

Knight Templar

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January 2022

NUMBER 1



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Contents

Grand Master’s Message
Grand Master Michael Burke Johnson 4

**Templary and Shrinedom’s “Glory Days”
 Interacted Perfectly with History**
Sir Knight James A. Marples..... 7

**Sir Knight James C. McGee
 Grand Captain General
 of the Grand Encampment..... 12**

2022 Easter Observances 13

**Holy Rocks, Secret Deposits,
 & Sacred Discoveries**
Sir Knight Bengt-Ola S. Bengtsson 17

**Address changes or corrections
 and all membership activity
 including deaths should be
 reported to the recorder of the
 local Commandery. Please do
 not report them to the editor.**

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Features

In Memoriam 5

Prelate’s Chapel 6

Triennium Membership Committee 10

A Chat with the Managing Editor 11

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation..... 14,24,29

Leadership Notes - Masonry is Leadership 26

Beauceant News..... 28

Cover photo
Courtyard over the birthplace
of Jesus in Bethelhem. Photo by
the editor.

**Grand Encampment web site: www.knightstemplar.org
www.knightstemplar.org/KnightTemplar/archive**

Grand Master's Message

As we start a new year, let us all give thanks to our Lord and Savior that we have been able to survive the Covid 19 pandemic that severely affected our order. We realize that we are not out of harm's way yet, but many of our Commanderies are back to work and conferring the orders on the backlog of candidates that we accumulated during the shutdown.

When we confer the orders, please keep in mind that there is no greater ritualistic experience than when a candidate receives the Order of the Temple. There is no greater honor than to learn and practice the teachings that are provided to us by the orders of knighthood we confer. With enthusiasm, we must confer these orders on our new Knights so that they will be inspired to tell their Brother Masons to continue their Blue Lodge experience through the York Rite and the Christian orders of the Knights Templar.

For this triennium I have placed the membership committee in the very capable hands of Sir Knight William Garrard, Sir Knight Stuart Drost, and Sir Knight Jerry Pugh. Many of you have by now heard of the program for membership that this committee has been providing at our department conferences. They are asking for volunteers to get this information to the constituent commandery level, and I sincerely hope that all of our Templars will unite in their efforts to advance our order.

Over 200 years ago, our early Templars laid aside their own separate jurisdictional entities to form the body we know today as the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. I believe that we owe these early Templars a great debt for their unselfish actions, so in honor of them, we must preserve and propagate this great order. They made it possible for us to enjoy a Christian fellowship and to worship with our brothers. Let us repay that debt by showing a positive gain in our membership.

May God bless you, your families, and our Templar family in this New Year of 2022.

Michael B. Johnson, grand master



Knight Templar Magazine Available on Your Smart Phone

The *Knight Templar* magazine is now available on your smart phone including your state supplement. 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/>.

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.

IN MEMORIAM



Charles Livingston Welch
Tennessee
Grand Commander 1996
Born: January 28, 1927
Died: November 5, 2021

Leslie Edward Black
Kentucky
Grand Commander 1983
Born: May 5, 1927
Died: February 12, 2021

Billy Joe Carroll
Kentucky
Grand Commander 1979
Born: November 25, 1934
Died: March 25, 2021

John Leroy Elwell, Jr.
Utah
Grand Commander 1995
Born: March 3, 1936
Died: October 30, 2021

Prelate's Chapel

by

Sir Knight Paul D. Erickson, KCT
associate grand prelate of the Grand Encampment

Matthew 6:14-15 NASB

¹⁴ For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

 Our fraternity is steeped with many traditions, the way we act and talk to one another, how we move about the floor, and many of the things we say and do. Another of our great traditions is to recite the Lord's Prayer. We do it at banquets and at conferences. It is part of our ritual, and it is often part of our social gatherings. After Jesus finished teaching His disciples how to pray (Matthew 6:9-13), He proceeded to teach us another great lesson. He taught us the importance of **forgiveness**, and that without it, we cannot be forgiven.

One of our most time-honored traditions is the "New Years resolution." The fact is, that many of those things we resolve to change frequently end in failure, and when they do, we simply resolve to try again next year, but there is a simple resolution that we can and should do. It is that important. The *Bible* teaches us that to be forgiven, we must first forgive. What better resolution could there be than to search our hearts to see if there is someone we need to forgive and then to resolve to do it. How freeing it is to our soul to forgive someone and then never need to remember it, because it done; it is over. Also, in searching our hearts for someone to forgive, we might find that we are the one who needs to be forgiven because of our behavior toward those we felt had wronged us. In Matthew 6:14-15, two promises are given. First, if you forgive, you will be forgiven, and second, Jesus teaches us if we do not forgive, our Father will not forgive our transgressions.

I think my New Year's resolution will be to practice another of our great traditions, showing brotherly love toward my fellow Sir Knights and searching my soul for those I need to forgive, hoping that they might also forgive me.

Blessings to you all,
Sir Knight Paul D. Erickson KCT
associate grand prelate



Templary and Shrinedom's "Glory Days" Interacted Perfectly with History

By

Sir Knight James A. Marples, K.T.

When the Shrine (or Mystic Shrine) was founded in New York City by Eminent Sir Knight and M.D., Walter M. Fleming, a past commander of Columbian Commandery 1 in New York City, and his friend, Sir Knight William J. Florence, it was designed to be a place of relaxation "for high-degree Masons: either Knight Templar Masons of the York Rite or 32° Masons of the Scottish Rite." That prerequisite for membership remained in effect until the year 2000. Although the Shriners are mostly noted for children's hospitals, the fraternity existed for a full fifty years before the first hospital opened in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1922. The Shrine's founders wanted a branch of the fraternity dedicated to wholesome fun and relaxation after the serious Masonic rituals were done. Emphasis was on the words: "wholesome fun and relaxation" among good men they liked and trusted.

It may seem contradictory for Templars to be professors and defenders of the Christian religion, whereas the Shriners wear the distinctive red fez usually associated with the Muslim faith (named for the city of Fez, Morocco, in North Africa), yet the two religious groups interacted with each other,

for better or for worse, in ancient times. For centuries, "real-life Christians and real-life Muslims" have sometimes been at war, yet at other times, some centuries passed with comparative peace. It needs to be emphasized that American Shriners are not all Muslims, although a few are (those who have professed, as Masons, a belief in peace and have pledged to obey our *American Constitution*). Many American Masons continue to wear the red fez on their heads while wearing the Templar cross and crown lapel pin on their suit coats.

While the Shrine is often called "the fun degree" or "the playground of Masonry," just imagine the tranquility of the year 1913 when Templars met inside a large Shriners hall, decked-out with minarets (tall slender towers) and accompanied by the sound of muezzins. Back then, Americans craved the beauty and exotic lands they could only see in



murals or paintings. Back then, very few Americans ventured overseas. To imagine the beauty, majesty, intrigue, and thrills was a key component of why men flocked to Templary and Shrinedom.

Back in the year 1913, Americans lived in simpler times. I am very pleased about the level-headedness of Masons back then. There was much less favoritism, less bias, less world terrorism, and the totality of Masonic and Masonic-related groups was promoted in tranquility.

Notice the picture postcard on the preceding page. It is a 1913 postcard which reads: "El Jebel Temple, Denver, Colo. Headquarters Colorado Commandery. 1, K.T." A separate caption to the right reads: "Compliments, Colorado Commandery 1 K.T. — 32nd Triennial Conclave, Denver, 1913."

That is certainly a great depiction of Masonic brotherhood at its finest. Incidentally, the flag atop the building says "El Jebel" which means "The

Mountain" in Arabic, a reference to the nearby Pike's Peak, a place where the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas made a pilgrimage and placed a deposit with a triangular cap in the year 1899. So the cooperation, fun, and fellowship among various Masonic rites, groups, and associations has spanned the decades. It has been a mix of serious history, fun, and merriment. In my view, that is why a lot of American men were (and still are) attracted to activities as American as apple pie but which give them global insights while at the same time practicing brotherhood.

It is obvious that "Making good men better men" is the main purpose of the valuable Masonic lessons inculcated in the degrees. True, charity is important. I highly encourage its continuance, but I also believe in the adage "charity begins at home." There are many of us who can mow the lawn of an elderly Mason or go fetch the groceries of a Masonic widow.

By the same token, when possible,



A meeting of a preceptory of the Knights Templar. The order, founded in 1119, was originally formed to protect pilgrims on their journey to the Holy Land. The elderly man in the center is the grand master. The ancient Knights Templar met their downfall on Friday the 13th of October, 1307. Yet, our modern order still has purpose and relevance today.

we can support our outside charities and do community projects and parades if desired and feasible. Obviously, it is not the year 1913 anymore. However, we can still use a dose of the Masonry our Masonic forefathers loved and cherished.

Every so often, I have non-Templars and even non-Masons converse with me about our Fraternity. Most value a nice building which is a hub of activity. They like the idea of mingling, both for serious purposes and occasionally for fun and recreational activities. I find it astonishing that some current Masons bemoan the inverse, that at meetings, "We don't do anything." We need to study the rea-

sons that prompted men to join us a century ago. Bonding and friendship were the main reasons. While technology has changed, and people can interact with their neighbor across the street just as easily as communicating with someone halfway around the globe; yet personal local connections are still craved. We as Templars must study ways to induce new candidates to join by providing a local hub. Word of mouth only goes so far.

Sir Knight James Marples is a life member of Mt. Olivet Commandery 12 in Wichita, Kansas, and currently resides in Texas. He can be contacted at rosehillks@yahoo.com or 1300 Greenbriar Drive, Longview, TX 75604.

We publish 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.

Recently, I was attending one of our Department Conferences, and I heard one of our Grand Commanders make the comment, during a discussion on membership, that every Knight should be prepared to answer the question of a prospective member: "What's in it for me?"

After some reflection, I came to the conclusion that the proper answer is: "What's in it for you is that we try to give you the opportunity to undergo a basic life-changing transformation so that, when accomplished, you will never again ask the question; 'What's in it for me?'" You see, one of the most important Knightly virtues is selflessness. One cannot truly experience a chivalric life style unless he learns to become selfless in his thinking.

When asked what we as Freemasons do, one of the most popular answers is that "We take good men and make them better." To me, this is obviously a lie. Only God can make a man better. We, as a fraternity, can only hope to assist by offering a man the opportunity to make himself better in the context of our teachings relating to God's eternal truths.

Are we doing this for our new Knights?

The Editor

69th Triennium Membership Committee

William A. Garrard, Chairman

Be S.M.A.R.T. When You Plan Your Membership Goals

Our most eminent grand master recently sent out a letter, directing all grand commanders to complete a set of goals for their jurisdiction over the next three years of this triennium. He has also ordered each of the elected officers, including the deputy grand commander, grand generalissimo, and grand captain general to sign on to the form as a show of their solidarity in support of these goals. Grand Master Johnson has made it clear that he continues to hold “Membership” as his top priority item for this 69th triennium. He has ordered that these initial reports were due back to him before January of 2022. There can be no doubt how imperative it is that we should all be concerned with improving our strength in numbers and leadership.

The next step will be to ask each of you to tell us how you expect to achieve these goals, including the time lines you have set for yourselves. Remember that old cliché, “Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.” This should be viewed as the first step in establishing a plan, a strategic plan for your jurisdiction that covers the next few years of this triennium with regard to your membership. Many of you have likely been involved with setting a strategic plan for the company you work for. You will recognize the acronym “S.M.A.R.T.” which stands for **Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound**. Your goals should be **Specific**, define exactly what it is that you expect to accomplish. They should be **Measureable**, referring to quantity but also quality of the goals you set. **Achievable** means that your jurisdiction has the capability (manpower, ritual teams, and commitment) to follow all the way through with this effort. They must be **Relevant** by fitting in with your overall goal of improving your membership (attendance, perceived relevance by your membership, retaining more of your numbers, and improving leadership training.) They should be **Time-Bound**, meaning that you have time frames or “mile posts” for the accomplishment of each phase of your plan.

Once you and your whole suite of officers have signed on to this plan, then communicate it to all concerned, far and wide. Tell them what, how, and when this plan is to be done; who is to take on what job; and when it is to be completed.

Then follow up on a regular basis to determine where you stand time-wise and by those measures you have established. Review what has been accomplished to see if there have been any set-backs and, if so, what needs to be adjusted. Did you have all of the necessary support you needed? Were the time lines realistic? Finally, make any adjustments to your initial plan that you have deemed appropriate.

A Chat with the Managing Editor

By

John L. Palmer, G.C.T.

For some time now, I have been contemplating what is commonly referred to as our “membership problem,” and since I have been actively engaged in Templary for some fifty years, I have had opportunity to form some conclusions on the subject. I have seen literally hundreds of members receive the Order of the Temple during that time, and yet, we feel fortunate if on our stated meeting nights, we have more than a dozen in attendance. I have noticed, during the last fifty years, that the Templars I have been around have spent almost all their time together perfecting their ability to confer the Order of the Temple in an impressive manner on a candidate. While this is certainly a worthwhile endeavor, and while most of our new members seem to be most impressed at the time they are dubbed, I cannot help but notice that all this effort seems to act like a sieve. Few of them ever return to meet with us after they have become card carrying members, and a good number of them later choose to terminate their memberships by either demitting or even worse, by being suspended for non-payment of dues. Why is this? Certainly, a good deal of time, effort, and money are required to obtain that little membership card, so why does it seem to be deemed worthless almost as soon as the ink dries?

I have come to the conclusion that we are getting exactly what we are spending all that time and effort to get – new members. What we seem not to be getting is actively engaged Sir Knights. Perhaps if we spent a larger percentage of our time and effort focusing on making Knights, rather than making new members, we would begin to accumulate actively engaged Knights who are going about the business of helping to accomplish our mission. If you are unsure what our mission is, I suggest you read the back cover of this magazine.

The members who are of the most concern to me are those who retain their membership but are not actively engaged in Templary. Sometimes I wonder how many of us who attend the meetings are actively engaged in Templary. I read in a book lately where one author describes those who never attend as “parasite members.” He said that they are perfectly willing to purchase the reputation of the fraternity with their dues, but are unwilling to engage in accomplishing our mission and sustaining that reputation. (I suppose we should be happy to have their money.)

Perhaps we should establish a “Knight School” where those who aspire to become members of our fraternity and those who just received that membership card might learn what it truly is to be a Knight. The curriculum might include something about the history of the ancient Templars, the history and governance of the Grand Encampment, and most of all, what it really means to transform your life in a way that will reflect the true chivalric qualities of a Knight Templar.

We need to give our new members the opportunity to make such a transition in their lives. This doesn’t happen in one night during one ceremony.

A true Knight is engaged in Templary. Are you?

Sir Knight James C. McGee

Right Eminent Grand Captain General

Grand Encampment of

Knights Templar, U.S.A.

69th Triennium

James C. McGee attended the University of North Alabama and graduated in 1994. Sir Knight McGee served in the United State Marine Corps from 1983 to 1989. He has worked in the financial services industry for the past twenty-five years. In August of 2015, Sir Knight McGee married Donna Lee Travers McGee. He has three children, Sir Knight Allen, Julia, and Kyle.

Sir Knight McGee began his Masonic journey in January of 1977 when he joined the Florence Chapter, Order of DeMolay. He was elected as grand master of the International Supreme Council of the Order of DeMolay in 1999.

Sir Knight McGee was raised a Master Mason in 1982. He served as junior grand deacon of Alabama in 2004-2005 and currently serves as the right worshipful grand orator.

Sir Knight McGee received the Capitular Degrees in 1996. In 2010, he was elected grand high priest. He received the Cryptic Degrees in 1996. In 2015, he was elected illustrious grand master. Sir Knight McGee received the Chivalric orders in 1996. In 2018 he was elected grand commander and Most Eminent Grand Master Nelson appointed Sir Knight McGee department commander of the Southeastern Department.

Sir Knight McGee received his 33rd degree in the Scottish Rite in 2001. He became a member of York Rite College 179 in 1998. He currently serves as the grand herald. In 2019 Sir Knight McGee was elected to the grand line of Convent General and currently serves as grand seneschal. He is a member of the St. Dunstan Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine. He is a chief adept of the Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis. He joined the Order of the Eastern Star in 1990. He is a member of Mobile 119 Knight Masons. In 2020 he was appointed as the grand superintendent of Alabama. He was consecrated into the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests in 2016. He served as the sovereign master of Old Cahaba Council 339, Allied Masonic Degrees, in 2021.

Sir Knight McGee was installed right eminent grand captain general by Sir Knight Michael B. Johnson, most eminent grand master on September 11, 2021.





92nd ANNUAL GRAND ENCAMPMENT EASTER OBSERVANCE – 2022

The 92nd Annual Easter Sunrise Service, sponsored by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, will again be held on the steps of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia, on Sunday, April 17, 2022.

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

The Hilton Crystal City at Washington Reagan National Airport, 2399 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia, is our headquarters hotel. The special Knight Templar rate will be \$109.00 per room, based on double occupancy. The parking rate is \$17.50, per night. Please make your reservations directly with the hotel by calling 703-418-6800 (mention Knights Templar). A hotel reservation link is available on our website at: www.knightstemplar.org.

MEALS

A meal package is available for \$75.00 per person and includes Saturday evening dinner and Sunday morning breakfast buffet. Order your meal tickets from the Grand Encampment office. Registration forms are available online at www.knightstemplar.org for credit card processing, or mail your check, payable to the Grand Encampment, to 5909 West Loop South, Suite 495, Bellaire, TX 77401-2497. Additional tickets may be ordered separately; Saturday dinner, \$60.00; Sunday breakfast buffet, \$20.00. Reserved seating at the Saturday night dinner will be assigned on a first come first served basis. If you would like to be seated together, please send in your payment as a group.

Note: The hotel and meal ticket cutoff date is March 1, 2022. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Grand Commanders and their ladies are invited to attend the Saturday evening dinner, courtesy of the Grand Encampment. Prior reservations are required with the Grand Encampment office.

EASTER MORNING SCHEDULE

Breakfast buffet – 6:00 a.m.

Buses begin to leave hotel – 6:30 a.m.

Parade will step off at 7:40 a.m.

Easter Memorial Service – 8:00 a.m.

Buses return to the hotel after the service at approximately 9:30 a.m.

OTHER DETAILS

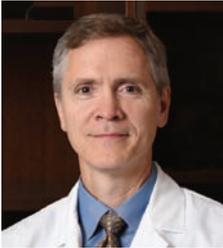
Grand Commanders are requested to appoint a delegation chairman and notify Sir Knight Lawrence E. Tucker, Right Eminent Grand Recorder, 5909 West Loop South, Suite 495, Bellaire, TX 77401-2497, Phone: 713-349-8700, Fax: 713-349-8710, E-mail: john@gektusa.org.



Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

Newest member of the Scientific Advisory Committee

David K. Wallace, MD, MPH, Chair, Department of Ophthalmology, Marilyn K. Glick Professor of Ophthalmology, Indiana University School of Medicine. Doctor Wallace is also a member of The Knights Templar Eye Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee, and was awarded the Knights Templar Eye Foundation 1997 Career Starter grant.



It has been a pleasure for me to join the Knights Templar Scientific Advisory Board in 2021. When asked to serve in this role, I accepted without hesitation, because I recall fondly how the Knights Templar Eye Foundation helped launch my clinical research career back in 1997. At that time, I was an assistant professor of ophthalmology and pediatrics at the University of North Carolina (UNC). We had a small group of investigators interested in studying retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), but we did not have any funding to support this

work. Retinopathy of prematurity is one of the most common causes of blindness in children worldwide. With the funds from the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, we were able to collect video images of the retinas of infants with ROP. We completed studies that helped us understand important risk factors for severe ROP, such as poor rate of weight gain early in life, early blood vessel changes (pre-plus disease), and small tufts of tissue above the retina (popcorn).

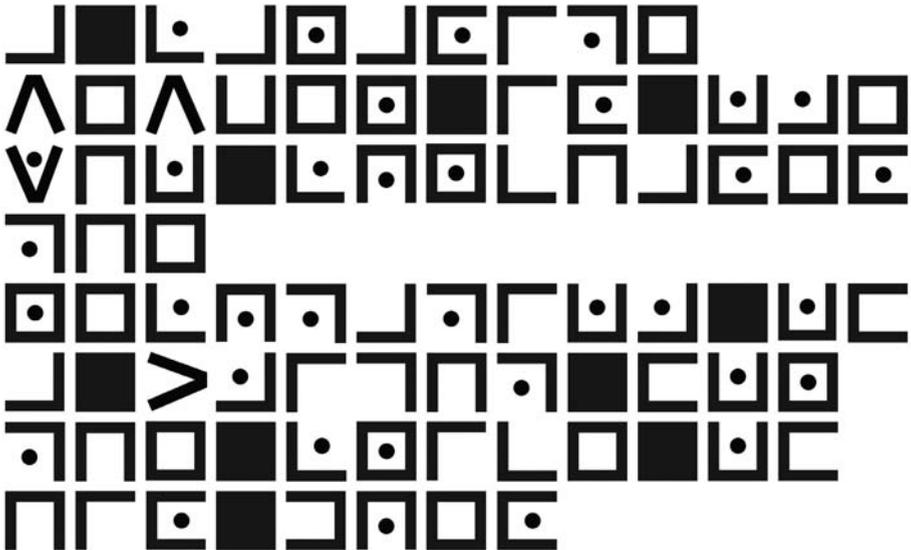
In 2004, I had the opportunity to be a member of the committee that revised the International classification of ROP and to learn from some of the “giants” in our field. A few years later, I participated as an investigator and then as an Executive Committee member in the early treatment for ROP randomized trial. These experiences piqued my interest in contributing to the development of better treatments for ROP. Later I received an National Institute of Health (NIH) K23 Career Development Award in Patient-Oriented Research, and I obtained a Master’s in Public Health in Epidemiology, which provided a deeper understanding of research design and statistics. In 2014, I assumed the role of network chair for the Pediatric Eye Disease Investigator Group (PEDIG), an NIH-funded national clinical trials network.

ROP care has rapidly evolved. Until five to ten years ago, most infants with severe ROP were treated using lasers. Now many infants are treated with injections of drugs

that reverse the sight-threatening effects of severe ROP. However, much remains unknown about which drugs are best and what dose we should use. Our PEDIG group recently completed a multi-center study that helped to establish that a much lower dose can be used, which is potentially safer for infants and better for their developing vision. Our research group is now planning two simultaneous multi-center randomized clinical trials to help determine the best care for premature infants with severe ROP; one will compare laser to a low-dose injection, and the other will compare two different doses of injections.

When I reflect back on my early career, it could have gone in any of several different directions – private practice, industry, or academic medicine with a focus on education, administration, or research. The grant I received from the Knights Templar Eye Foundation in 1997 gave our group the support we needed to study ROP, and it allowed me to begin to develop skills as a clinical researcher. Subsequently, I chose to devote a large part of my career to helping find better treatments for ROP and other pediatric eye diseases.

David K. Wallace, MD, MPH



Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

54th Voluntary Campaign

A New Year's Resolution is a promise to do something differently in the New Year. Wikipedia defines New Year's Resolution as a tradition in which a person resolves to continue good practices, change an undesired trait or behavior, accomplish a personal goal, or otherwise improve his life at the start of the new year.

In medieval times, knights took the "Peacock Vow" at the end of the Christmas season each year during a feast or banquet to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry. A peacock was considered a noble bird; its appearance was majestic and was an integral part of the vow. Feasts or banquets were not only about the food, they were a form of entertainment, complete with ceremony, pomp, and pageantry. During the high point of the banquet, roasted peacock with its skin (which had been carefully roasted separately complete with feathers stitched back on) was presented to each knight who took his portion and his turn vowing to uphold chivalric traditions (courage, honor, justice, and a readiness to help the weak).

Along with the "Peacock Vow" to chivalry, my New Year's Resolution includes faithfully contributing to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation each month and encouraging others to do the same. Doing it that way will not only make a financial contribution, it will remind me of the important work the Knights Templar Eye Foundation does on a continuing basis. One good way for sending contributions is to work with your local bank to generate a monthly draft and have it sent directly to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation office.

As soldiers of the cross, let us all take this New Year's Resolution opportunity to make change, for improvement, and to re-affirm our knightly vows. Remember that we need to not give until it hurts, but give until it feels good.

For those wondering, roast peacock will not be on the menu at our house for New Year's Day dinner.

Onward Christian Soldiers.

Happy New Year,

Lon W. Kvasager, KCT
chairman, 54th Annual Voluntary Campaign



Holy Rocks, Secret Deposits, & Sacred Discoveries

The Bible, the History & the Legend behind Masonic Tradition

By

Sir Knight Bengt-Ola S. Bengtsson, MD

The cornerstone is the foundation stone upon which a structure is built. The cornerstone must be well fitted to support further construction, and it relates to a man's character and the four cardinal virtues. Thus, just as in a building, there can be only one cornerstone in an individual.

The cornerstone is first introduced to the Entered Apprentice at the end of the first degree. Masonic degrees build on the actual Biblical-historical tradition that ultimately resulted in the foundation stones for the three Abrahamic world religions.

The Ineffable and Unimaginable Deity of Creation

The Ark of the Covenant was the physical evidence of God's existence and his promise to man. The Ark was therefore the sole reason for the building of Solomon's Temple. The *Ten Commandments* stored inside the Ark laid out the basic rules of civic behavior for a civilization to function in harmony. Solomon's Temple is a symbol of human civilization inspired by divine truth. The Masonic Lodge is a symbol of Solomon's Temple, and this is reflected in its belief in a benevolent creator God and universal truth. This is in turn expressed within Freemasonry as an emphasis on social knight templar

responsibility, political and religious tolerance, and civic duty.

However, the First Temple (of Solomon) is also a symbol of perfection at the cost of decadence and symbolizes earthly life. After the death of Solomon, the Israelite kingdom was eventually divided and succumbed to its neighbors which culminated in the Babylonian captivity.

The Second Temple (of Zerubbabel) symbolizes a chance for redemption and thus learning from prior mishaps, as we are re-building on the ruins of our previous mistakes, thus symbolizing human progress into a spiritual and more enlightened life.

In Masonry, we also come face to face with the allegorical meaning of the lost word, which refers to the fall of man or the loss of man's divine nature and therefore man's lost understanding of the true nature of God.

The name is magical and is not to be uttered because the utterance of the word or "Logos" is the thought manifesting as the creative energy of God, which is obviously beyond man's purview, thus the word was "ineffable" or unlawful to try to pronounce.

This subsequently leads us to humility, and humility equals objectiveness.

The search for truth requires being objective about our observations and having no pre-conceived notions of

what the truth actually is.

Having a pre-conceived notion of what the truth is can lead to subjective and thus premature interpretations of these observations and the creation of a false truth. In science this would be called bias and in religion and philosophy it would perhaps be described in terms of heresy or heterodoxy (deviation from truth).

Divine truth is the knowledge of God concealed by the kabbalists as the ineffable word or the Tetragrammaton. This is what Masonry refers to as the lost or true word or the Master's Wages.

Divine truth is man's quest or journey to find the purpose of life and the nature of God. Since it is not within man's ability to understand God, he can only contemplate, seek, and integrate God into his life. This is deeply personal and cannot be codified by religious or political authorities and despots, because they are also mortal and imperfect men.

Thus, the lost word is the acceptance of a self-existent, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent Deity that, through the gift of free will and intellectual curiosity, inspires man to do great things.

In Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, the iconic formula $E=mc^2$ describes how energy and matter are interchangeable and proportional to each other with the proportionality constant being the speed of light, an unimaginable speed of 300,000 kilometers per second, squared. A more tangible example of this is photosynthesis, where plants (matter) are created by energy (sunlight). The nature of light is paradoxical, because it is sometimes understood as a particle (photon) and sometimes as an electromagnetic wave, depending on how man is trying to explain a certain aspect of the physi-

cal universe. Just like God, light is ubiquitous, paradoxical, and mysterious.

Most people associate the Trinity with Christianity or more specifically Trinitarian Christianity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; each separate but also the same.

If the Son is physical matter (flesh) and the Holy Spirit is inspirational energy, that leaves us with God as the speed of light squared: ubiquitous, paradoxical, and mysterious.

Since light has existed at least since the Big Bang, it is therefore certainly both omnipotent and omnipresent. Is light, being both a particle and an electromagnetic wave, also intelligent and therefore omniscient? Is light God? Light is clearly a creative force as evidenced by the process of photosynthesis, the prerequisite for the organic chemistry of life.

Freemasonry provides for perfect harmony between science and religion, making them complimentary rather than opposing.

So, what is the ineffable word? Science in the form of $E = mc^2$ takes us from the Big Bang and forward in time. Energy and matter are proportional and the proportionality constant is the speed of light squared (an unimaginable large number in itself)

Religion is necessary to explain what placed the matter that subsequently exploded in a dark void (the universe) and also what made it explode. Where did the dark void and the original matter come from in the first place?

The concept of infinity, such as an infinite and constantly expanding universe, is very difficult for the human brain to understand, and in mathematics (a universal language), division by zero is a

forbidden operation, simply because it leads to infinity, and it cannot be quantified. This concept is one of the tenets of calculus, a mathematical discipline developed by Sir Isaac Newton, a Freemason, a scientist, and a religious scholar.

A better translation of the word inefable is perhaps unimaginable because it simply cannot (and perhaps should not) be fully explained or understood.

Masonic labor is the search for truth and it is this journey, fueled by our curiosity, (and not necessarily the knowledge itself) that creates human progress and makes us better men.

**The Secret Vault
Legend and Religious Origins
The First and Old Foundation Stone**

In Blue Lodge Craft Freemasonry, we learn the substitute for the lost word. In the higher degrees, within the appendant bodies, we find the key to what was lost. Finally, we learn how the symbol of Divine truth, also known as the lost word, ended up under Solomon's Temple in the first place.

According to Masonic legend inspired by Jewish tradition in the apocryphal book of *Enoch*, the patriarch, under the direction of God, constructed nine vertical underground vaults under Mt. Moriah. Here, in the deepest vault, he placed a cubical stone, the Stone of Foundation, with a triangular metal plate engraved with the Tetragrammaton.

The location of this secret crypt was then lost during the flood.



THE CAVE UNDER THE GREAT ROCK ON MOUNT MORIAH.

Figure 1. The Well of the Souls. [Public Domain]

According to Masonic legend, while building the first temple, the three grand masters came across this stone inside Enoch's re-discovered crypt and placed it in a secret vault under the Sanctum Sanctorum of the first temple and beneath the last of nine arches, presumably inspired by Enoch's original crypt, since some Masonic illustrations show these arches vertically while others horizontally. In this crypt, according to Masonic tradition, were also deposited a replica of the Ark of the covenant (the so-called Masonic Ark) together with other items such as copies of the *Book of Law*, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. The first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians under King Nebud-kadnessar in 587 BC. These items were subsequently retrieved during the con-

struction of the second temple and their discovery in Masonry is thus explained.

The second temple was later renovated by King Herod the Great, who also extended the size of the retaining walls of the original Mount. The Temple was then destroyed by the Roman general Titus in 70 AD during the Great Revolt, also known as the first of three Jewish-Roman Wars. The temple treasures were brought in triumph to Rome, and the Arch of Titus depicts these items; the Menorah, the gold trumpets, the fire pans used for removing the ashes from the altar, and the table of shew bread. Conspicuously absent is the Ark of the Covenant, suggesting that it was either not in the second temple because it had been previously lost to the Babylonians, or that it was hidden and escaped the



Figure 2. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the Aedicule. [Public Domain]

vengeance of Rome.

Between 688-692 AD after having conquered Jerusalem, the Arab Muslim converts built a Mosque (the Dome of the Rock) on the site of the ruins of the first and second temples, also known as the Temple Mount (*Haram-Al-Sharif* or the Noble Sanctuary in Arabic), originally known as Mt. Moriah.

Jewish tradition identifies this rock outcrop under the Dome as the Foundation Stone, the legendary site of God's creation of Adam, the site of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, and the site of Jacob's dream of a ladder to Heaven. Islamic tradition also identifies this same rock or *Es-Sakhra* as the site of the Prophet Mohammed's ascension to Heaven.

Under and inside the rock is a chamber known as the Well of the Souls, a partially natural, partially made-made cave. (Figure 1) This brings perhaps somewhat of a historical explanation to the legend of Enoch's crypt. After the European capture of Jerusalem in 1099, the Crusaders converted the Dome to a Christian place of worship and called it *Templum Domini* (Latin: Temple of the Lord) and made physical changes to both the rock and the cave within, which they called the Holy of Holies (not to be confused with the inner chamber or *Sanctum Sanctorum* of Solomon's Temple, whose floor was partially composed of the surface of the original rock)

The rock and the cave within it have never been subjected to a through archeological excavation, and political and religious circumstances will probably forever preclude a scientific investigation. The Temple Mount is a place of active worship, and the Muslim authority controlling it views archeological ex-

cavations as desecration.

Stones and rocks were worshipped as deities by the pagan, polytheistic cultures of the Middle East. The decoration of a specific stone with the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of God, is a statement of monotheism and a prohibition of idol worship, central to Judaism and later to Christianity and Islam, that is, the three Abrahamic world religions.

Thus, the treasure deposited for future generations was the idea of the one true God, and the search for this treasure, "the journey" or "intellectual curiosity" was the carrot on a stick to stimulate man to seek further light and self-improvement, which is striving to find the Divine truth or Masonic light.

This Divine spark of intellectual curiosity can be compared to a commitment to life-long learning and academic excellence, a necessity for mankind's progress.

Chivalric Masonry and Religious Origins The Second and New Foundation Stone

The pagan Romans built a sanctuary at the alleged site of Jesus' empty tomb in an attempt to conceal it and suppress the new religion. In the early 4th century, the Romans, now Christian converts, under Emperor Constantine, re-discovered the empty tomb and built a shrine, called an *Aedicule*, over it within a church called the Holy Sepulchre which was later built-on by the Crusaders in the 12th century. (Figure 2)

Thus, the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the First Jewish Temple, the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, and the *Aedicule* of the Holy Sepulchre were all shrines built on a rock or a stone that was considered sacred ground, based on

historical tradition.

A comparison of the deposits, discoveries, and rediscoveries in the Secret Vault legend and the Holy Sepulchre is shown in the table on the facing page.

Conclusion

Masonry is a Biblical and history based tradition of secret deposits and the subsequent and repeated re-discoveries, commemorated by sacred shrines that later became the metaphorical foundation stones for the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The common religious origin and literally the common "physical ground" they share are also central concepts in

Masonry, which brings together scientific evidence, historical tradition, and religious belief within a framework of deism, tolerance, and the individual's pursuit of happiness, wherein he is free to seek knowledge about the ultimate truth.

This search or journey for light, fueled by human curiosity, is the essential driver for improvement of self and, by extension, the improvement of society and thus human progress.

Sir Knight Bengt-Ola S. Bengtsson is a member of Ventura Commandery 18 in Ventura, California and can be contacted at bengtolabengtsson@gmail.com.

Notes

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Observation

Having frequently attended Masonic meetings on the national level, primarily as an observer, I have often observed our Masonic leaders at the state and national levels interact and conduct the business of the fraternity. I would remind our state and national leaders that the politicians in Washington, D.C. are not stellar examples of how statesmen should act and would implore you to observe the courtesy and forbearance toward your brethren which will preserve your example to the craft of how their leaders and brethren should behave.

The Editor

The Holy Sepulchre & the Secret Vault: A Comparison

	The Secret Vault of Tradition	The Holy Sepulchre
<i>The Original Deposit</i>	Antediluvian (Pre-Flood) Period: <i>Enoch</i> under the direction of God constructs nine underground vaults on top of each other on Mt. Moriah. Here in the deepest vault he places a cubical stone with a triangular metal plate engraved with the Tetragrammaton. The location of this secret crypt is then lost during the flood.	~30 AD: <i>Jesus</i> is buried in a rock tomb and arises 3 days later. The location of the tomb is lost as the disciples are scattered and the Romans persecute the early Christians.
<i>The 1st Sanctuary The Initial Discovery The Re-deposit</i>	~900 BC: While building the 1st Temple , the three Grand Masters under <i>Solomon</i> come across the Foundation Stone inside <i>Enoch's</i> re-discovered crypt and place it inside a secret vault beneath the first temple. The 1 st Temple is destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC .	135 AD: With the purpose of suppressing Christianity, Emperor <i>Hadrian</i> builds a pagan temple on the alleged site of the tomb.
<i>The 2nd Sanctuary The First Re-Discovery</i>	521-515 BC: While building the 2nd Temple the secret vault is re-discovered by <i>Zerubbabel</i> . The 2 nd temple is later renovated by Herod the Great and destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD .	325-335 AD: Emperor <i>Constantine</i> , the first Christian Roman Emperor, razes <i>Hadrian's</i> temple and finds an intact 1 st century tomb over which he builds an Aedicule (shrine) and a Rotunda. A stone slab is placed on top of the original rock. *
<i>The 3rd Sanctuary The 2nd Re-Discovery</i>	688-692 AD: The Muslims having conquered Jerusalem build a Mosque (<i>Dome of the Rock</i>) on the site of the ruins of the 1 st and 2 nd temples aka the Temple Mount (Mt. Moriah, Haram-Esh-Sharif) <i>Jewish tradition</i> identifies this rock as the legendary site of God's creation of Adam, Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, and Jacob's dream of a ladder to heaven. <i>Islamic tradition</i> identifies the rock as the site of the Prophet Mohammed's ascension to Heaven.	11th-12th century AD: The Crusaders after having conquered Jerusalem build on the <i>Church of the Holy Sepulchre</i> by encasing the tomb with the Aedicule and with the Rock of Golgotha (Calvary) under one roof. A marble slab is placed on top of <i>Constantine's</i> stone slab. *
<i>Result</i>	<i>The metaphorical Foundation Stone for both Judaism and Islam!</i>	<i>The metaphorical Foundation Stone for Christianity!</i>

Table The Holy Sepulchre & the Secret Vault

* See reference 9

NEW CONTRIBUTORS TO THE KTEF CLUBS

Grand Master's Club

Thomas R. BassettAL	Robert W. McNamara CA
Micheal A. Padilla CA	Claud E. Dutro CO
Joseph D. Edwards CO	Daniel A. Rivers CO
Grover L. Sardeson CO	Patrick B. Kelley GA
John E. Warner ID	Glynn R. Bridge MD
Donald G. Hicks, Jr. MA/RI	John R. Banning MI
Lee S. Fruman MI	Kenneth J. Simons MI
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William F. Trogdon TX	Jonathan A. Giles VA
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William S. Ghent SC	Joshua W. Solomon SC
Ronald L. McVey, Jr. TN	Roy T. Sutton, III TN
Ralph B. Taylor TN	Kevin J. Harvey VA
Matthew S. Broughton Sr. WV	

A Templar Monitor

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation, in partnership with Lookout Commandery 14 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, is excited to announce a one of a kind original handwritten work by Sir Knight George Cooper Connor.

Sir Knight Connor served as right eminent grand commander and most worshipful grand master of Masons in Tennessee. He later served as grand recorder of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee as well as on several committees of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar U.S.A.

This handwritten manuscript, dating from the late 1800's, includes the orders of the Red Cross, Temple, and Malta. It is a direct reflection of Connor's dedication to Templary. This work was his labor of love, not only to furnish the orders for use in the grand jurisdiction of Tennessee, but which later became a basis for the development of the adopted Templar orders.

You will also find information about Sir Knight Connor in the preface to the book, as well as items regarding his templar funeral service, along with items relative to the many Templars and dignitaries from around the nation who attended his funeral.

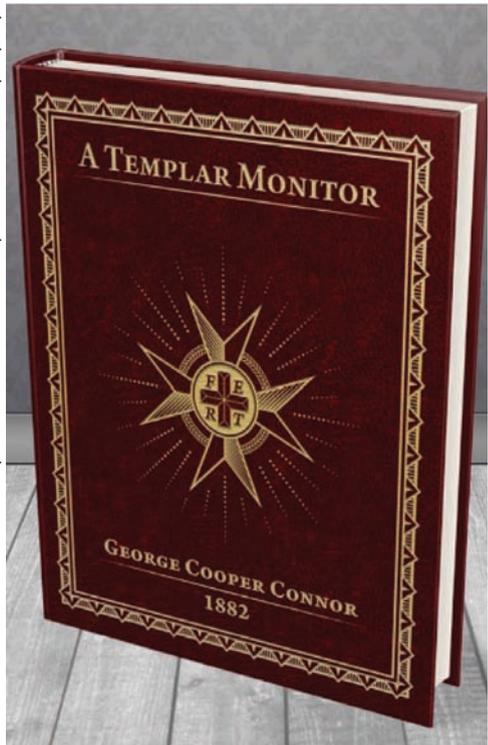
The manuscript includes many hand-drawn watercolored images relating to each of the orders. Inside the book, you will find on one page the original handwritten text of Connor, and on the accompanying page a modern day typeset for easier reading.

The book includes commentary from Past Grand Commander George Marshall, KGT, on the ritual of each of the orders, and the publication reflects the tireless efforts of Sir Knight Piers Vaughan, KCT.

Every Templar scholar and student of ritual will want a copy of this unique piece of Templar history as part of his personal library.

As we near its publication, additional information will be provided as well as instructions on how you can order a copy of this historic work.

Two options will be available for purchase: one will be a hardbound edition and another a limited edition deluxe leather bound version.



Leadership Notes

Masonry is Leadership

Sir Knights, I submit to you that Masonry is leadership.

As an Entered Apprentice, you learned to master your impulses and to practice masonry by serving others. You learned that one who would ascend to the degree of Master Mason should learn to subdue his passions and to pick up the working tools with deference to those who have learned their use. As an Entered Apprentice you submitted to a process of learning to master yourself.

Having been passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, you were then charged to learn the importance of the working tools that you might skillfully use them as a member of the brotherhood, indeed even as a member of the human race. You learned that success and leadership was accomplished by a genuine study in education and the cooperative engagement of others. You were charged to work diligently side-by-side with like-minded others to accomplish meaningful and important work. Working with groups enabled you to do more for yourself and others.

Once raised a Master Mason, it was hinted that the journey was not yet complete and that you were now authorized to stand in your full power as a Mason. You were taught to use your voice to correct and guide your brothers in the paths of brotherly love, relief, and truth. Your skills in communication allow you to conceive and communicate the grand designs of Freemasonry.

In the capitular degrees, you extended the lessons of the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason degrees in many ways. From the lens of a leader, you were taught to honor good work and to honor your commitments. You were taught that the *Great Light* in Masonry was to be ever present in your life and that it should be a source of wisdom to you. Finally, you culminated your degrees by discovering the true word and work of a Master Mason. It is expected that, as a Royal Arch Mason, you should lead others to build those arches that support the work in creating happiness among men.

In the orders of Knighthood, you are recommitted to being a leader. This time, you are charged with an even higher responsibility to lead by way of The Christ. Jesus was born of a kingly lineage to be King, yet he served all mankind while living on this earthly plane. He is the perfect model of service leadership.

I say to you, Sir Knights, that you have been trained from the beginning of your Masonic career to be a leader. You are a Masonic Leader which is a special kind of leadership. More than that, you are a Templar Leader.

A Templar Leader is one who knows that his first duty is to subordinate himself to those he serves. A Templar Leader is one who operates from a place of the open and empowered mind. He is keenly interested in making sure that duty and honor are the framework for building the principal tenets of Freemasonry. He is chivalric

in his actions and regards no man an enemy once he finds a mutual agreement to resolve any discrepancies. Most importantly a Templar leader leads with God as his moral compass.

The York Rite Leadership training program is an executive-class leadership training program that will teach you the skills of personal effectiveness, group dynamics, and influential communication. These skills build the stable foundation upon which to grow and improve your Masonic leadership abilities.

If you have found yourself wondering, “How do we attract the right kind of members?” or “How do we save our Templar asylum from demising?” The answer is leadership.

There is not a problem in this fraternity that cannot be solved with excellent leadership. Do not wait on others to step up and lead. It’s up to **you**. You can lead from the front. You can lead from the back. You can even lead from the sidelines. We will teach you how.

Join the leadership training program today and be prepared to become an agent of change our fraternity needs.

Announcement!

I am happy to announce that we have added a new instructor to our ranks! Sir Knight Kevin Wheeler officially joined the training team in November of 2021. Kevin and his wife, Stefanie, live in the Chicago area with their two children. Kevin holds a bachelor of arts in criminal justice and a master of science in psychology. Sir Knight Kevin served our country in the Marine Corps, and he now serves the grand bodies of Illinois on several committees. Welcome to the team, Kevin.

If you want to learn more about leadership principles, join the York Rite Leadership Training Program. Visit the website at YorkRiteLeadership.org for more information and to register for the program.

Sir Knight S. Lane Pierce
York Rite Leadership Faculty
program executive





Beauceant News





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:

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