

Masonic Missionaries

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(Speech delivered at the Convention of Masonic District No. 1, March 26, 1966.)

RWB Wilmarth, Brethren in the East, Brethren of District No. 1:

This is one district convention which for me involves the shortest trip, only a few steps from the first floor to the second floor. Those of you who have been worried about the transportation budget can now relax. The trip costs us exactly nothing. Incidentally, since in 33 days the first word of the title Bro. Wilmarth now bears will be removed, this speech can be my valedictory and in that spirit, much of what I am going to say will have to be transilient.

Your Executive Committee Chairman, WB Shepley, thinking that because I grew up in a mission school I could talk to you on "Masonic Missionaries", wrote the topic on the program and that's that.

Rather than point out the renowned heroes, statesmen, soldiers, diplomats, teachers, religious leaders and writers who were and are Masons as Masonic missionaries, I shall pin-point all brother Masons whithersoever dispersed as the Masonic missionaries. There is no attempt here to be diplomatic, to make you all feel good. In truth and in fact, every Mason is, or should be, a missionary for Masonry.

Your zeal and enthusiasm for our Ancient and Honorable Fraternity point you out as one to tell the world, by your acts and deeds, that Masonry is good for you and therefore good for others. The tenets and principles

of Masonry by which you live day by day should point you out as the real Masonic missionaries. All through the year, I have been exhorting the brethren to manifest more Masonry in whatever they think, say and do. If they have exemplified these, there can be no doubt about their being Masonic missionaries.

Religious missionaries are noted for their carefulness in their public relations. If they cannot say anything good, they would rather not say anything at all. Similarly, Masonic missionaries should be careful. There is so much dirt and muck around us; there is little or no use to stress the obvious. I am strongly of the opinion that the positive approach is more effective in bringing about our objective of making better persons in a better community in a better nation. In the lecture in the third degree, we are counselled to whisper words of advice to an erring brother and not to broadcast his sins to the four winds of heaven. Let us try the same thing in dealing with others who are not of our Craft. I am positive that they will be impressed with our method and will be induced to find out more about us.

One other thing I have observed in missionaries is that their families know what they are doing and, directly or indirectly, they are helped in their work. It is not uncommon for the wife and children of a minister

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to be helping him with the music of his church services. The members of his family help him in his pastoral visits, giving aid to the needy and comfort to the distressed.

I have often wondered if, as Masonic missionaries, we have taken our families into our confidence in so far as we can do so. Our benevolences, moral and monetary, are open. If they know what they are, they can even help. We should encourage them to attend our public gatherings. Properly, they can be asked to help because in this way, they will have a sense of belonging.

In many lodges their installation of officers, their raising, and their commemorations of important events are Masonic community affairs. In many towns and cities, particularly, Manila, Cavite, Davao, Olongapo, Clark Field, Dumaguete, Agana in Guam, Naha in Okinawa, they have real Masonic communities where they have, besides lodges, chapters of the Eastern Star and DeMolay, Rainbow assemblies and Job's Daughters Bethels for the other members of their families. We hope there will be more of these Masonic communities later.

You have often heard the remark: "Oh, he is the son of a minister," obviously meant to deride the pastor and his family. I do not mean to deny that there are black sheep even among the children of religious people as there are, or even more so, in the best of families. But, listen to this: At one time a tabulation of the parenthood of all the men and women included in "Who is Who in America" was made. It was found that of the educators, military leaders, scientists, lawyers, doctors, engineers, bankers, statesmen, business tycoons, and other famous people in America, 85%, I repeat 85% of them are children of ministers and missionaries.

Now, I wonder what others might

want to mean when they say, "Oh, he is the son of a Mason." The usual run of criticisms against Masons may be bearable. But, when members of our families are involved, such criticisms hit us squarely between the eyes. It is about time we wake up and re-examine the way we raise our families. If we must make ourselves manifest more Masonry in our lives, let us spread our ideals around even to our families.

There is a quotation I have used once or twice before which I would like to repeat on this occasion. It is: "There are none more loveless than parents who abdicate their role, fearful to limit, afraid to forbid, unwilling to train." Today, more than ever, we need parents who can stick to the old-time method of rearing their children, parents who would rather break the rod and have good children. I have often wished that parents were less modern but more fundamental with respect to the way they rear their children.

History is replete with Masons who have contributed immensely to freedom in their several countries: Disraeli and Churchill in England; Danton and Robespierre in France; Garibaldi and King Victor Emmanuel in Italy; Washington and Jefferson in the United States; Juarez in Mexico; Bolivar in Bolivia; and right here in our own country — Rizal, Bonifacio, Mabini, Abad Santos, Aguinaldo, Quezon, Roxas, to name just a few. Without doubt, these heroes were Masonic missionaries in their day and age.

They have lived their lives; we are living ours. For our day and generation and for the generation still to come, we must be Masonic missionaries. By the life we live today, we are preparing the next generation for the responsibilities that shall be theirs

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