

*Ars Longa - Vita Brevis*

**THE LYF SO SHORT- THE CRAFT SO LONG TO LERNE**

[by: Raymond S. J. Daniels, SM, Presented to Medwayosh Council No. 62 on April 29, 2002.]

**Inaugural Address**

*Ars tonga - vita brevis*

Hippocrates

*The lyf so short -the craft so long to learne*

Geoffrey Chaucer

Venerable Brother Donald B. Kaufman, Sovereign Master, M. V. Bro. William R. Laycock,

Sovereign Grand Master,

M. V. Bro. Kenneth C. Whiting, Past Sovereign Grand Master,

R. V. Bro. Morley J. Brown, District Deputy Grand Master, District 1,

Distinguished Members of the Grand Council, Present and Past, Brethren of St. Lawrence,

In former days, I am informed that it was the custom in this Council for the Venerable Master-elect to deliver a paper immediately before the Ceremony of his Installation as Sovereign Master. At the meeting last October at which I was elected Sovereign Master, it was proposed and agreed that the salutary custom of giving a short inaugural address would be revived. Medwayosh Council No. 62 is known and recognized throughout the Grand Jurisdiction for the papers presented at the four regular meetings held each year, and the publication of those collected papers by R. Yen. Bro. John W. Reynolds attest to the scholarship and erudition of the members of this Council during almost five decades since institution in 1963.

*"What are you doing?"* a man passing by a building site asked three operative masons who were taking a break. "Stone-cuttin'" one of them replied. The second shrugged, gave a weak grin, and said, *"Just puttin in time 'til a better job comes along."* The third man paused to think for a moment, and then pointing with obvious pride to the walls and arches under construction behind him, said, *"I'm building a cathedral!"* It does not take too much scrutiny or perception to find the counterparts of these three men in our modern lodges of speculative Freemasons. There are those always busy with the organization and administration of the lodge, chapter, or council -"stone cuttin'" business. There may be some who are ambitious for preferment, seeking advancement, consumed with aspiration after rank and title - "puttin' in time." Then there are those few, 'we few, we happy few, we band of brothers' who, to the best of our skill and ability, 'press toward the mark of our high calling' by endeavoring to 'rend, mark, learn, and inwardly digest', the lessons of Freemasonry, practising our royal art and noble science. As Vince Lombardi observed, both in life and in lodge, *"Some of us will do our jobs well and some will not, but we will all be judged by only one thing - the result."*

One observer has suggested that a Mason is someone who spends an inordinate amount of time talking about what a Mason is. What is a Mason? What do Masons do? What is the object of Freemasonry? In other words, Why are we here? What do we have to offer? Why would anyone want to join? ... three pointed questions, which I believe may be answered quite simply. A Mason is, first and foremost, a student. Masons study to learn and strive to practice the lessons Masonry teaches. Freemasonry is an educational institution. In a prudent and well-regulated course of self-discipline, self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-realization, the real Mason becomes a self-educated man in the full sense and proper meaning of the term.

If the Craft Lodge is an elementary school teaching the basics, then our York Rite bodies may be considered a secondary school where our knowledge is expanded and our skill is increased. No matter how many degrees are attained, we are still 'apprentices' learning our craft. No matter how colourful and ornamental our Aprons become, the unadorned plain white lambskin of the Entered Apprentice remains the central feature. To borrow a phrase from another Rite, the motto of Masonry is 'to learn and to do'.

Bro. Will Rogers stated a sure formula for success in three memorable lines:

*Know what you are doing.*

*Like what you are doing.*

*Believe in what you do.*

Our Council is well-placed and poised to make a significant contribution to the progress of our Masonic science. Tonight, we have received, obligated and acknowledged three new Brethren of St. Lawrence. This Council in particular and Allied Masonry in general will benefit from their applied knowledge and ability. This summer we will welcome the Sovereign Grand Master and Members of the Grand Council to Waterloo Region when Medwayosh will be privileged to act as host Council. The sessions will provide a convenient opportunity for all of us to learn more about Allied Masonry and to enjoy the company of many distinguished and experienced Masons.

During the year ahead we must all endeavour to invite worthy brethren, studious brethren, curious brethren whose enthusiasm for further knowledge is infectious to join our researches in Council. The presentation of Masonic research papers will continue to constitute the chief work of the Council. But it is now the time for us to move beyond the maintenance phase, and begin a rebuilding program. A pro-active scheme is being considered and will be implemented in which each present member will be encouraged to bring in one or more new members to replace himself. Then our Council will thrive and flourish, the vision of our founding fathers will be realized, and the future of Allied Masonry will be ensured.

Allied Masonic Degrees of Canada is not merely another concordant body to add to a list of Masonic memberships. We do not want card-carrying members; we need active members. Furthermore, Medwayosh Council does not exist to provide a vehicle to attain rank and title. We are here to study, to learn, and to do the real work of Freemasonry. Robert Fritz has expressed it thus: "*The historic period in which we live is a period of reawakening to a commitment to higher values, a reawakening of individual purpose, and a reawakening of the longing to fulfil that purpose in life.*" The timeless values of Freemasonry are ours to freely share with our Brethren.

Our individual purpose in life has been clearly defined by Carl Jung: "*As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle light in the darkness of mere living.*" To fulfil that purpose in life may each Brother resolve, in the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson. "*To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*"

In conclusion, the following lines seem to sum up all I have been trying to share with you, my Brethren, as I stand with the Wardens and other Officers on the threshold of a year of service as your Sovereign Master. They are from A Plain Poem by Jeremy Ingalls:

*I say this plain. Of every strenuous word  
In weighty volumes ponderously shelved,  
In each address, all artful eloquence  
Of those adept in the enchanted phrase,  
Take heed. Read. Listen. There is much to learn.  
But strictest thought and deepest sense pertain,  
To the honour of God. Do not shun His name.  
Now the sun goes noonward. Whether you return  
With two or three or singly, still you walk  
Companioned, among brothers, going home.*

A Plain Poem -Jeremy Ingalls

J.W.R

*Tempus Demus Literus* - we give our time to knowledge OCI

*Cum Alias Pro Alias* - with others, for others

*Mens Sano in Corpo Sano* - a sound mind in a sound body

The Oakwood C. I. Motto of my mother and father the first Latin I ever learned together with the RYCI motto, my first high school, describe exactly was the Allied Masonic Degrees mean to me. Research fraternity - TDL - give our time to knowledge - advance in masonry each day by study, etc. But not alone, after doing the research, present it to others in order to share the "light" which has been gained

-CAPA.