

**SYNOPSIS OF PAPERS FOR PRESENTATION
FOR THE A.N.Z.M.R.C. TOUR OF AUSTRALIA
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B.A. (Soc Ant & Rel Stds – Massey) Dip. Mas Ed.
Dip Pol Stds.**

Paper 1:

The Ethos of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry does not write social policy or in anyway attempt to engineer how it is applied, however within our organisation the tenets of the Craft can provide tools that will allow each of us as individuals to achieve goals within ourselves that are beneficial to society.

I will develop ethos as part of a culture and then move it into the culture of Freemasonry as I know it.

The ethos I believe within the confines of present-day Freemasonry concerns two principles and these are:

- Social equality; and
- Religious equality.

The combination of these two leads to CHARITY and on this basis I will build a foundation in an attempt to answer the Ethos of Freemasonry. **4800 words.**

Paper 2:

Freemasonry in the context of our current existence and how the teachings of the 2nd degree apply.

The Fellowcraft Degree or Second degree in Freemasonry is perhaps one of the most ignored degrees by some Freemasons and yet when we turn our attentions to the fact that it is known as ***'the Ceremony of Passing'*** that surely must give us a clue as to its importance.

The Second degree ceremony imparts to the candidate three important lessons in life and gives three important answers.

- Experience
- Education
- Wisdom

If the role of Freemasonry is to educate us then we must all accept that the proposition advanced by Bro Kent Henderson in 2002 is an excellent and precise definition of Freemasonry when he states:

'Freemasonry is a moral and ethical education society. Let us assume, for a moment, that we accept my definition. If so, then we must accept that Masonry's primary role is to teach morality and ethics, in other words to educate.' **4100 words.**

Paper 3:

Freemasonry, humanity – will we survive?

To address this topic it is extremely easy to be drawn into writing from a perspective that allows me to 'grandstand' however my intention will be not to do this. Over many years I have made notes and listened to various ideas, communicated and know that there will be some crystal ball gazing however predicting the future course of events is not possible with any precise degree of accuracy.

In today's world we use various trade mark devices, advanced computer technology, i-pods and the latest medical equipment for many reasons including the saving of lives but technology is having a major impact on many lives in all parts of the world. We have seen in former times various revolutions such as the Industrial one but we are currently in a massive technological revolution.

This allows us to perform actions which once were only dreams and were in our imagination. There has been many positives created for humanity but alas there are consequences.

'All humanity is divided into three parts—the positives, the negatives, and the neutrals. The positives are comparatively few, the negatives are numerous, and the neutrals are the vast majority. The neutral may become occasionally positive or negative, the positive may lapse now and then into negativeness, but the born negative can never be a positive; once a negative always a negative.'

Paper 4:

Freemasonry, environmentalism - a way forward – is there one? Think Universally – Act Locally.

In our choices we make as Freemasons we must lift our vision and raise our awareness to environmentalism.

If we do not consider, but we reject this vision, then the standards of living in many countries will alter. We will face in the future the destruction and imbalance of nature leading to a situation where the environment, as we know it, will be ultimately destroyed. At this point it will perhaps become irreversible and the world as we know it will cease to exist. To what extent we can only assume but we must all be aware that it is a possibility.

The world is in a state of chaos in respect to environmental issues and some order must be considered. I do not believe that the chaos can be resolved by any one person or group but by adopting a unified role and approaching the problem with a joint effort being made by all humanity then we can achieve some semblance of order.

I propose to draw on the three problems in solving any issue that needs addressing as outlined by James Surowiecki.¹ He argues that with the proper structure and characteristics, large groups of ordinary people can out-perform small groups of experts in making decisions and predictions.

I will quote various religious references relative to their respective viewpoint on the *Earth*. I wish to make it clear that I am not advocating Freemasonry is a religion but I believe that as Freemasons we are Universal in our approach and contained within our principles and tenets we accept members who believe in a Supreme Being as diverse as the 'god of Nature' in the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia. With the aid of all our teachings and by employing our joint efforts perhaps we can reach a consensus that allows us to show that as a universal society we can assist in moving forward an issue of vast moral significance to all humanity.

I will conclude with reference to the Earth Charter and a letter written to the Grand Master of South Carolina on 1st December 2006.

6000 words

Paper 5:

Is Freemasonry able to serve or is it serving a useful purpose in Society?

'Bro. Michael Yaxley, President of the Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge of Tasmania, is quite correct when he writes - Society does have a need for a body such as Freemasonry. I believe that this need will increase rather than decrease. In the next century the work place will not offer fellowship and camaraderie sufficient to satisfy the social instincts that people have. Many people will work at home, linked to the office by computer and telephone. Others will work in an office with complex but nevertheless inanimate equipment. The irony of the Age of Communication is that people spend, and will spend, more time by themselves.'

Not a truer set of words have been spoken. This reputable Brother has given to all of us a direction and challenge that we must pursue vigorously in order to show Freemasonry *is able to serve* and *is serving* a useful purpose in society.

I will begin by outlining -

- What I believe Freemasonry is.
- What its purpose is in society and the ability to be relevant in that purpose.

Societies undergo phenomenon changes and subsequently these changes impact in many areas including Freemasonry.

I will consider as examples homelessness, various morality dilemmas and global ethical issues. **4100 words.**

¹ James Surowiecki: *The Wisdom of Crowds – Why the Many are Smarter than the few.* Random House. 2004

Paper 6:

'Lux Libertas' – Light and Liberty.

The title of this paper is able to conjure up the imagination of many however do not be fooled by the magic tricks I will attempt to perform with the title. In this paper my intention is to consider these title words and draw from them some interesting Masonic relevance. There has been a large amount of writing and discussion on *Lux* and *Libertas* in Freemasonry.

Where do these words feature in the world today and have a Masonic history attached to them? Maybe this is another one of our hidden mysteries for most of us.

Birth plays a fundamental role in what we think and what we are.

How many of us understand the implications and role of birth in our lives – apart from the obvious. Consider for a moment the earliest memories of your life – for most it is many days, weeks or maybe even years from your actual birth or is it? Consider your intrauterine memories they are a unique experience. You as a foetus are encased in a warm universe of water being nurtured by your mother's body. Your universe is dark but you are safe. This is the primal state of your human mind. Remember those words and '*darkness lay upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*'. Is this in fact your foetal state and then all of sudden liberty – you have escaped from the womb. **5700 words.**

Paper 7:

The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences – the Trivium - how they originated and their place in today's society.

This subject is an area within Freemasonry which we are all encouraged to make a study of however their originality at first glance does not appear to fit comfortably in the current society as we know it today. Or does it?

I believe the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences are of vital importance and an asset to all Freemasons, however in former times they were divided into two separate distinctions and today this can still be applied.

We must consider them in light of where they fit with today's lifestyle and that is what I will attempt to consider in this paper.

I will commence with an introduction of them, outline three Roman Scholars who were the driving force in their formation and application and address the following question – was there 7 or 9 of them?

I will then discuss the relevance of the Trivium in today's society and conclude with an overview of the three contained within the Trivium. **4000 words.**

Paper 8:

The 'Quadrivium' of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences – an historical overview and portrayal of them in today's society.

Moving forward from the Trivium in our learning we have now acquired the skills that with grammar comes **knowledge**, with logic **understanding** and with rhetoric - **wisdom**.

Let us now ask ourselves – what more is required to polish our minds and what is the next step?

The Quadrivium is this next step and consists of arithmetic (number alone), geometry (number in space), music (number in time), and astronomy (number in space and time), and was based on the classification system for arithmetic created by the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, who defined number as the basic principle of all things.

I focus in this paper on Boethius as his work was centered around and played a major role in developing the Quadrivium.

I look at the four areas of the Quadrivium and consider their ways of being projected in today's society with particular emphasis on music as a case study.

I will show that even though music in Freemasonry is regarded as the concord of sweet sounds which

elevates the generous sentiments of the soul it has a far-reaching effect and impact within the world. Rather than being a cacophony it is universal through various methods and for people it is of major significance in their everyday lives for a number of reasons. **6000 words.**

Paper 9:

The 'hidden mysteries of Nature and Science' – are they 'hidden' or have they not yet been found?

*'One touch of nature made the whole world kin. As disastrous and sorrowful was the calamity, it had its good effect of making all as one family, and binding the tie of brotherly love and fraternity stronger. It knew no station in life. All like the teachings of Freemasonry, were of an equality. They met upon the level and parted on the square.'*²

The above quote was made following the relief effort of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and reflects how a disastrous hidden mystery can bind the world and humanity as one.

'You are now expected to extend your researches into the hidden mysteries of nature and science.'

In the second degree this is part of an instruction or teaching imparted to us but upon hearing this one must ask – what does it really mean? In this paper I will consider the **what, where, why and hows** of the *'hidden mysteries of nature and science.'*

I will commence with a brief look at the 'Argument from Design' and then move through some of the above and consider how science arose as magic declined. Stone spheres, astronomical connection raises a question of stonemasons - round stones, square stones perhaps one of the hidden mysteries that may never be unravelled. Ventifacts and butterflies. One day we may learn with the aid of science how to unlock them – or do we really want to? Perhaps some mysteries will always remain hidden. **4500 words.**

Paper 10:

Caodaism and Freemasonry – Both are Brotherhoods – but with similarities.

This paper was inspired by an interest as a result of reading an article in a magazine that had emblazoned on its page in bright colour - 'the all seeing eye.'

I continued for many years to enquire into this religion and found that there were many Masonic connections that intrigued me that I believe because we are multicultural in our views, have for me personally made this research worthwhile, and ultimately of interest to others.

I do not have any intention of expressing any views as to the merits of either the religion of Caodaism or Freemasonry. I will show that there has in history been parallels and connections that make interesting reading and perhaps allow us to extend our daily advancement a little further. In many respects this also allows us to gain a greater understanding of humanity under the canopy of diversity in which we all live.

I will consider the concept of Brotherhood, Brotherly Love, background the historical formation of Caodaism, Vietnamese Freemasonry and some of its members, the French Connection, the Masonic Connection, some parallel connections, and conclude with a modern-day brief summary of Caodaism.

The noble effort of Cao Dai is to unite all of humanity through a common vision of the Supreme Being, whatever our minor differences, in order to promote peace and understanding throughout the world.

5400 words.

Paper 11:

Is Freemasonry Androgynocentric, Androcentric or Gynocentric?

We constantly hear and read that Freemasonry is a male only organization and that we only admit men into our ceremonies.

This statement is not correct and in this paper I intend to outline and produce examples that there are female Masonic organizations, that over a number of years, male have influenced female and female have influenced male in ways of thinking. In some instances the problems encountered in all our formative years of Freemasonry are not experienced by any one individual order.

Are we androgynocentric, androcentric or gynocentric or are we some or all of these? **4500 words.**

² 1906 Report to Annual Communication – Grand Lodge of California - by Harry.J.Lask, Secretary of the San Francisco. Board of Relief.

Paper 12:

Sacred Space in Freemasonry.

Throughout the world today there are numerous Masonic buildings situated in cities, towns and rural areas. To understand the concept of sacred space within Freemasonry I will commence with a brief historical overview of the organisation.

I will then outline the history surrounding King Solomon's Temple, a brief outline of their rituals and its symbolism within sacred space and various points relating to their beliefs and reasons supporting the concept of sacred space. I am proposing that as Freemasons we must always consider our space as sacred space. **4800 words.**

Paper 13:

Women Freemasons – or are they?

From earliest times women masons may have commenced perhaps as a 'goddess' and then due to family, social issues, a desire for recognition and a changing society Freemasonry and Lodges played a role in shaping the ways that women have been slowly given an inside view of Freemasonry and involved and initiated into Lodges. As examples I will background some women who have contributed in various ways and one who caused some concern for a number of years. **4600 words.**

Paper 14:

Elisha Kent Kane: -Real Freemasonry in Action - Brotherly Love, Nature, Science and the Hidden Mysteries - all rolled into one.

This paper concerns Elisha Kent Kane - a doctor, explorer, scientist, writer, world traveller, military hero and Freemason. A man - who in nearly 37 short years lived life and proved to the world that the principles and tenets of Freemasonry can be truly exhibited in that short passage of time.

It serves as an example to all humanity that no matter what the odds are you can derive lessons and enjoy life in rendering service to your fellow human-beings. **4100 words.**

- **TOTAL: 67400 words**
- **Presentations are all suitable for non-Masonic visitors.**
- **All Presentations have PowerPoint.**