



## **IS FREEMASONRY INVISIBLE?**

Address to the Brethren and Visitors of Seymour Lodge No. 272 on April 9, 2019 by R.W. Bro. Robin J. Colville – DDGM Hamilton District “C” on his Official Visit.

Good Evening Brethren:

The topic of my talk this evening – Is Freemasonry Invisible ?

I have been attempting to keep my talks on official visits focused on a recurring theme, that of how we can “ensure the timeless vitality of the Craft”. We all know that membership has been on a steady decline for decades, and I think most of us realize that if we don’t take the proper actions to address this huge problem then the Craft will continue to shrink in membership and in significance to our society.

The good news is that we are now well aware of the direction in which our ship is sailing, and for the best part of a decade now the message on what needs to be done to turn the ship around has been the sermon of Masonic leaders across the nation. Doing things the same way we have been doing in the past is not working .... we need to change and adapt our methods to prevent further decline. We need to stop the practice of bringing good men in the front door, and by not providing the experience they signed up for allowing them to walk right out the back door.

So how do we increase the profile of Masonry, and subsequently our membership when we are invisible to a general public who barely know we exist? Grand Lodge created the Friend to Friend Programme to help address this issue, but this program relies primarily on YOU ... our current members ... to identify worthy men and introduce them to what Masonry is about. They say talk is cheap, and that actions speak much louder than words .... So I say that it is the actions we take that can potentially have the biggest impact on what potential candidates, and the public at large, think about us.



We need to raise the profile of Masonry through Volunteering and Community involvement, and not just as individuals but as an organization. We need to demonstrate to the public that we are a fraternity of good men who are all trying to become a better self, by practicing the fundamental tenants of brotherly love, relief and truth. Each of us setting the example of what a Mason is and stands for, by living a just and moral lifestyle, helping others and doing your part to enrich your community. These actions are what will draw new young men to see what we are about, and they will want to be part of such a noble fraternity!

We all know that we do good things for our community .... I have seen the financial contributions made by our District Lodges to many worth charities that support the well being of our communities. But although the financial support is extremely important, we must do more than write cheques and sit back feeling chuff with ourselves about all the good deeds we are doing. Nobody really sees this, and therefore nobody except the recipients know how Masons are helping.

Freemasonry is not just about what happens at a lodge meeting .... It is also about the image we project. We need a visual identity that is recognisable, that represents our values and heritage, and also reflects our relevance to society.

The public wants to know Who are the Masons? & how do we know them in our lives today? When we can answer these questions, then we can move forward with traditional programs for public relations, marketing communications, membership, and more.

How does the public perceive Freemasonry today? Masons are typically not visible in the daily life of their communities. Masonic identity is frequently misunderstood and misrepresented in the press and by religious critics. Within eye and ear range of the public, Masons have largely failed to perform what we profess; and consequently, have lost significance within the context of community.

So what actions can we take to raise the profile of Masonry in our community?



In our own District, I can think of many ways to raise our profile and let our community, and the men who live here know the ideals we stand for and how they can become part of our great organization.

Participating in our local fairs and showing our support at community events – like running MasoniChIP programs at the Ancaster Fair, holding a pancake breakfast for young families at the Ancaster Heritage day parade, sponsoring a booth at the Dundas Cactus Festival, volunteering at Mission Services to serve meals on holidays, promoting our new Dyslexic learning centre, volunteering at mobile blood donor clinics throughout the city, supporting our vulnerable youth and encouraging students to be their best through scholarship programs.

Just a few ideas, and we already do some of these things now .... but we can't continue to do this in secret ... we need to let our light shine! Each and every one of us need to promote Masonry in our community, by living and acting like a Mason should to set an example for others to follow, and be proud to wear the square and compass logo in public ... it will raise the profile of Masonry and possibly motivate a young man to ask what that logo stands for?

Public awareness of Masonry begins at a grassroots level. Masons must be visible in the community to demonstrate Masonic values in many aspects of their lives. Volunteering for a cause you feel strongly about, and setting an example for others to follow will ultimately raise the profile of Masonry in our community in a very positive manner.

I leave you with this passage from the book of Matthew (5: 14-16) in the VOTSL;

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

My Brothers, let YOUR Masonic light so shine! Let OUR Masonic light so shine! We CAN bring light to a world wandering in darkness!

Thank you for your attention.