



Knight Templar

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Contents

Grand Master's Message
Grand Master Jeffrey N. Nelson 4

A Symbolic Consideration of the Royal Arch
Sir Knight George Marshall, PGC 7

At the Heart of Freemasonry
Sir Knight John R. Dinke 11

Updated Hypothesis of
Knight Templar Treasure
Dr. Donald J. G. Chiarella, KT 13

Hell
Reverend and Sir Knight Richard R. Losch 21

What's in it for Me?
Sir Knight Fred M. Duncan 28

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Features

Leadership Notes - Perpetuating a Legacy..... 5

Prelate's Chapel 6

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation ...10,17,20

Focus on Chivalry 16

Grand Commandery Supplement..... 18

In Memoriam 26

Knightly News Meritorious Service Award 27

Beauceant News..... 32

Knights at the Bookshelf..... 34

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Grand Master's Message

The theme of our message this month is technology and Templary or virtual Templary. As we announced last month, the Grand Encampment will be presenting the fall 2020 department conferences through videoconferencing. The York Rite Leadership training team has already successfully completed its first Virtual Instructor Led Training for the Leadership 101 course. This was accomplished for the Southeastern Department and confirmed that we will be able to utilize this format for both the leadership courses as well as the department conferences.

Although we are as anxious as each of you to resume normal or whatever will be the "new normal" activities, one aspect of leadership is to attempt to anticipate the future based upon currently available information. Essentially, hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst.

One difference between the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and today's pandemic is that, while the earlier pandemic primarily affected younger members of society, the current pandemic appears to disproportionately affect members who are older, male, and those with underlying health conditions, exactly our demographic. Another difference is that, unlike 1918 or even ten years ago, we now have the technological capability to meet remotely. The Grand Encampment elected officers and department commanders have been able to continue to carry out our responsibilities by holding regular meetings and attending a number of annual conclaves through various videoconferencing platforms. This has actually worked better than we had anticipated. Grand Commanderies have been able to complete all of their required business through virtual conclaves. This includes reception of dignitaries and all required reports and approval of all business items. Voting on legislation and offices, sometimes with multiple measures and candidates, has been conducted without incident.

Although we have not been able to confer the Order of the Temple since March, membership continues to be priority number one for the 68th triennium. Now is a good time to reach out and contact those members who are self-isolating to some degree. It is also a good time to review each demit and suspension recently issued by your commandery in preparation for the new normal.

Courteously,

Jeffrey N. Nelson, GCT



Leadership Notes

Perpetuating a Legacy

My wife has an Angel Wing Begonia, several actually, that are generational cuttings from a plant that was given to her by her mother. That plant originated with her grandmother and is now regarded as a fifty plus year legacy that my wife feels a sincere obligation to sustain. She now has several plants that are from this lineage, and she has given cuttings away as a sort of backup in case disease or other tragedy should befall her grandmother's legacy plant.

What would it mean to lose a legacy? Perhaps with good stewardship, we will never need to answer that question.

Stewardship is the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving. A heritage plant, a family tradition, money, and a home depend on good stewardship in order to continue to exist and to thrive. Our fraternity is no different. Our behavior becomes the public perception of our fraternity, and our governance determines the health of our fraternity and our ability to do good works. It is incumbent on each Mason to be a good steward of our fraternity through his behavior and actions.

Leadership is the ability to lead. Leadership, combined with a charitable intent, creates that best quality of stewardship that Masons represent. Good stewardship without leadership will at best maintain stasis within the organization. Leadership is the defining component that determines if the organization dies or flourishes.

This author believes that to be a Mason is to be a leader. We take good men and make them better by teaching them how to be effective leaders of themselves, their families, their businesses, and their Lodges.

The best part of leadership is that it is a learnable skill. Anyone can begin where they are on the journey to becoming a leader. Through honest self-assessment and the practice of leadership principles and skills, you can make the difference in the stewardship of your organization.

So, interestingly enough, neither of my daughters have a piece of that Angel Wing Begonia—yet. At some point soon, it will become important to my wife that she inspire our daughters to carry on this legacy.

If you want to learn more about leadership principles, join the York Rite Leadership Training Program. Send an email to YRL@YorkRiteLeadership.org for more information.

Yours in Knightly Service,
S. Lane Pierce, KYCH



Prelate's Apartment

by

Reverend Arthur F. Hebbeler, III,
right eminent grand prelate of the Grand Encampment

"Be still, and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth!" (Psalm 46:10 ESV)

Sometimes, we need to be reminded that being still, being quiet, and doing nothing is OK. The Psalmist brings us that message in the well-known Psalm (Martin Luther paraphrased it for his famous hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*). In times of turmoil, such as we have been experiencing for months now with the coronavirus, it is hard to be still, but that is exactly what God encourages us to do in this text.

This Psalm declares that the refuge of the people is not a building, cave, or mountaintop but God Himself. It is in God, and not man-made structures, in which the Hebrew people place their trust (Hmm; that sounds familiar....). God will protect, defend, and care for His chosen people. In exchange, He will be praised and exalted by all people throughout the world. By His actions and the response of His chosen people, the world will come to know that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph is to be worshipped, praised, and most of all, trusted.

Trust God to do what He has promised. Trust God to provide that which He has said he will provide. Sit down, be quiet, be patient, pay attention, and remember that God is indeed your God. He's got this and everything else. Don't panic, as Douglas Adams wrote. God wants us to be calm and let Him do what He does best—protect His people. For a "type A" personality, as more than a few of us are, that can be a huge challenge.

Being still is what we have had to be during the last several months. We have been working from home, or worse, not working from home. We have been lucky if we crossed paths with a friend or a frater while making a quick stop in the grocery store. We have spent years being active, but now we are called to be still and do nothing. That is a challenge.

Dear friends and brothers, we will get through this, just as we have survived a heck of a lot worse. We will look back on this experience and consider the good, the bad, and the foolish things that have happened. We will lament the lives lost and the farewells not shared because of our separation. We will celebrate the things we learned because we had time to be still and leave things in God's hands. Stay positive. Stay engaged with one another. Most importantly, be still. Let God be God, and when we are together again, let us exalt Him and praise his holy Name.

A Symbolic Consideration of the Royal Arch

by

Sir Knight George L. Marshall, Jr., PGC, KGT

This brief article will attempt to provide some personal insights into the symbolism of the Royal Arch, in connection with the degree of that name but also considering some possible Christian interpretations. As far as I know, these offerings are entirely novel, at least insofar as I have not used any texts, reference materials, or the internet to prepare the article. However, given the broad latitude of interpretations and symbolism inherent in this interesting device, I doubt not that ideas similar to mine exist somewhere in the abundance of Masonic literature available to the interested searcher.

As we are aware from having observed the Royal Arch Mason degree at one time or another, most of the attention given to the Royal Arch is concentrated on the principal stone of the Arch, namely the keystone. In fact, this stone is the focal point in no less than three of the four Chapter degrees—the Mark Master, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch degrees. Before considering the Arch proper, I will turn our attention for a few moments to the keystone. From the rituals of the degrees, we learn that:

- (1) The keystone was initially rejected by the builders,
- (2) the keystone contained a “new name,”

- (3) the keystone became the chief stone of the Temple,
- (4) the keystone completed the Temple,
- (5) the keystone was the first artifact retrieved during the construction of the Second Temple.

Let us consider some possible symbolic aspects of these five statements.

The Chapter degrees originally immediately preceded the Commandery orders (the Cryptic degrees appeared later) and were intended to complete the saga of Symbolic Masonry begun in the Blue Lodge as well as to serve as a preparation for the Christian orders of Knighthood. We often lose sight of the latter by emphasizing the former. I would propose for your consideration that the keystone, as indicated in the five preceding statements, does in fact represent Christ, who is the keystone of our faith.



- (1) Like the keystone, Christ was rejected by the “builders,” that is, by the religious teachers and theological experts of His day, the Scribes and the Pharisees, who were engaged in “building” the Jewish religion.
- (2) The “new name” con-

tained within Christ as keystone is multifarious. Numerous instances of this “new name” ascribed to Him exist in the *Holy Bible*. For example, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Alpha and Omega, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Amen, and the True Vine. These names are “new” in that they identify His divine nature and hence are inapplicable to humanity.

- (3) Christ became the chief stone of the Temple, that is, the universal body of believers which is known as the Church, for it is on the foundation of His teachings that the Church was established.
- (4) Christ completed the Temple. In other words, He perfected and fulfilled the Law and the prophecies of Judaism and built His Church on the faith and belief of Simon Peter and those like him.
- (5) As the keystone was the first artifact recovered at the erection of

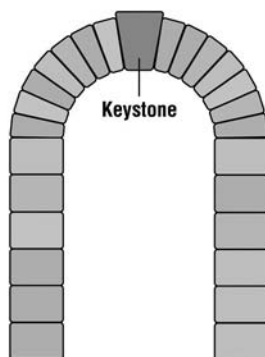
the Second Temple, so Christ, as first-raised from the dead, shall triumphantly lead us in due time to the Second Temple in the New Jerusalem, which is no temple at all, since we read in Rev. 21:22,



“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

Let us return to the arch. Architecturally, an arch may be defined as “a curved masonry

construction for spanning an opening, consisting of a number of wedge like stones, bricks, or the like, set with the narrower side toward the opening.” (cf. *Random House College Dictionary*, Revised First Edition, 1980) This, of course, is the idea we all have of an arch. Physically, the arch provides much greater support and distribution of the weight forces of the stones above the opening than does, say, a straight-line termination, and the keystone is always located at the top central position in the arch.



The exact position of this arch in the Solomonic Temple according to the rituals is paradoxical. According to the Most Excellent Master degree, it is located at the entrance to the *Kadosh Kadoshim*, or Holy of Holies. The Royal Arch Mason degree only tells us that it ex-

ists and what lies beneath it. Regardless of its exact position, Masonic history is clear on one point: it is centrally located at or near the heart of the Temple, but why is it a "Royal Arch?" Again, referring to the dictionary, we read two definitions of royal: "established or existing under the patronage of a sovereign" and "kinglike, princely, magnificent, stately." Both of these definitions are applicable to that arch that we as York Rite Masons designate as royal, since the arch, as part of the infrastructure of the Temple, was obviously constructed by skilled craftsmen under the aegis of King Solomon, and from the references alluding to it in the ritual, it must surely have been an imposing and impressive arch, worthy of the magnificence of Solomon.

Few important objects in Masonry are without their symbolic interpretations, and the Royal Arch is no exception. First, consider the Temple as allegorical of the universe, whose building blocks consist of everything that is and its Holy of Holies being a complete and perfect knowledge of its constituents. The Royal Arch in this case might be symbolic of the natural laws, both physical and biological, which God ordained for its government and perpetuation and which we discover only through diligent and progressive mental labor and experimentation. Second, the Temple could be a representation of Freemasonry itself, whose Holy of Holies might be taken to be that ultimate truth or Masonic "light" toward which we are all continually striving. The Royal Arch now assumes the role represented by the several degrees of all the Masonic bodies and orders, which aid us in our quest for this "light." Finally, the Temple may symbolically be a depiction of life itself, with its variety of experi-

ences, both good and bad, beneficial and detrimental, joyful and sad, whose Holy of Holies is Heaven, that peaceful harbor, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary shall find rest." The Royal Arch might here be thought of as the individual Mason himself, whose actions, character, and faith support him through life and prepare his transition into the ethereal Holy of Holies.

It is of interest to note that the keystone of all these symbolic Royal Arches may again be inferred to be God or Christ. He, as creator of the universe, the *Logos*, establishes and upholds the laws by which it operates. He, as the perfect truth and light, is the capstone of Masonry and the object toward which all its degrees and orders point. He, as the author and finisher of our faith, is our sure and unshakeable support throughout life and strengthens us as we pass through the portal of death to life eternal.

Thus, we see that the Royal Arch and its keystone are open to a richer and more meaningful set of interpretations than are afforded merely by their ritualistic references. Perhaps this is why the early Companions of this degree called it the "Holy Royal Arch," a designation largely lost today.

Sir Knight George Marshall, PGC, KGT, is a past grand commander of the Grand Commandery of Alabama. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Knight Templar* magazine and serves as chairman of the Grand Encampment Knights Templar History Committee. He is a frequent contributor to the *Knight Templar* and *Royal Arch Mason* magazines and can be reached at geomarsh@yahoo.com.

The Life Sponsor Challenge



During the 2018 annual conclave of the Grand Commandery of Ohio, the Grand Commanderies of Ohio and Texas engaged in a friendly competition. The challenge was which Grand Commandery would be the first to attain 100 percent Life Sponsorship participation in the Knights Templar Eye Foundation.

On October 15, 2019, one year after the competition was announced, the Grand Commandery of Ohio achieved 100 percent Life Sponsorship with 6,685 members. Thus, technically, Ohio "won" the competition. However, this did not stop the Grand Commandery of Texas. On March 31, 2020, Texas became the first Grand Commandery to attain 200 percent Life Sponsorship participation with 5,772 members.

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation cannot express its gratitude sufficiently for the generous contributions from both Grand Commanderies. On behalf of the officers and trustees, the Foundation would like to thank each of these Grand Commanderies and congratulate them on their hard work and creativity in attaining 100 percent Life Sponsorship status.

Several Grand Commanderies have achieved 100 percent Life Sponsorship participation and now Ohio and Texas join this distinguished group. It should be noted that not only have these Grand Commanderies achieved this goal, they continue to maintain 100 percent Life Sponsorship each year.

2014 – Montana / Tennessee

2015 – District of Columbia / Wyoming

2017 – Virginia / Georgia



At the Heart of Freemasonry

By
Sir Knight John R. Dinkel

The art and application of Freemasonry is clearly set out as a mission statement which all Masons have heard many times in their travels - "We take good men and make them better." Toward that end, we are entrusted with tools and lectures, beginning with the geometric degrees of the Blue Lodge and continuing with those of the York and Scottish rites, which are meant as landmarks and signposts on our journey toward personal improvement, ultimately benefiting us, our families, and the world.

In the Entered Apprentice degree, we are taught to use our time wisely for the benefit of our relationships with God, our employments, and our fellowman. A little thought on our part takes this concept a step further by increasing our awareness of these three areas of life. We are asked to relocate our focus from our own desires toward those things that are less transitory and more lasting, from a focus on self to one that takes in the rest of mankind.

In the Fellowcraft degree, we are introduced to the concepts of building and architecture as well as to those areas of study that improve the intellectual mind, i.e. the seven liberal arts and sciences of grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. These concepts once again turn our minds and intellect from self-absorption to selflessness, from the tyranny of one's own wants to the knowledge of the world and the needs of others, pointing us toward the virtues of charity and brotherly love,

but in the words of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,¹ "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." Freemasonry exhorts us to act with benevolence in thought, word, and deed, understanding what needs to be done, and then acting, even if we must act alone.

The Master Mason degree combines the two preceding degrees and their teachings, with all the tools we have been given previously, while adding the virtues of brotherly love and affection. With the aid of our intelligence and conscience we now turn the focus of our energies toward leadership. Freemasonry expects its adherents to become more than just followers - we are to be leaders in our homes, our places of employment, and our nation. We are thereby called to a life of service and sacrifice for our families and to serve others as our abilities and means allow us.

Becoming a better man also requires us to have an awareness of our transitory nature and mortality. *Memento Mori*,² this concept of the shortness of life is also part of the Master Mason's degree, but this is closely interwoven with the virtues of integrity and devotion; devotion to others in a life of integrity is the goal to which we aspire and toward which we travel every day. Our journey is never completed, our final goal never fully realized, for we are always a work in progress as we "travel upon the level of time, toward an undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns."³

There are many more lessons taught

in Freemasonry, but we can learn all we need to start with from the three symbolic degrees: first, self-improvement is necessary for us all and is a constant journey which is unfinished in this life; second, the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom point us from selfishness toward selflessness; and finally, we must find our true purpose and worth in integrity, sacrifice, and service to others or miss finding it at all, regardless of our other successes in life.

Freemasons understand that no one is perfect. We only fail if we stop trying to succeed. Becoming the man we are meant to be requires work and plenty of it, acquiring a knowledge of the world and our fellow man, and a willingness to apply what we know to what needs to be done for the betterment of all. Our journey is made by thinking on our feet, standing by our convictions, and by acting, doing what is right ethically, morally, and spiritually every day.

If the mission statement of Freemasonry is “we take good men and make them better,” the pathway toward our

success must always be one of putting others before self, regardless of our station in life. A good man and great American, Fred Rogers,⁴ once stated his thoughts about what makes a good man, “It’s not the honors and not the titles and not the power that is of ultimate importance. It’s what resides inside” (that is to say, inside the heart of a man).

At the very heart of Freemasonry is the selfless service that lives within its members - yesterday, today, tomorrow, and forever. In the words of Albert Pike, sage of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry:

“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.”

Sir Knight J. R. Dinkel is past commander of Beaver Valley Commandery 84 in Beaver County Pennsylvania. He resides in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, and can be contacted at jdcommander@comcast.net.

Sources

1. German writer, philosopher, and Freemason (1749-1832).
2. Medieval concept “remember that we all must die”, which reminds us of our mortality and the shortness of life.
3. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: Act 3, Scene 1.
4. Creator and star of *Mister Rogers Neighborhood*, PBS TV, Pittsburgh, PA (1968-2001).

Archived issues of the *Knight Templar* magazine can be accessed on the web at <http://www.knightstemplar.org/>. Then click on the button “Knight Templar” at the top of the page and select “Archives.” The archives include an index.

Updated Hypothesis of the Knight Templar Treasure

By

Dr. Donald J. G. Chiarella, KT

New research begets new information and new opinions. Several more books have changed my views on the Templar treasure. Did Jesse James hide the treasure in various locations across America using a map of the Jewish Tree of Life? Under this theory by Daniel Duke, his great grandson, James obtained the treasure from the Knights of the Golden Circle, and he was a Knight Templar Mason. Originally, I believe that Sir Henry Sinclair brought the Templar treasure to North America in 1398 as guided by the Zeno Brothers' navigation. The *Sinclair Saga* book clearly shows that Sinclair made landings in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and left evidence of the visit. (Westford Knight gravesite of Sir James Gunn and Newport Tower round church). The book *Zeno Brothers* discusses how they helped navigate Sinclair to the New World from Iceland and Greenland, to Nova Scotia and America in 1398. He left memories with the Mik'maq Indians of the region. He also stayed two years and returned to the Scottish Orkney Islands.

Sir Francis Bacon wrote about the *New Atlantis* or new world in England. He was [possibly] the son of Queen Elizabeth and foresaw America as the new light of hope on the hill. He called it a utopia. His book describes a place of enchantment and new values across knight templar

the Atlantic Ocean before it became a reality with the colonies. Bacon was also thought to be the undercover author of Shakespearean plays in his position of attorney general for Queen Elizabeth. He was well educated but not in line for the throne due to his illegitimacy. He may have known of the voyages of Sir Henry Sinclair which preceded him in time.

Sinclair may have stopped at Oak Island along the way to Nova Scotia. Brother George Washington knew about the Oak Island treasure pit and sent a secret Masonic delegation there who left some carvings on the rocks. This was gleaned from a recent television show episode of *The Curse of Oak Island*. Again, Templars would not just bury the full treasure without giving charge to a living Templar to handle the treasure.

It is my opinion that ultimately the treasure belongs to the Jewish people and should be returned to them, including the Ark of the Covenant. It should be displayed in a secure museum. A small church in Ethiopia was one place said to be holding the Ark under guard. It belongs to the Jewish people not the Templars. We are only the protectors of the treasure, not the owners. The Royal Arch degree tells us how it was found after the second Temple was built in the B.C. time frame. Forward to 1100 A.D. and the Templars digging under the lo-

cation of the second Temple. The second Temple location is now in dispute in the City of David near an underground stream outside the walls of old Jerusalem. The second Temple was not even where it has been supposed for many years. It was located near a mikveh cleansing pool or water source such as this underground stream. Modern locations of ancient artifacts demand a return to the Jewish motherland. We must make sure that the return of artifacts is done safely and securely.

Nazis hunted for many Jewish treasures during the 3rd Reich and did immeasurable damage to the Jewish people. Nazis took art, gold, and silver from normal people as well as hunting for other treasures as they blamed the Jewish people for stealing money from the German people. The Japanese buried gold in the Philippines on Leyte Island during the war. They stole their booty from the Chinese and other Asian countries they dominated with the military. It seems that war is a good reason and chance to steal gold. Both sides did the same thing during the Civil War. The war losers never gave restitution to those from whom they stole vast riches. America had to make them whole through trade agreements.

We need to be above the modern Nazis which include Arab nations with a pact with Hitler and passed along to them after the war in the terrorism methods of the Nazi Werewolves led by Lt. Col. Otto Skorzeny. Yes to this day, Nazi terrorist theory has been propagated to Yasar Arafat, Al Queda, ISIS, 9/11, and other terrorist attacks as described on the American Heroes Channel television series. They are actively seeking destruction of America and Israel. The

reason for secrecy is paramount to this logic of security and moral restitution to the Jews. How much Jewish money was laundered by Nazis in Swiss banks under new laws which the Knights Templar helped create? Today, Deutsch Bank has been accused of money laundering for the Russians. This seems to be convenient for German descent Donald Drumpf and Vladimir Putin. There are connections to German Nazis at this bank as well as many German companies like Siemens, Mercedes Benz, BMW, Volkswagen, and others. We Masons need to take an honest look around us and determine what we stand for in regard to helping the Jewish nation upon which our brotherhood legends and degrees are based. We are the light and goodness they need for total restitution from the atrocities the Nazis heaped upon them alone. This goal has been lost through the years, which is why our membership is dwindling. Honesty matters. God before treasures. Wisdom before gold and silver. Solomon our master knew this more than most men as he was granted the most wisdom of any king in history by God. It's all right there in Kings I & II. Indeed, the *Old Testament* and *New Testament* scripture is the most valuable treasure we have for living wisely. The Nazis were nothing more than cult followers with no religion.

Dr. Donald J.G. Chiarella is recorder of Beauseant Commandery 8, in Baltimore, Maryland. His books website is www.lulu.com/donchiarella, and he can be contacted at dchiarella56@gmail.com.

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Focus on Chivalry

One of the fundamental traits of a chivalrous Knight is selflessness. He always puts the interests of others before his own. We all have selfish and greedy thoughts, but the trick is to develop a habit of not putting them into action or into words for that matter. This is against human nature and a continuous battle, but it is an essential part of the chivalrous life style. "Me first" is the motto of the average citizen, whether he jumps in front of you in traffic, takes the down elevator to go up rather than wait his turn, pushes in line in front of others, or simply speaks when he should be listening.

As a Knight, you can't act like everyone else and expect to be viewed as someone who is different. You have to choose. There is a television series "Longmire" about a small town chief of police who is always investigating something or other. The series has some "background" messages that are worth studying. Several times during the series, the chief will be walking down the sidewalk or across the street and look down and see a piece of trash on the street. Without saying a word about it, he picks it up and puts it in the trash can. He could have been offended and had a "No Littering" sign put up. He could have ignored it like most of us would, but instead, he expresses his displeasure with someone trashing his town by simply correcting the problem without bringing attention to himself.

I have to admit that my interest in being chivalrous and the actions of the character on the television series has changed my thinking about my responsibilities as a good citizen. I may not do the right thing every time, but I can no longer resist thinking about it when I see something that needs to be done which I would have formerly ignored.

The same principle applies to people who have a scarcity mentality as oppose to those who have an abundance mentality. One thinks in terms of "I have to get my share," while the other knows that "there is enough abundance for everyone." I am reminded of a Christmas party I attended as a young teenager. We were all supposed to bring gifts and then each of us would take a gift home. I did not push my way to the front, and as a result, I was last in line and received a hastily wrapped package of candy that had obviously been prepared by some adult there who had discovered that someone hadn't brought a gift. I think that I remember this, not because I didn't get a gift but because I was embarrassed because the adult thought I wasn't smart enough to recognize what was going on. At any rate, I believe I did the right thing by pretending I didn't notice, and I decided that I would rather be the person who didn't get a gift than the one who didn't bring one.

Let us all continually and consciously cultivate the chivalrous habit of selflessness. The world may not appreciate it or even notice, but I guarantee you that it will make you feel better about your role as a Knight and will make this world just a little better.

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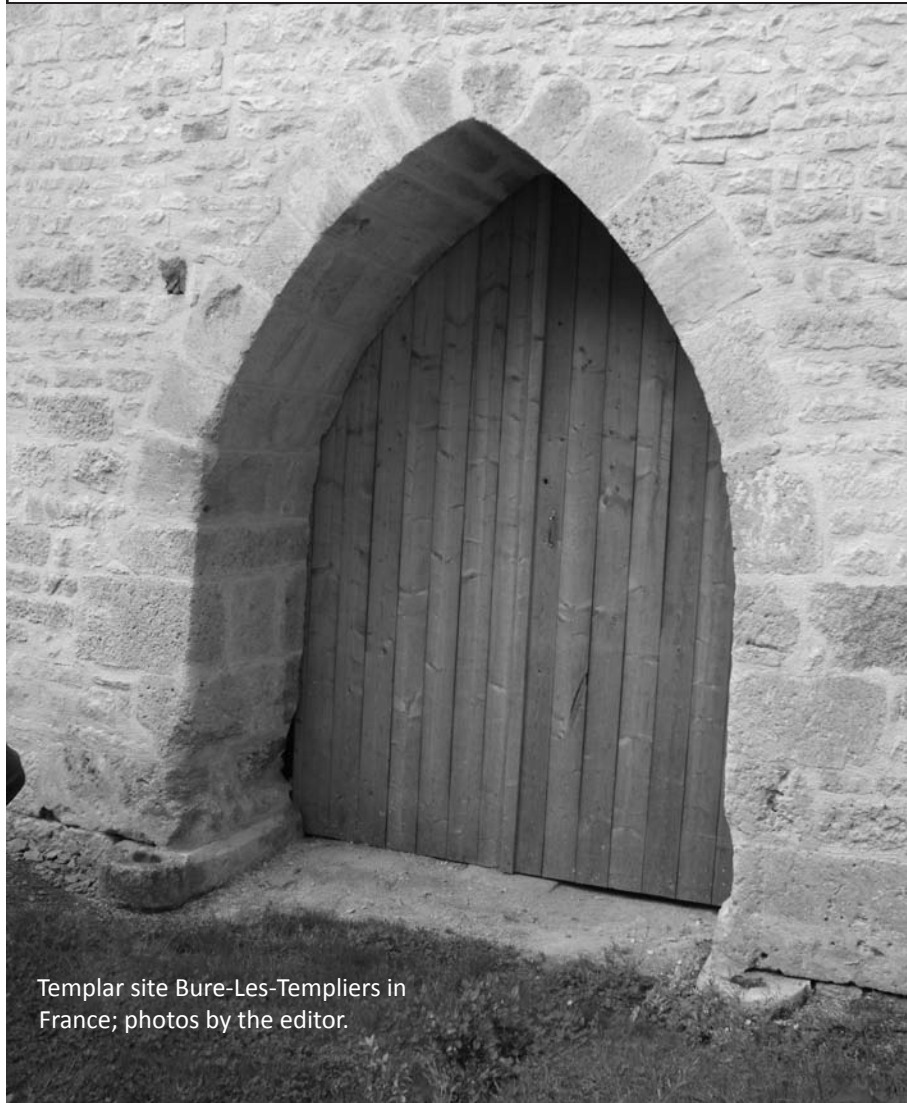
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General Supplement

The space on these two pages is provided by the *Knight Templar* magazine to be used by the Grand Commanderies to communicate with the individual Sir Knights in their jurisdictions on a monthly basis. From time to time and for various reasons, we fail to receive any material from the editor of the state supplement for a given month. When this happens, we take the opportunity to offer you the information below. – The Ed.



Templar site Bure-Les-Templiers in France; photos by the editor.



Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

How to join the Grand Commander's or the Grand Master's Clubs

Any individual may send a check in the amount of \$100 or more specified for the purpose of beginning a Grand Commander's Club membership and made payable to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. This initial contribution will begin your Grand Commander's Club membership. In addition, members of the Grand Commander's Club pledge to make annual contributions of \$100 or more. Once contributions total \$1,000, the individual is enrolled in the Grand Master's Club. Membership is open to individuals only, and Commandery Credit is given for participation.

Qualified Charitable Distributions Can Yield Big Tax Savings

Congress has now made the qualified charitable distribution (QCD) option permanent for those who wish to make direct contributions from their IRA to charity. The tax law allows individuals required to make minimum distributions due to age to transfer up to \$100,000 a year from their IRA to a qualified charity. This distribution counts toward their required minimum distribution but isn't added to their adjusted gross income the way a normal IRA distribution is. This can provide a tax savings of up to 40% depending upon an individual's tax situation. Please discuss with your tax professional whether this option could benefit you in your charitable and retirement planning.

Planned Giving – Create a Charitable Legacy

Your Foundation now has a full web site dedicated to Planned Giving which you can access from our web site, shown at the bottom of this page. So if you're thinking of ways to make a lasting legacy for yourself please check out the tab on the home page that says "Planned Giving". Leaving your mark on the future is so simple with a gift in your will. To leave a gift in your Will or Trust it is as easy as asking your attorney to include a sentence that says:

**I bequeath (lump sum) or (%) of my estate to:
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Fax: 214-888-0230
Email: manager@ktef.us**



www.ktef.org

HELL

By

Reverend and Sir Knight Richard R. Losch

Countless volumes have been written on the theological, spiritual, and mystical aspects of Hell, so an article such as this cannot begin to delve completely into the subject. Notwithstanding, since it is a subject that is much avoided these days because it is uncomfortable and politically incorrect, I want to share some basic thoughts about it.

At least in Western Civilization, when the average person hears the word “Hell,” the first thing that pops into his head is an image of a fiery pit where grotesque demons eternally torture damned sinners as punishment for their earthly transgressions. While this may be an effective metaphor for frightening unrepentant sinners to repent and strive for virtue, it is a theologically inaccurate and overly simplistic picture.

The name Hell is cognate to hole (cavern) and derives from the Anglo-Saxon *helan* or *behelian*, to hide. In ancient Teutonic mythology, Hel was the goddess of the underworld, which was also called Hel. It was the repository for all dead souls except warriors who fell bravely in battle. They went to Valhalla, the banquet hall of Odin’s palace, where they feasted forever. Hel was equivalent to the Greek Hades, which was also ruled over by the god Hades.

From the beginning of humanity, height and light have been associated knight templar

with good, and depth and darkness with evil. To this day we speak of high values and low morals, and of bright ideas and dark thoughts. Likewise, every religion’s concept of the place of ultimate good is high and bright and above the clouds, and the concept of the place of death or evil as a place low and dark, usually beneath the earth. The gods lived above the clouds or on mountaintops, while evil beings ended up in deep chasms or in the bowels of the earth. Those religions that believed in reward or punishment after death had the virtuous souls either turned into gods or brought to where the gods live to remain with them; there was a place in the underworld that was an even deeper pit where the wicked were punished.

Evidence of early burial rituals indicate that as early as the Pleistocene Epoch (the time of the Neanderthals), people believed in some form of afterlife. We know that since the beginning of recorded history (about 3000 B.C.), and unquestionably long before that, virtually every religion in the world believed in some form of afterlife, and most believed that there was significant everlasting reward for the outstandingly righteous and significant everlasting punishment for grievous evildoers. In these religions, the average person, however, simply spent the rest of eternity in some kind of passive “holding tank.” For example, in Greek my-

thology, all the dead went to an underworld ruled by Zeus' brother Hades, and that place eventually itself came to be known as Hades. This was neither Heaven or Hell, as we think of them, but a place where their disembodied spirits existed in an almost passive, barely self-aware state. Psychologists call it a limbic or hypnagogic state, and it can be described as that state you are in when you are just falling asleep, you are neither awake or asleep and are just barely aware of your own existence. The ancients believed that in this underworld there was a deep chasm called Tartarus, where grievous sinners were fully self-aware and were punished, some by eternal torture and others by being given extremely onerous tasks that they could never finish. Another section of Hades was a beautiful place called Elysium or the Elysian Fields. This was reserved for the unusually righteous and virtuous souls, who lived there fully self-aware and in eternal happiness and bliss. Originally the only souls who could go there were outstandingly brave warriors and women who died giving birth to sons who eventually would become great warriors. In later Greek mythology, anyone who was unusually virtuous could also go to Elysium. Early Christians, in trying to convert pagan Greeks, explained Heaven and Hell by likening them to Elysium and Tartarus. The primary Roman religion, which reflected that of the Greeks, had very similar beliefs.

Until a couple of centuries before Christ, Judaism's concept of the afterlife was not unlike that of the Greeks. Their concept of Sheol (שְׁאוֹל) was quite similar to the Greek Hades except that most Jews did not believe in places of eternal reward or punishment. After the return from the Babylonian Exile (6th century

B.C.) there was an increasing belief that in Sheol there was a place where the wicked were punished, and one where the righteous were rewarded, making the concept of Sheol even more like that of the Greek Hades. Most Jews, however, believed that virtue is rewarded and sin punished in this life. When they saw good people suffer, they assumed that they had committed some serious sin that no one knew about, and when they saw evildoers prosper, they rationalized it by saying that they must have done something so good that it outweighed their obvious sins. The book of *Job* clearly denies this thinking, but it nonetheless prevailed even up to Jesus' time. He was asked what sins the people had committed who were slaughtered by Pilate when they were offering sacrifice and those who were killed when a tower fell on them (Lk. 13:1-5). Jesus denied that either of these things happened directly because of the sins of the victims. He frequently spoke clearly of Heaven and Hell. In fact, he talked about Hell more often than about any other subject, including Heaven.¹

Part of Jerusalem is in the Valley of *Hinnom*, which runs right beside the Temple Mount. Before David captured the city and made it his capital (in about 1000 B.C.) a pagan Canaanite tribe called the Jebusites lived there. They worshiped a god named Moloch, whom they propitiated by sacrificing their first-born infant sons by throwing them alive into a raging fire. These sacrifices were made in the Valley of *Hinnom* right beside Mount Moriah, where the Temple would later stand. The spot, needless to say, was an abomination to the Jews. In Hebrew the name of the place is *Gehenna*. It eventually became the city dump, and among

other things thrown there was the animal dung that was daily swept up from the city streets. Dried dung burns, so Gehenna was a filthy, stinking, and constantly smoldering pit, alive with vermin, particularly rats and maggots. The bodies of dead lepers were thrown there as well. During Roman occupation, if a crucified man were still alive as the Sabbath approached, his legs would be broken so that he could not escape, and he would be thrown alive into *Gehenna* (John 19:32).² It was indeed a Hell of a place, maggot-ridden and fiery, that Jesus described as a place “where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched” (Mark 9:48). *Gehenna* was the source of the image of Hell being a place of fire. It was sometimes the bogey-man used to threaten disobedient children: “If you don’t behave, we’ll send you to *Gehenna*.” It is easy to see how this grew into “If you don’t behave, God will send you to Hell.” The image of a fiery Hell was much enhanced in a great deal of early Medieval art, and finely polished by Dante Alighieri in *Inferno*.³

The Christian View of Hell

Jesus referred to Hell as “outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30). In the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* one of the astronauts loses his tether and drifts off into space, where his body will drift forever. Imagine being in such a situation but living forever, facing an eternity of abject loneliness in the darkness of outer space. To me, that is a far more frightening image than being surrounded by fire and demons. When we cut ourselves off from God, we cut ourselves off from all that he is, including love, companion-

ship, and anything good. That would mean an unbearable eternal loneliness, with absolutely nothing, not even God, to turn to for hope or consolation. The Church has taught from the earliest times that the damned have no consciousness of their fellow damned creatures and thus no concern for them and no ability to share their pain. They are alone in their sufferings.

In the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus,⁴ Jesus spoke of the total separation of the saved from the damned. He has Abraham say to the rich man, “Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us” (Lk. 16:26). This parable warns us that when we are dead, the saved are separated from the damned, and even though the damned may become conscious of this horrible reality, it is then too late for repentance and forgiveness. An interesting sidelight to this is that there is no indication that Lazarus, who is at Abraham’s side (meaning that he is among the saved), is even aware of the presence of the rich man who speaks to Abraham, not to Lazarus. The righteous saved would have compassion for the suffering damned, and this would cause them distress. That is not consistent with the happiness and peace of Heaven, so they are made unaware of them.⁵ The early 3rd century theologian, Origen, expressed a hope that all humans might eventually be saved.⁶ He was careful to emphasize that this was only a hope and not a formal theological proposition, but he has been remembered for it ever since. It is the basis of the heresy of Universalism. The highly controversial Roman Catho-

lic priest, Hans von Balthasar, has embraced this hope of Origen's, proposing that there is "a reasonable hope" that all men might be saved, and that Hell therefore may well be empty but for the demons consigned to there.⁷ He has been accused by many of being a heretic, but at the moment, he is still in good standing as a priest. One of his arguments is that the *Bible* never identifies anyone, including Judas, as being in Hell. While this is technically true, Jesus spoke enough about Hell to imply that it is not at all empty, and he said of Judas, "Woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born" (Mk. 14:21). Dr. Gavin Ashenden, a Roman Catholic theologian, said that Universalism turns God into "a 21st-century non-judgmental therapist by claiming that he never chastises us." With the exception of Unitarian-Universalism and a small handful of liberal Christian sects, the concept of universal salvation is soundly rejected by most of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant alike.⁸

In the *Apostles' Creed*, which is the earliest formalized statement of Christian faith, it says that after Christ's death and burial "he descended into Hell" and remained there three days until the resurrection. This does not mean the Hell of punishment of the damned but simply the underworld to which all souls go after death. This was a concept that would have been familiar to any Jew or Gentile, Christian or not, in the 1st century world. Many modern translations of the *Apostles' Creed*, instead of Hell, say, "the place of departed spirits." When he was on the cross, Jesus said to the penitent thief, "This day you will be with me in Paradise," yet he did not ascend to

Heaven until forty-three days later. Paradise then, must refer not to Heaven, but to the place of the departed spirits who held the hope of salvation and Heaven. There Christ preached to the departed spirits to present the Gospel to those who through no fault of their own had never heard or accepted it (1 Pet. 3:19). In Medieval theology this was called the "Harrowing of Hell."⁹ Further discussion of that requires far more than we can deal with in this article, but we will explore it in a future issue.

From time immemorial people have questioned where Hell is located. In more primitive times, it was thought that it was a physical place in the bowels of the earth, but as we became more sophisticated we came to understand that since it is a spiritual state, it transcends time and physicality, so it does not have a physical or geographical location. This sophistication also leads some to demean the concept of Hell to nothing more than a state of mind, teaching that we make our own Heaven or Hell right here on earth during our mortal life. This, of course, is heresy and is denounced by orthodox Christianity.

Another frequently asked question is how a loving God could condemn his own creatures to eternal suffering, regardless of the gravity of their sins. Since punishment is supposed to be not for revenge or vindictiveness but for the purpose of bringing about reformation, eternal punishment would be nothing more than vindictiveness.¹⁰ The answer is relatively simple. One of the greatest gifts that God gave us is free will. Without it we would be robotic slaves to God, and thus would be incapable of loving him. Love can exist only when there is also the freedom not to love. Being a

loving god, God does not send anyone to Hell. However, because in his love he gave us free will, we have the freedom to reject him, and by so doing, we condemn ourselves to Hell. Because God will not withdraw our freedom, he allows us to do so. Hell is the absence of God, and we have the freedom to absent ourselves from him if we so choose. He will put everything in our path to help us make the right choices, but ultimately he still leaves us free to make our choices, whether or not they are good ones. Thus God does not send people to Hell, but he allows them to send themselves there. Every single soul that is in either Heaven or Hell is there because by his thoughts, words, and deeds he chose to

be there. I cannot imagine anyone consciously deciding that he would prefer to go to Hell, but the choice is much more subtle. We choose to go to Hell by not making the effort to choose to go to Heaven and thus by cutting ourselves off from God. The damned lose all sense of remorse, compassion, or concern for anyone other than themselves. This is the cause of their total loneliness and their resultant suffering in Hell.

Reverend and Sir Knight Richard R. Losch is a past grand prelate of the Grand Commandery of Alabama and can be contacted at rlosch33@gmail.com.

Notes

1. Those who say that there is no Hell and yet are quick to cite Jesus on other topics would do well to note that.
2. Normally crucified victims' bodies were left on the cross until they rotted off or were eaten by scavengers. The Romans had no respect for the Sabbath. Nonetheless, in Judea they found that it was not worth the problems that arose from angering the Jews by leaving bodies on the crosses over the Sabbath, which the Jews considered blasphemy.
3. In Latin *infernus* means "nether world" (it is cognate to inferior, lower). The Italian *inferno* means the same. Because of Dante's poem, the word *inferno* came to mean Hell in the modern sense. According to Merriam-Webster, the first known use of *inferno* to mean a raging fire was in 1834.
4. This is also known as the Parable of Dives and Lazarus. *Dives* is not a proper name, but is simply the Latin word for "rich man." When the *Bible* was translated into Latin, people confused *dives* with a proper name. The beggar Lazarus in this parable should not be confused with Jesus' friend Lazarus of Bethany, who was, ironically, a rich man.
5. The early Church Fathers wrestled with the question of the saintly woman who goes to Heaven but whose evil-doing son goes to Hell. A mother loves her son unconditionally, even when he does wrong, she may hate his sins, but she still loves him. Such a mother would grieve deeply over the damnation of her son. Since such grief would be inconsistent with the bliss of Heaven and there is

nothing she could do to help him, they concluded that all memory of his ever having existed would be wiped from her mind.

6. Origen was accused of saying that even Satan would eventually repent and be saved, but he vehemently denied this. He argued that universal salvation was only a hope, not a doctrine. He was a brilliant theologian and one of the very important early Church Fathers, but his teaching on Universalism has been condemned by the Church from the very earliest times.
7. Von Balthasar's most prominent American disciple is Bishop Robert Barron, the Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, who has spoken and written extensively on the subject of Universalism.
8. The Unitarian-Universalist Society does not claim to be Christian or even a church but only that it adheres to Jesus' moral and ethical teachings.
9. In this sense, the word "harrowing" means breaking up and preparing, as a farmer breaks up and readies (harrows) the soil to prepare for a crop.
10. This is one of the arguments that Universalists use to support their case that eventually all, even including Satan, will be saved.

IN MEMORIAM



Joseph Pierce Suttles
Georgia
Grand Commander 1986
Born: January 19, 1926
Died: September 11, 2019

Steve Alton Kirk
Georgia
Grand Commander 2018
Born: October 30, 1944
Died: October 17, 2019

Dwight E. Lanman Jr.
Indiana
Grand Commander 1991
Born: November 14, 1929
Died: June 16, 2020

Knightly News

The Grand Commandery Meritorious Service Award is a new medal available to every Commandery of the Grand Encampment to award to a worthy Sir Knight. It is not a Grand Encampment award. It is a local Commandery award, although the medal itself is available through the Grand Encampment. No approval of the Grand Encampment is required, only a vote of each Commandery. This award is purely optional to each Commandery. Only one such award should be given out each calendar year by each Commandery.

Prior to this award being made available, a Commandery could only recommend a worthy member for the Knight Templar Cross of Honor, but only one such award could be given out per Grand Commandery per year. Thus the Commandery had no other award available to give to a worthy Knight. This award was created to address that problem.

If your Grand Commandery approves this award, then each Commandery will be able to reward one worthy member each year. This medal was created and in use in California for thirty years and is very well received. The recipients are very proud of this award and wear it proudly on their uniform.

The medal is available through the Grand Encampment office, and the cost is \$100.00.

In the Bonds of our order.

Kenneth G. Hope, KCT
chairman,
Grand Encampment Heraldic Committee

Meritorious Service Award Now Available



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

By

Sir Knight Fred M. Duncan

The question, "What's in it for me?" was asked of our Lodge secretary after our increased dues notices were received. My response to the question was "What?" Was your response similar? The question is not new and may have been asked as often as the comments regarding the content of Lodge meetings. Surely you have been asked or heard the question asked. What was your response? Unless you're a political scientist, philosopher, or motivational speaker your answer may have been incorrect.

Paul Harvey would tell "the rest of the story" later in his daily broadcasts. You can do the same by googling the references in this article for further information. To answer the title question Sir Knights, we must know the why of the question. For answers and background information we will get membership numbers from the Masonic Service Association (MSA), then we will go outside Masonry and review a portion of a doctoral thesis in philosophy, the research of a political scientist, and an opinion of a motivational speaker.

The MSA established a Masonic Information Center Task Force to specifically study our membership numbers which are on a steady decline. The results of the task force findings are published under the title *It's About Time*. The Task Force tabulated United States Masonic membership numbers from 1924 through 2017. The 2017 number, 1,076,626, is the lowest United States Masonic membership number to date during that period. The Craft's membership peaked at 4,103,161

in 1959. While Masonic membership has steadily declined, the United States population continues to steadily increase. The potential petitioner pool continues steady growth.

The task force identified the following causes for our declining membership:

1. We are in a downward cycle of a cyclical membership.
2. We lost the Vietnam generation. The Vietnam generation resisted joining organizations. They were turned off by those older than thirty-five years old, and any organization that embraced traditional values was not trusted. Most Millennials or GenXers would never dream of joining a club geared to their grandparent's activities.
3. People no longer join the way they used to.
4. We are all so busy, life styles change, and both spouses work.

The MSA task force summarized their work by saying that "the numbers tell a very sad tale of the decline of one of the world's most important fraternal organizations which is slowly fading away, as T.S. Elliot says, "...not with a bang, but with a whimper." The MSA has documented numbers which we have heard or seen on numerous occasions. What may be surprising is the mind set of the Millennials and GenXers, since it is commonly stated that the future of Masonry

lies within these two groups!

In May of 2018 John Michael Hinck submitted his dissertation titled *Understanding the Decline in Participation in Fraternal Organizations: A Mixed Methods Approach* as partial fulfillment for his degree of doctor of philosophy at the University of San Diego.

Hinck writes, "Masonry is a practical case representative, because they have already begun to study the decline to understand the dynamics involved in organizational sustainability." In 2015 the California Grand Lodge surveyed 4,792 respondents and collected 8,793 qualitative comments, finding the most meaningful aspects of Masonry as relationships formed, rituals, social events, and community service. That survey did not specifically identify why Masonic membership is declining. Hinck goes on to say that "At the current rate of decline, Masonry will cease to exist in 2030!" (Note the qualifier).

In 2015 Hinck had conducted two mini-studies of Masonic membership, employing a case study or cross pattern analysis design in the first study and a grounded theory in the second study. Combining his work with a study conducted by Monroe and Comer (2002), Hinck found that misalignment of personal and organizational values, especially espoused and enacted organizational values, were at the heart of the reason to leave Masonry. Decisions to remain active in Masonry were a direct result of their Lodges fulfilling a feeling of "family fabric" and fulfilling "a common purpose" of making a difference in the community.

For his dissertation Hinck again employed a case study or cross case pattern analysis design focusing on membership attraction and why people joined and left knight templar

Masonry. His findings mirrored the 2015 study and again showed that "the misalignment of personal and organizational values, especially espoused and enacted organizational values" were at the heart of the reason to leave Masonry! Hinck again found a feeling of being valued, being trusted, and being part of something making a difference in the community were missing for the participants.

Robert D. Putnam, Ph.D., a political scientist and author of the book titled *Bowling Alone*, identified a reason why American's community life began to fray in 1960. Putnam examined eleven possible causes of the deterioration of American community life; time pressure, economic hard times, residential mobility, suburbanization, women entering the labor force, structural changes of the economy, the sixties, growth of the welfare state, the civil rights revolution, and the electronic revolution.

Each "possibility" was subjected to analogous tests to qualify the "cause" for consideration. Each cause had to test positive in all of the following four areas to be considered:

1. Is the proposed explanatory factor correlated with trust and civic engagement?
2. Is the correlations spurious?
3. Is the proposed explanatory factor changing in a prevalent way?
4. Is the proposed explanatory factor vulnerable to the claim that it might be the result of civic disengagement, not the cause?

The process enabled Dr. Putnam to announce that "the culprit is television."

Dr. Putnam maintains that, "Television watching comes at the expense of nearly every social activity outside the home, especially social gatherings and informal conversations," "television privatizes our leisure time," "results appear to be that heavy television watching probably increases aggressiveness," and "it probably reduces school achievement."

Now the answer to our title question! Janine Garner wrote that "What's in it for me?" is a question that makes a lot of people cringe. It is often seen as a selfish, self-serving query, but think about it. When we make the biggest decisions of our lives, in any arena, whether it be work, study, or relationships, we are all, to a lesser or greater extent, making said decision out of care for what we want. If we aren't, then we should be.

Let's get this straight, the starting point of any decision-making process that involves you has to be you. Unless you know the reason for what your doing, either in your career, business, or personal life, how can you make the right choices and decisions? First and foremost, you should possess a solid belief in yourself, your dreams, your vision, and your business and personal future. "That vision is yours, and yours alone, and until you understand this and are willing to embrace it and get it

sorted, there will not be the ability to move forward."

Garner further states that our need is to look after the self first, because only then can you give the best of yourself to others and further enhance yourself with the openness to receive, making sure that you are in charge of you. Asking "What is in it for me?" creates a plan, a journey and provides your own built-in decision-making tool. It helps ground your personal values firmly and permanently.

Knowing what it is you want is a critical part of collaboration and gives you the ability to ask for the right help and support. Knowing what you want creates the direction of the journey; it allows you to see and hear opportunities as they present themselves and equally to take control of decisions that you make along the way.

Sir Knights, are your findings similar? Are the unbiased findings and opinions of benefit to you? Can your York Rite bodies benefit from this information? Are you equipped now to take control of decisions?

Sir Knight Fred M. Duncan is a member of Coer De Lion 1 Pensacola, Florida and can be reached at harmonyblu62@yahoo.com.

End Notes

R. D. Putnam; political scientist, Peter and Isabel Malkin Professors of Public Policy, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government; alma mater: Swathmore College, Yale University.

Janine Garner holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Aston University, UK and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the same university in 2016. She is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School in The Art and Practice of Leadership, She is a partner at Thought Leaders Global. Garner has won an International Stevie Award in recognition of her work.

Knight Templar Magazine Available on Your Smart Phone

The *Knight Templar* magazine is now available on your smart phone. Just download the application from either the Apple App Store at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/knight-templar-magazine/id1422046085?ls=1&mt=8> if you have an I-Phone or the Google Play Store at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.axiosdigital.KnightTemplar> if you have an Android based phone. Then each month, you will be automatically notified when the new issue of the magazine is available. One tap and you are reading the magazine!

If at some point in the future, you want to discontinue the delivery of your paper copy and save the Grand Encampment some printing and postage expense, the recorder of your local Commandery can have it stopped by updating the membership database.

Of course, the current issue of the magazine and all previous issues are still available on-line at <http://www.knightstemplar.org/KnightTemplar/>.

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We publish letters and articles from a variety of sources and points of view. The opinions expressed in these articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy of the Grand Encampment, the *Knight Templar* magazine, or the Editorial Review Board.



Beauceant News

Wichita 8
100th Anniversary
Newton, Kansas

On March 13, 2020, Wichita Assembly 8 celebrated one hundred years as a Beauceant Assembly with the official visit of Mrs. Carl Wunsche, supreme worthy president, at the Newton Masonic Lodge. Also present were Mrs. T. Michael Fegan, past supreme worthy president, and Mrs. Richard Brown, supreme recorder emeritus. A luncheon was held with several distinguished guests present, and Mrs. Nan King gave a patriotic reading, "Our Flag." Beauceant sisters from Stillwater 124 and Pueblo 11 with Wichita sisters enjoyed a delightful day. Distinguished guests present were Sir Knight Jamie Carwell, right eminent grand commander of Kansas; Sir Knight T. Michael Fegan, past south-central department commander of Grand Encampment; Sir Knight Mike Bennett, commander of



Mt. Olivet Commandery in Wichita; and Sir Knight Richard Workman, past grand high priest of Kansas.





Supreme Assembly 2020

By

(Mrs. Dean) Edie Rein, PSWP, special deputy

Dearest sisters, by now I am sure that you have heard that Supreme Assembly 2020 has been canceled due to the pandemic sweeping the world. Denver Assembly 1, Wichita Assembly 8, and Pueblo Assembly 11, along with the support of Melrose Assembly 204 were so excited to welcome you as we celebrate our one hundred years of faith, loyalty, and love, but the safety and well-being of our sisters is so much more important and long lasting than our week together. We hope that canceling our Supreme Assembly will ensure that we have many more years together with all of you.

I want to express my heartfelt thank you to the sisters of the hostess group for their years of hard work preparing for this celebration. You all shared your talents, your energy, your creativity, and your time without reservation. Your willingness to work together is recognized and greatly appreciated! It was a pleasure working with each and every one of you, and I treasure the renewed friendship. To the hostess group committee, it has been a joyful journey for all of us, and we thank you!



Knights



at the Bookshelf

By
Sir Knight W. Bruce Pruitt, PGC

The Persecution of the Knights Templar, (Scandal, Torture, and Trial) by Alan Demurger, Pegasus Book, Ltd., copyright 2015, 2018, 354 pages, ISBN 970-1-64313-001-9.

The author of this book is a senior lecturer at the University of Paris and also the author of *The Last Templar*. He is recognized as France's foremost specialist in the history of the Crusades. *Persecution* was written in French and translated into English. The *Last Templar* has been translated into twelve languages. The book under consideration is probably the most complete and readable account of the scandal and scheming which occurred from 1305 to 1314, when the order was terminated and Jacques DeMolay and Geoffroy de Charnay were burned at the stake. It is extremely detailed and documented. It is so detailed that it is difficult to summarize, but the serious reader will have an incentive to "stick with it" and will become absorbed into a sad account of speculation, intrigue, politics, torture, and murder.

Much early opinion about this story has been that the reason King Philip "the Fair" arranged for the destruction of the Knights Templar was to secure the treasure and thus relieve himself from debt. The truth is that such a motive was only a side issue. The Templars were caught in the midst of a conflict between the king and Pope Clement. Philip primarily wanted to religiously purge his kingdom, be recognized as superior to the Pope, and have the memory of the previous Pope, Boniface VIII (1295-1303) turned into shame. The king had accused Boniface of heresy and imprisoned him prior to his death. The arrests and inquisitions of the Knights Templar are well documented in this book, going into dates, places, and names. A reader learns of confessions, even by Jacques DeMolay, which makes us wonder about the character and intensity of the "interrogation." No less than eighty-eight accusations were alleged against the Templars, both as individuals and as an order. Those two were initially separated but later became merged.

An interesting part of the book is the story of rebellion, when a total of approximately six hundred fifty Templars came to Paris from nine regions to protect the order and defend against the accusations. The groups were reported as comprised of five hundred sixty-five sergeants, thirty-two knights, and sixty priests. They came in several different groups and were held in prisons while having their names recorded. Demurger reports that "The Templars received a daily allowance to cover the costs of their detention, the funds for which were taken from the

revenue earned by Templar property under sequestration.” The papal commission held a general meeting beginning on March 28, 1310, in which two of the Templar priests spoke for the group, strongly complaining against the accusations, expanded into 127 items. Obviously none of the resistance had any effect on the outcome.

In summary, this book provides essentially all the reliable information anyone would want about how, why, and when the ancient Knights of the Temple ceased to exist. It is highly recommended to the serious student of Templar history.

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