

Good Evening Brethren:

Where do we as Canadian Masons fit into the scheme of things in comparison with Masons in other countries such as Great Britain or the United States of America?

I have read and also have been told by several brethren that have visited in England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales that Masons there are still fairly low-key and quiet about their membership in our Craft. That is not to say that our brethren in Great Britain are not active and caring Masons, just that they are possibly a little more reserved about showing that they are Masons.

A friend of mine, a fellow Mason, has visited his family in Ireland on several occasions. He was so proud after being initiated into our lodge and couldn't wait to visit his mother and his brothers in his hometown overseas. Each of his brothers is a Mason. His next visit home, he announced the exciting news. They were all thrilled that he had become a Mason. Their gift to him was a flip-top Masonic ring. His initials were engraved on the one side and

then when the face of the ring was flipped over on a swivel, the square and compasses were displayed on the obverse side.

On the other hand, our American friends are much more open about their membership in our great fraternity. Someone once mentioned to me, in the kindest terms I must say, that while Masons in Great Britain may proclaim their lodges with a small plaque on the outside of their Masonic temples, the Americans will erect a huge sign on the top of their Masonic temples ablaze with neon lights.

Please let me clarify my position before I go any further, I have the greatest respect for both our British and American brethren and find their different approach to Masonry equally appealing.

Now take me for example, I used to put on my suit or tux, and picked out five or six Masonic pins for my lapel. A senior Mason, a dear friend of mine, pointed out to me one evening that one pin on the lapel would suffice. In retrospect, I do agree he was correct and ever since I have heeded his advice.

However, on occasion I still look at all the beautiful Masonic pins that I have accumulated and feel like putting them all on, up and down both lapels.

I drive a 2000 Mercury Grand Marquis. It is a beautiful Sea-foam green in colour. You look at it and it appears grey but slowly your eyes see this glorious green like you were staring into the ocean. I am sure there are many other more expensive cars but I truly love my car.

Now talk about neon lights, our American brethren would be proud of me.

On the back bumper of my car, I have five Masonic emblems proclaiming my membership in the Craft lodge, Royal Arch Masonry, Knights Templar, the Scottish Rite and the Shriners. Gees, I wonder if the Royal & Select Masters and the York Rite College have bumper stickers. I will have to inquire through my friend at R & J Regalia, R. W. Bro. T. Roy Binns.

My pride and joy is my new licence plate "DDGM 04". The plate is encompassed by a licence plate holder with "FREEMASONRY"

in large print enclosed by two square and compasses. This licence plate holder is available from our Grand Lodge for a small fee.

Some of you may be thinking that is a bit too much Masonic material on my car and you are probably right. Well something has to take the place of all those lapel pins.

On a serious note, the most important thing we must remember whenever we proclaim ourselves as Masons, either by wearing Masonic jewellery, lapel pins or bumper stickers on our cars is that we must project, at all times, to the general public, the very best image of Freemasonry. I know when I am driving my car laden with our Masonic symbols, I have a great responsibility to act with courtesy and concern for my fellow drivers, which, my brethren, as anyone who drives nowadays can easily attest to, that is sometimes extremely difficult.

To sum up my observations, Canadian Masons in general, and the members of our Grand Lodge in particular, have the best of all worlds because we have positive influence by our friends and brethren over the seas and also by our friends and brethren to our immediate south.

Brethren, thank you for your kind attention.