them have received masonic initiation not realizing that by it they were passing into another religion, but on the contrary from ignorance, thinking that they had done nothing contrary to the faith of their fathers. Recommending them to the sympathy, and in no wise to the hostility or hatred of the faithful children of the Church, the Assembly of the Bishops calls them to pray with her from the heart in Christian love, that the one Lord Jesus Christ "the way, the truth and the life" may illumine and return to the truth who in ignorance have gone astray."

- *Reprinted from:* Borichevsky, Rev. Fr. Vladimir S. and Rev. Fr. Stephen N. Jula, Masonry or Christ?, Ch. V.
- *Resource:* Orthodox Christian Information Center
- <http://www.freemasonrywatch.org/orthodox.html>

Q&A ON THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Fr. John Matusiak

Q: Is it forbidden for a member of the Orthodox Church in America to be a member of the Masonic Fraternity, and if so why?

A: It is forbidden for an Orthodox Christian to be a member of the Masonic Fraternity because many of its teachings stand in direct conflict with those of Orthodox Christianity.

http://www.oca.org/pages/orth_chri/Q-and-A_OLD/Masonic-Fraternity.html

A Letter from Metropolia of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America (now known as The Orthodox Church in America)

CONDEMNING FREE-MASONRY

May 9, 1960

HIS EMINENCE THE MOST REVEREND LEONTY ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK METROPOLITAN OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

59 EAST SECOND STREET NEW YORK 3, NEW YORK Telephone, Gramercy 7-7836

18649

TO ALL PASTORS AND CHURCH COMMITTEES OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

The Great Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, in session on March 29, 1960 RESOLVED: to publicize again for general information, the resolution concerning Masonry passed by the Great Council of Bishops on October 25, 1949 (see Russian Orthodox Messenger, p. 33 # 3, 1950) which reads as follows:

a) to caution members of the Russian Orthodox Church of America and especially the pastors, of the incompatibility of membership in the saving Church of Christ and simultaneously membership in Masonic Lodges, which are a mixture of pagan and other religions with certain secret "initiations" as a fixed ritual of the order;

b) to explain to the faithful that our Church views Masonry in perfect accord with the teaching of the Greek Orthodox Church and accepts her testament expressed by the Head of the Church of the Hellenes, the Most Reverend Chrysostom, Archbishop of Athens, in session of October 12, 1933 in Athens, in the following two statements:

FIRST: All the faithful children of the Church must stand apart from Freemasonry. With unshaken faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ, possessing the truth revealed by Him and preached by His Apostles, partaking in the Divine Sacraments through which we are sanctified, we must not fall from the grace of Christ by becoming partakers of other mysteries. It is not lawful to belong at the same time to Christ and to search for redemption and moral perfection outside Him.

SECOND: all who have become involved in the initiations of masonic mysteries must from this moment sever all relations with masonic lodges and activities, being sure that they are thereby of a certainty renewing their links with our one Lord and Saviour which were weakened by ignorance and a wrong sense of values.

c) to reiterate the statement of the Eastern Churches to those who entered masonry not realizing that by it they were passing into another religion comparable to the Gnostic sects of Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Persia and Greece, that the Church awaits with great love their contrition for their ignorant departure from Christ, and calls on all faithful to pray that the One Lord Jesus Christ 'the way, the truth and the life' may illumine and return to the truth those who in ignorance have gone astray.

d) to caution all faithful, especially the youth, to take to heart the directions of our Episcopate concerning Masonry, that the Grace of God be with them, their parents and relatives and with their organizations, now abiding in the mercies from above for their loyalty to the Orthodox Church of their fathers.

This resolution is to be promulgated to all concerned and is to be published in the official organ of the Metropolia and if possible, in circulars, for the guidance of all."

In informing all members of the Russian Orthodox Church of America of the above, the Great Council of Bishops strongly recommends that all Reverend Rectors admonish their parishioners who are members of the Masonic Lodges, and use their pastoral influence, especially during Penance, that they repent and leave the masonic organizations. The parishioners who refuse to do so are to be deprived, as unrepentant sinners, of Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, to whom is glory and honor forever. Amen.

The names of those deprived of Communion must be kept in the parish records as evidence for their exclusion from membership in Parish and Diocesan councils and as delegates to the All-American Sobor.

SIGNED by Members of the Metropolitan Council:

Protopresbyter Feofan Buketoff

and Secretary of the Metropolitan Council,

Right Reverend Joseph Pishtey.

<http://www.orthodox.net/ecumenism/1960-metropolia-letter.html>

Orthodox America

(a publication of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia)

WHAT ABOUT....FREEMASONRY?

written by Fr. Alexey Young



Most Americans, as often as they see a dollar bill, are unaware that the strange pyramid on the reverse side is a Masonic symbol and that George Washington, the "father of our country" was a Mason. What is Masonry? Few people could give more than a vague (and not very accurate) answer. It is, in fact, the largest secret society in the world, numbering nearly six million members, among whom are many men prominent in business, politics and the arts.

Until quite recently I had never known a Mason. In the first six years of my pastoral activity in the missions I had never met an Orthodox Christian who was a Mason, or catechized anyone who had ever been one. Evidently Freemasonry has rarely been attractive to the average American convert to Orthodoxy, who sees the Masonic Lodge as a silly collection of "mumbo-jumbo" and "high pooh-bahs." My own acquaintance with it was purely academic. Until this year, when my "book-knowledge" on the subject had cause to take on a definite form. Let me relate.

One day I received a call from an older man of Greek background who wished to join our parish. He made an appointment to come and talk to me. Although I noticed that he wore a distinctive ring, I failed to recognize the emblem until he casually mentioned that he belonged to the "Blue Lodge." When I asked what this was, he said, "It's a local Masonic Lodge." "Demetrios," I replied, "I can't admit you to the Sacraments if you area Freemason." "Why not?" he asked. "Because Masonry is anti-Christian and has been condemned by both the Greek and Russian Churches in this century." "That's funny," he said, "because I know many Orthodox who are my 'lodge brothers,' even a bishop!"

Shortly after this meeting with Demetrios (he refused to renounce Masonry, telling me that I simply didn't understand it), I had another encounter with a Mason. I then resolved that in future I would routinely ask all new parishioners or inquirers if they were involved with Masonry (or any of its related organizations--Odd Fellows, Shriners, Demolay, Job's Daughters, Rainbow Girls) in accordance with

this decree from the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church ;,broad, dating from 1932 and still in force:

The (Holy Council recommends) to pastors the necessity of questioning every person presenting himself for confession with a view of finding out whether or not that person is a member of a Masonic organization and whether or not he shares its doctrine. If it appears that the person is a member explain to him that participation in these organizations is incompatible with the name of Christian, with being a member of the Church of Christ That he must take a firm decision to break with Masonry and with doctrines related to it; and if he does not do so, not to admit him m Holy Communion; and if he should refuse to repent, to excommunicate him from the Holy Church."

Strong words, to those of us raised with the benevolent image of Masonry as we see it in Shriners' hospitals for children, but not as strong as the official statement of the Church of Greece in 1933, one year after the Russian bishops spoke out:

Freemasonry constitutes a mystagogical system which reminds us of the ancient heathen mystery-religion and cults--from which it descends and is their continuation and regeneration. This is not only admitted by prominent teachers in the lodges, but they declare it with pride, affirming literally Freemasonry is the only survival of the ancient mysteries and can be called the guardian of them--the Masonic Lodge is nothing else than the caves and the darkness of the cedars of India and the unknown depths of the pyramids and the crypts of the magnificent temple, of Isis, etc.

Thus the Greek bishops conclude:

"Freemasonry is a mystery religion quite different, separate, and alien to the Christian faith."

Similar pronouncements against Freemasonry have been made by the Roman Catholic Church (in 1738 and again in 1892). Likewise, some Protestant groups--as, for example, the Lutheran Church-

Missouri Synod-teach that Freemasonry is an un-Christian cult. And even the theologically liberal Church of England, after an investigation of Masonry, recently issued a recommendation that Anglicans take no part in it. [1] But in spite of official censure, many Christians—including those belonging to various Orthodox jurisdictions--see no conflict between their loyalty to the Lodge and their Faith. Most of these people would agree with Bishop Sven Lindegard of the Church of Sweden--where six of its 13 bishops are Masons--who responded to criticisms that Masonic membership is incompatible with Christian beliefs: "[That idea] does not deserve to be commented upon...It's absurd." What is it that makes the Orthodox Church so vigorously opposed to it?

Most Masons, certainly those that profess to be Christian, would claim that Freemasonry is not a religion but only a fraternal organization. Historically Masonry grew out of the medieval stone masons' guilds. When the guild system disintegrated, the desire for preserving a select, mutually supportive group inspired four lodges in London to band together, and in 1717 the first Grand Lodge was formed. Unlike the medieval guilds, however, the Lodge from its inception was composed of "speculative masons" who had nothing to do with stone work but who incorporated into their society many terms and symbols of the stone cutter's trade. This is the factual history of the Lodge, although Masonic sources claim that the society's origin is traceable to King Solomon and the building of the temple in Jerusalem, and extends even further back to "the very cradle of the human race." The Lodge claims to accept men of all creeds, and to lead them along the road of moral perfectibility to "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" (the very motto of the French Revolution),

There are, however, some Masonic authorities who openly admit that the purpose of the society is not purely fraternal. Albert Pike, in his exhaustive compendium, *Morals and Dogma* (a Masonic source, 1871), writes: "Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion and its teachings are instruction in religion" (p. 213). Requisite for membership in the Lodge is belief in a Supreme Being (who is referred to as the Great Architect of the Universe) and the immortality of the soul. Every meeting opens with a prayer addressed to this Supreme Being. Christians are assured that they can pray to their God, although discussion of particular religious creeds is forbidden, as well as any mention of Jesus Christ (ostensibly because Masonry seeks not to offend anyone's personal religious beliefs).

Given a superficial acquaintance with Masonic teaching, one can understand how an unthinking Christian can be deceived into believing that there's nothing wrong in his being a Mason. This deception is reinforced by the strong parallels between Masonic dogma and Christianity from which it has taken many basic concepts--lifting some directly, one can say deliberately, from the Scriptures. "The great commandment of Masonry is this: 'A new commandment give I unto you: that ye love one another'" (Pike, 18). St. Paul is frequently quoted: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" In "Christian" lodges, the Sacred Book (which together with the square and compass comprise the indispensable "furniture" of the lodge) is the Holy Bible. Masonry even claims to "reverentially enforce the sublime lessons of Him Who died upon the Cross" (Pike, 221).

A Rival Religion

But even a cursory examination of Masonic doctrine will prove to anyone that the Mason's "Great Architect" is certainly not the God of the Christians, not Solomen's Jehovah. Pike makes this very clear when he writes that the Old Testament writings about God merely reflect "popular notions of the

Deity But such were not the ideas of the intellectual and enlightened few among the Hebrews. It is certain that they possessed a knowledge of the true nature and attributes of God, as the same class of men did among the other nations-Zoroaster, Manu, Confucius, Socrates, Plato. But their doctrines on this subject were esoteric; they did not communicate them to the people at large, but only to a favored few...to the Initiates. The communication of this knowledge and other secrets ..constitutes, under other names, what we now call Masonry...

"The Supreme, Self-existent, Eternal, All-wise, All-powerful, Infinitely Good, Pitying, Beneficent, and Merciful Creator and Preserver of the Universe was the same, *by whatever name he was called*, to the intellectual and enlighten ed men of all nations" (pp. 207-208, our italics).

This teaching was precisely reflected in a troubling conversation Demetrios had had with one of my parishioners. When I learned he was a Mason, his meaning suddenly became clear. "The Greeks wouldn't say that Allah is God," he said, "only because they didn't know the word Allah; they only knew the Greek word for God, Theos--but they're both the same" When asked about the Greek Orthodox martyrs who died simply because they refused to utter the two syllables, Allah, he was silent. Here, then, was the chilling fruit of Masonic "theology," an ecumenism so profound that thousands of martyrs could be dismissed as ignorant fools rather than glorified as Confessors of the Faith.

Indeed, Masonry reverences equally Moses, Confucius, Zoroaster, Jesus Christ and others, for ecumenism is its deepest truth: "Universality is its boast In its language citizens of every nation may converse; at its altars men of all religions may kneel; to its creed disciples of every faith may subscribe., the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer..." As the Greek bishops said in 1933: "Masonry seeks to embrace in itself gradually all mankind and .. promises to give moral perfection and knowledge of truth...lifting itself to the position of a kind of super-religion, looking on all religions (not excepting Christianity) as inferior to itself." This philosophy is identical to that of modern ecumenism, and it is precisely this idea which has been anathematized by traditional Orthodox jurisdiction,, as being the gathering place of all heresy, all error, all idolatry. "Therefore," declare the Greek bishops:

All who have become involved in the initiations of masonic mysteries must from this moment sever all relations with masonic lodges and activities, being sure that they are thereby of a certainty renewing their links with our one Lord and Saviour which were weakened by ignorance and by a wrong sense of values.... For Christianity alone is the religion which teaches absolute truth and fulfills the religious and moral needs of men We must not fall from the grace of Christ by becoming partakers of other mysteries. It is not lawful to belong at the same time to Christ and to march for redemption and moral perfection outside Him."

Masonry promises to all its faithful members salvation and a place in the "Grand Lodge above" without need of Christ's redeeming Sacrifice on the Cross; it promises moral perfection without need of repentance; it claims to initiate man into a knowledge of God and truth through a revelation of mysteries, not through Christ Who said: "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*" (John 14:6). These facts alone should alert the Christian that his participation in the Lodge is nothing less than spiritual adultery. For our God is a jealous God, and we have been exhorted:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for...what concord hath Christ with Belial or what part hath he that believeth an infidel! Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. (II Cor. 6:14-17)

Even were it not for the pagan, syncretic ecumenical nature of Masonic dogmas, the religious rites of the Lodge make it impossible for a conscious and informed Orthodox Christian to participate in any slightest way. Orthodox means not only "right belief," but also "right worship" (pravoslavny is the Russian for "orthodox" and means, literally, "true praising"). Therefore, since right belief and right worship are virtually synonymous in Orthodoxy, it is never permissible for an Orthodox Christian to participate in non-Orthodox religious rites (and "Masonry is worship"--Pike, 219). When Orthodox Christians join a Masonic Lodge (or participate in the prayers and rites of other churches) they utterly compromise the purity of their witness, both theologically and liturgically. They betray the Faith as Judas betrayed Christ. They place Orthodoxy on the same level as non-Orthodox faiths, non-Christian movements, and even the ancient pagan mystery religions--all of which Christ came in order to overthrow and destroy, not to somehow elevate to the same level of Truth !

According to the Masons, the True God "rediscovered" is JAH-BUL-ON. "Jah" is the abbreviation for the Hebrew name of God - Jahweh or Jehovah; "Bul" or "Bal" is the Assyrian deity Baal; "On" is the Egyptian sun god [Am'on Ra].

(From L. James Rongstadt, How to Respond to...the Lodge; Concordia Publishing House, 1977)

Here we do not have the space to investigate in detail the doctrines and rites of Masonry, or the favoritism practiced by Masons towards each other, the elitism, the barbarous oaths of secrecy, the deception practiced on the members, etc. But we hope that even this brief explanation will serve to enlighten those who have been unwittingly attracted by Masonry's benign exterior and to steer others clear of its nets. Freemasonry is obviously the mother of modern ecumenism,^[2] without doubt the most subtle and dangerous heresy of our time. If we are to persevere faithful to Christ, we must be vigilant and "try the spirits whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone into the world" (I John 4:1). How are we to do this? Herein lies our hope:

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This, is the true God, and eternal life. (I John 5:20)

Amen !

written by Fr. Alexey Young

[1] Some readers may be interested toknow that Prince Charles is the first in a long line of English male' royalty to decline membership

[2] For example, even 19th century Masonic manuals taught the "branch-theory" of Christianity, which has now been accepted by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and, alas, some Orthodox.

<http://www.roca.org/OA/70/70t.htm>

<http://www.apostle1.com/orthinfo/What%20About-Freemasonry1.htm>

<http://roca.org/index.php/orthodox-america/>

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Freemasonry in American Orthodox history

POSTED ON NOVEMBER 20, 2012 by MATTHEW NAMEE

Once upon a time, it was the norm for American men to be members of fraternal organizations. These were especially attractive to new immigrants, who wanted to be integrated into American society and make progress in business. And in that earlier era, fraternal membership was the best and quickest way to achieve both goals. They joined the Rotary Club, the Lions, the Elks, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Columbus, and a host of others. But the most famous — and infamous — of them all was Freemasonry. Countless men in American Orthodox history, including priests and bishops, have been Freemasons. This, despite the fact that membership in secret societies is widely viewed as incompatible with Orthodoxy.

For some background, let's first look at the relevant canons. Now, I am *not* a canonist, nor am I a historian of the Eastern Roman (or "Byzantine") Empire. But, as best I can tell, the key canons are Canon 18 of Chalcedon and Canon 34 of Trullo. Let's take the latter one first:

But in future, since the priestly canon openly sets this forth, that the crime of conspiracy or secret society is forbidden by external laws, but much more ought it to be prohibited in the Church; we also hasten to observe that if any clerics or monks are found either conspiring or entering secret societies, or devising anything against bishops or clergymen, they shall be altogether deprived of their rank.

The Trullo canon was referred to as simply a renewal of Canon 18 of Chalcedon:

The crime of conspiracy or banding together is utterly prohibited even by the secular law, and much more ought it to be forbidden in the Church of God. Therefore, if any, whether clergymen or monks, should be detected in conspiring or banding together, or hatching plots against their bishops or fellow-clergy, they shall by all means be deposed from their own rank.

On their face, these canons seem to be focused on prohibiting clergymen from conspiring against other clergymen. I don't *think* that the bishops who composed the canons had in mind groups like the Freemasons. That isn't to say that Freemasonry is acceptable in Orthodoxy, but I don't think there's an explicit forbiddance in the ancient canons themselves. If anyone knows of other relevant canons, please let me know, because, as I said earlier, I am definitely not an expert on this stuff.

Freemasonry and other secret societies were extremely prevalent in Russia, Greece, and other traditionally Orthodox countries in the 19th century. Meletios Metaxakis — the Archbishop of Athens who founded the Greek Archdiocese and later became Ecumenical Patriarch — was a Freemason. So was Archbishop Athenagoras Spyrou, who led the Greek Archdiocese for two decades and then became a hugely influential Ecumenical Patriarch. Likewise Metropolitan Antony Bashir, the longtime head of the Antiochian Archdiocese of New York. And these were just three of the biggest names; numerous other Orthodox bishops were Freemasons in the 20th

century. (In the case of Athenagoras and Bashir, I've talked to people who knew them, and it was common knowledge that they were Freemasons. But I must admit that I don't have any hard evidence to *prove* this fact. Unfortunately, evidence beyond word of mouth is hard to come by on this sort of thing.)

In 1917, Fr. Ingram Nathaniel Irvine argued strongly against the consecration of Aftimios Ofiesh as bishop for the Syrians. One of Irvine's main contentions was that Ofiesh was a Freemason. I'll quote Irvine's letter at length here, because it's directly relevant to the topic at hand. The letter, dated 2/5/1917, was written to the North American Ecclesiastical Consistory and is preserved in Irvine's file in the OCA archives. All the emphases and misspellings are Irvine's.

A Schism can be healed but the consecration of the wrong party for the Episcopate never. [...] Who is the candidate for the Syrian Vicar Bishoprick? A Freemason. It may be said that, he has given up Masonry. While I doubt it, it makes the matter more terrible than if he persisted in being an active member. And why?

First: Because by being an in-active member for the sake of a chance of being made a Bishop he must have lost the respect of both the Masonic Order and loyal Orthodox Christians.

Second: There is an old and well authenticated fact to wit: — "Once a Mason always a Mason." An ignorance of the watchword because of delinquency of a member etc., for the time being, does nothinder the opportunity of having that ignorance remedied and the knowledge granted at an opportune moment. Insincerity under the first point would suggest the second idea.

The history of Freemasonry is a night-mare to Christianity in the West. Pardon a little bit of my own knowledge being interjected. Practical knowledge after all is the best.

[Irvine goes on to discuss his own negative experience with a Freemason bishop in the Episcopal Church.]

Freemasonry, today, is a mixture of spurious Christianity, agnosticism, infidelity, aethism [sic], Judaism, and in very many instances, immorality. I have carefully studied it for over fifty years. It's [sic] nobility of long ago, while it has still had some noble men as members, has long since departed. It has damned the State and the Church by its under-hand influence and corruptive practices.

If a Bishop of the Church is a Freemason then every priest had better be a Mason in his Diocese, for otherwise it may follow that a Jew, an Infidel, an Athiest, etc. or the lowest saloon keeper, or house of ill fame manager, as a member would have more influence as a mason with the Masonic Bishop than the priest who was not a member of the Order.

One of the questions asked of me when I was a candidate for the Russian Orthodox Priesthood was "Are you a Freemason?" My reply was "I am not." Have we changed? Are our conditions variable?

Now if the Episcopate is one, any member of it affects the whole. And if the Church is one, any member of the same may feel agrieved [sic] if he believes that a member of an alien and pernicious organization is permitted to rule in the high and sacred office of a Bishop in the Church of God Almighty.

The Orthodox Church has gained the Confidence and love of right-thinking people. Let us not tarnish her banner now by inserting amongst the title letters "Masonry." Rome is marveling at our success and Orthodox Catholicity. Let us not give her a chance to say that, we have retrograded to rationalism and chicanery. Above all things let us guard the Episcopate from that which is worldly and earthly.

Therefore if all others keep silent, I for one, as a faithful priest of the Russo-Greek Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, most solemnly protest against the admission of Archimandrite Afiesh or any other Mason into the Episcopate.

And if he is admitted or any Mason, even under pain of Ecclesiastical penalties, I will never recognize him as a Bishop. I can not serve God and Mammon in the Episcopate. Masons as Laymen may be sinners, but as Bishops hypocrites and creatures of circumstances.

In spite of Irvine's campaign against him, Ofiesh was consecrated a bishop. And his career did end badly — he exhibited erratic behavior and ended up marrying a young girl in 1933 — but I don't think any of that was connected to his status as a Freemason.

Have any Orthodox Churches formally condemned Freemasonry? Yes, they have. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) condemned it in 1932. The Church of Greece followed suit the next year, issuing a rather lengthy statement. The Holy Synod of Greece had appointed a commission of four bishops to study Freemasonry, and on October 12, 1933, the commission presented its initial findings. The Holy Synod also heard reports from the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens. After this, the Synod unanimously adopted several conclusions.

1. "Freemasonry is not simply a philanthropic union or a philosophical school, but constitutes a mystagogical system which reminds us of the ancient heathen mystery-religions and cults—from which it descends and is their continuation and regeneration."
2. "Such a link between Freemasonry and the ancient idolatrous mysteries is also manifested by all that is enacted and performed at the initiations."
3. "Thus Freemasonry is, as granted, a mystery-religion, quite different, separate, and alien to the Christian faith."
4. "It is true that it may seem at first that Freemasonry can be reconciled with every other religion, because it is not interested directly in the religion to which its initiates belong. This is, however, explained by its syncretistic character and proves that in this point also it is an offspring and a continuation of ancient idolatrous mysteries which accepted for initiation worshippers of all gods. [...] This means that by masonic initiation, a Christian becomes a brother of the Muslim, the Buddhist, or any kind of

rationalist, while the Christian not initiated in Freemasonry becomes to him an outsider.”

5. “On the other hand, Freemasonry [...] shows itself in this sense to be in sharp contradiction with the Christian religion.”
6. “Thus, the incompatible contradiction between Christianity and Freemasonry is quite clear. [...] [T]he Orthodox Catholic Church, maintaining in its integrity the treasure of Christian faith [has] proclaimed against it every time that the question of Freemasonry has been raised. Recently, the Inter-Orthodox Commission which met on Mount Athos and in which the representatives of all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches took part, has characterized Freemasonry as a ‘false and anti-Christian system.’”

I’ve truncated all of those conclusions; click on the above link to read the full statement. The Holy Synod of Greece concluded:

Freemasonry cannot be at all compatible with Christianity as far as it is a secret organization, acting and teaching in mystery and secret and deifying rationalism. Freemasonry accepts as its members not only Christians, but also Jews and Muslims. Consequently clergymen cannot be permitted to take part in this association. I consider as worthy of degradation every clergyman who does so. It is necessary to urge upon all who entered it without due thought and without examining what Freemasonry is, to sever all connections with it, for Christianity alone is the religion which teaches absolute truth and fulfills the religious and moral needs of men. Unanimously and with one voice all the Bishops of the Church of Greece have approved what was said, and we declare that all the faithful children of the Church must stand apart from Freemasonry...

This is an especially remarkable statement given the prevalence of Freemasonry in Greece, and its role in the Greek Revolution a century earlier. The Church of Greece didn’t (and doesn’t) have an American jurisdiction, but in 1949 the Holy Synod of the Russian Metropolia in America (today’s OCA) formally affirmed the statement of the Church of Greece. In 1960, the Metropolia’s Synod reiterated that affirmation ([click here to read the 1960 affirmation](#)).

As far as I know, those three bodies — ROCOR, the Church of Greece, and the Russian Metropolia (OCA) are the only Orthodox Churches/jurisdictions that have formally condemned Freemasonry. That isn’t to say that it is acceptable among the other Orthodox Churches, but it’s also a somewhat sensitive issue, given how many Orthodox men have been Freemasons over the past century.

This is all by way of introduction. There’s quite a bit of material online about Orthodoxy and Freemasonry, but unsurprisingly, most of it focuses on condemning Freemasonry, rather than talking about history. If anyone out there has more details on the historical side of things, please let me know.

by Matthew Namee

<https://orthodoxhistory.org/2012/11/20/freemasonry-in-american-orthodox-history/>



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OF A TRUTH MOST PROFOUND,
OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, SHALL BE GLORIFIED BY EVERY CREATED BEING,
BOTH CORPOREAL AND NOETIC, BOTH NOW AND EVER, AND UNTO THE AGES OF AGES --
WHETHER IN HEAVEN OR IN THE ETERNAL FIRE OF HELL.
AMEN!