# The Order of The Royal

# Arch The Way Forward

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On Tuesday 16 October 2007 I presented a paper to this Chapter entitled "Whither The Royal Arch" in which I concluded:

- We have an Order which provides an extension and widening of the philosophical and moral code which underpins Freemasonry.
- Its ceremonial and rites provides answers which are left hanging after the first three Degrees.
- The survival of the Royal Arch depends solely on its membership.
- The responsibility for Royal Arch Masonry lies with the Companions and the direction is upwards from the grassroots — not from Grand Chapter down.
- Where an individual Companion sees a need to improve things he must take responsibility and accept the challenge.
- Questions from Companions must be encouraged to assist with education and understanding.
- Promotion of the Order is the responsibility of every Companion, Chapter and Grand Chapter.
- The education of Companions is the responsibility of themselves, their Chapter and Grand Chapter.

> However one Companion cannot achieve success on his own: success will be achieved by a team effort, and the size of the team depends on the size of the objective. It may be a small group within a Chapter; it may be a Chapter; it may be Grand Chapter; or it may be the Order. And success will largely be determined by the excitement and enthusiasm each of us shows to our Brethren in Craft Masonry and, indeed to those outside the Craft. We need them to say "That looks so exciting that I wish to be part of it!"

A fine sentiment, but it leaves begging the almost overwhelming question *"How do we achieve it?"*

The short answer is, of course, increasing membership. But is the *short answer* sufficient? Is it more complex than that?

Recently I attended a meeting in another Order and listened while they struggled to come to grips with their immediate future. One member suggested, adamantly, that the solution to their woes was to get more members. We are all familiar with this argument—indeed we have all used it ourselves. In the Piako Chapter Summons for August 2008[1] I wrote:

> "... Step one is to ensure that we retain our members - that we do not allow any of them to feel unwanted and unloved and that we give them reason to feel it is worth remaining a member by not only making membership enjoyable but by ensuring that they will want to remain part of an organisation that exudes high standards in all that it undertakes. Step two is to gain new members by encouraging Craft Brethren that there is something worthwhile to be gained by joining; by seeking out unattached Royal Arch Masons and encouraging them to join us ... But we know that gaining new members from our Lodges is not easy, because they too are struggling. So we also need to have new membership of the Craft as one of our motivations."

I recently heard an interesting statistic which, unfortunately, I have not been able to verify: world-wide, an average of 20% of Craft Masons join another Order.

The Royal Arch in New Zealand has around 1,700 members at present - which is less than 20% of the membership of Craft Masonry in New Zealand. VE Comp Mark Fraser GDC, who also has responsibility for over viewing membership in the Hauraki District, points out that there are about 300 members in the District but while this number is closer to 20% of the Craft membership residing in the corresponding area, the percentage in the District reflects a decline in Craft numbers as much as it does an increase in Royal Arch membership.

The unavoidable conclusion that I draw is that since the membership of our Order in New Zealand approaches that remarkable statistic, if it is valid it follows that while the membership of the Craft is reducing we are not likely to gain a significant increase in membership. This means that, especially in the smaller Chapters, finding Officers will be more and more difficult; the overhead burden will become more and more crippling; and our ability to perform creditable ritual will gradually reduce. The outcome is obvious—unless:

1. We work hard at encouraging our inactive Companions to attend meetings.
2. We actively work at finding unattached Royal Arch Masons and bringing them back into the "fold".
3. We devote significant time to encouraging non-Royal Arch Masons to join us.
4. We take up the responsibility of gaining new members for our Craft Lodges.

How can we do this? It is simple, obvious, but not necessarily easy to achieve.

- Define the desired outcomes for our Chapters.
- Develop the leadership objectives we need (the "right" things we have to do).
- Establish management plans (the "right" ways to achieve our outcomes) to support the objectives.
- Aim for excellence in our ritual, management and social activities—generate excitement in our membership that will be conveyed to others.
- Convince non-Royal Arch Masons that the BEST way for them to improve and extend their Masonic education and understanding is to join another Order—particularly the Royal Arch.
- Convince those non-Masons we think would gain benefit from Freemasonry that it is the BEST way for them gain a better understanding of their lives and their participation in the world.

What, then, is the way forward?

I believe there are three steps:

1. Ensure that we fully understand our Order—what it is and why it is.
2. Develop management plans to improve our Chapters.
3. Promote our Order—and Freemasonry—to other persons, both non Royal Arch Masons and non Masons.

**Understanding the Order**

To understand the Order we need to come to grips with its history, why it came about and what it achieves.

In "The Freemason at Work" Harry Carr[2] wrote:

> "At the time when Grand Lodge was founded in 1717 only two Degrees were in general usage in England and Scotland, the first for the 'Entered Apprentice' and the second for the 'Master or Fellow Craft'. The Third Degree, when it eventually appeared in 1725, was not a new invention. It arose by a splitting of the original First Degree into two parts, i.e., for the E.A. and the F.C., so that the original Second Degree then became the Third in the new Three-Degree system .
>
> "When the contents of the Third Degree, now including the Hiramic legend, appeared in print in Masonry Dissected, in 1730, it is clear that the ceremony already contained material (i.e., a reference to a 'lost word') which subsequently formed one of the elements of the Royal Arch story. *however] this does not mean the Royal Arch existed in 1730.

"The earliest clear evidence of the existence of the Royal Arch is in a rather rare Irish work entitled A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the Causes of the present Decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland, by Dr. Fifield Dassigny, in 1744. He wrote that the Royal Arch was a separate Degree for 'men who have passed the chair'.

"It would be quite impossible to discuss the contents of the Royal Arch ceremony at that date because we have no ritual documents, but there seems to be little doubt that soon after its appearance in England it began to embody various links with the legend of the Third Degree. Apparently both 'ceremonies' were verbally modified so that a more or less tenuous relationship was established. I would say that the R.A. did not grow naturally on the tree of the Craft degrees, but it was 'grafted' on to one of its three branches. Much was added to the original material during the second half of the 18th century, and our modern R.A. is generally described as the completion of the Third Degree, though I would call it an extension.

" As early as 1598 we have a regulation in the Schaw Statutes, relating to operative masonry in Scotland, requiring that the 'Master of fellow of craft' should have his name and mark regularly inserted in the Lodge Book on the date of admission to that grade. Thereafter there are numerous records, in the Minutes of the early Scottish operative lodges, of masons who 'took their mark and paid for it'. This was a purely operative practice, enabling masons to mark their stones in a simple and recognizable manner. In those days it was certainly not a ceremony or a degree. When it did finally become a ceremony it had lost all operative connexion.

"The Mark seems to have developed into a Degree or ceremony during the 1750s, and there is an interesting rule, made by an unattached Craft Lodge at Newcastle on 19 January 1756 [which] suggests a Scottish source and there is evidence showing that this Lodge had contact with the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

"The earliest record of the making of 'Mark Mason and Mark Masters' is in the minutes of the Chapter of Friendship, Portsmouth, dated 1 September 1769"

Laurence Gardner in "The Shadow of Solomon" gives a different perspective as to when the Royal Arch became known. He writes[3]:

"We shall also discover that a time-honored aspect of the Craft known as the Royal Arch Chapter holds the ultimate key to Freemasonry. Although the Chapter is optional to Brethren, it is within this particular ritual (as distinct from the three primary degrees) that the light of Masonic heritage truly shines—yet the all-important Royal Arch was totally ignored by the Grand Lodge establishment for 96 years from its foundation."

Later he writes that when a Candidate enters a Lodge for the first time he is likened to the Rough Ashlar which will eventually become smoothed and perfected[4].

"It is at this stage that the prospect of being admitted to the 'mysteries and privileges of ancient Freemasonry' is potentially very exciting. Progressing through the three Craft degrees, however, concludes with the immensely disappointing Hiramic legend, and it is not until one joins the Royal Arch Chapter that the excitement builds again—but this time with a better purpose."

Gardner writes that Christopher Wren was as enthusiastic about the mathematical mystique of Solomon's Temple as Isaac Newton and that, therefore, when Desaguliers became the Grand Master of the Moderns in 1719 it was little wonder that they focused on it[5].

> "As a Fellow of the Royal Society he would have been fully aware of ongoing research from the society's published Transactions. It was worth creating a whole new degree just to cement the new-style Freemasonry to this Solomon tradition – and that is precisely what happened after 1724, when the 3rd degree was formulated"

Unfortunately, writes Gardner, instead of developing the thrust of the first two degrees by incorporating Newtonian or other Temple philosophy, the fictitious legend of Hiram Abif became the focus. But, he writes[6]:

> "… a rather more than adequate 3rd degree already existed. It was much older, and had evolved quite separately from Craft Freemasonry, with records of a Scottish working as far back as 1590 in Stirling. Laurence Dermott, Grand Secretary of the Antients, explained to the Moderns that he knew of this degree, which existed quite independently of the Craft, and that he firmly believed it to be the 'the root, heart, and marrow of Freemasonry', but he was ignored."

Much later the Antients included it as a formal aspect of their ritual, in 1772, but the Moderns did not relent until after amalgamation in December 1813—their own membership had applied pressure for something better than Hiram Abif.

There is another reason which is not apparent in these quotations. The philosophy of Freemasonry is established in the First Degree but complete education about and understanding of that philosophy is not accomplished in the remaining two degrees of the Craft. Indeed, one of the reasons that Gardner is so scathing of the Third Degree ("…the immensely disappointing Hiramic legend…") is that it leaves many questions unanswered—questions that a discerning and intelligent Master Mason can be expected to raise, and will expect to have answered. Foremost among these will be why, when it is clear from the ceremony of the Third Degree that Solomon of Israel, Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff knew the secrets, were they lost when Hiram Abiff was murdered?

The Exaltation Ceremony answers this question but that it is by no means obvious or clear suggests that many of us do not understand the degree even though we may have participated in the workings on many occasions. For example, in a recent meeting of a Chapter which intended to work an exemplar Royal Arch Degree, VE Comp Mark Fraser GDC and I were invited to participate to offer some commentary and understanding of the ceremony. I commenced by asking what the Royal Arch Degree contributed to Masonic Philosophy and received little response. I then ventured the opinion referred to above that in fact it adds nothing—that its important function was to extend our knowledge and understanding of that philosophy. VE Comp Fraser spoke about how various parts of the ritual could be presented in such a way as to enhance the understanding gained by the Candidate and I offered comment on the meaning of some of those aspects. After about one and half hours, during which little of the play was enacted, when we decided to call a halt, one of the Members of the Chapter thanked us for giving him some understanding—that in his years as a Member he had been unable understand what the Order was about and had been seriously contemplating resigning. Once again I was made aware of the disservice we do our Companions (and Brethren) by failing to build understanding and reinforce awareness.

What is it then that the Order brings to our knowledge and understanding of Freemasonry?

The philosophy which underpins Freemasonry is explained in the First Degree and summarised in the tracing Board.

- The three principle virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity
- The four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice
- The characteristics of a Freemason—virtue, honour and mercy

The Mark Degree exemplifies Faith, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice: the Faith of the Fellowcraft in following his intellect; his Fortitude in persisting in the correctness of his actions; the lack of Prudence on the part of the Master Overseer; and the Injustice in his treatment of the Fellowcraft. Along the way, the Mark Degree also educates the Candidate as to how the work on King Solomon's Temple was regulated and the quality controlled; it tells him of the relationship between the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft and, incidentally, informs as to why a Lodge of Speculative Masons takes the form we enjoy today.

The Excellent Degree builds on Faith, Hope and Fortitude: Faith in the Decree of Cyrus and that the Temple will be rebuilt; Hope that he will be allowed to work on the Second Temple; and Fortitude because of the long journey that confronts him as he leaves Babylon. The journey to Jerusalem would take at least 7 months and often longer. He is also given insights into how the ancient Hebrews viewed their situation; how God communicated with them; and he is educated in the symbolism of the veils and their relationship to his life and the way he ought to live it. Although the Mark Degree has introduced him to other secrets of recognition, the Excellent Degree tells him precisely why modes of recognition were so important in those uncertain days.

The Royal Arch Degree leads him to a number of points and exemplifies the Honour of a Freemason. It tells him about the structure of a Chapter and its processes. It explains how the sojourners were honour bound to report their findings to the Sanhedrin and the vows of secrecy so important to that trust. It amplifies one of the lessons of the Address in the Excellent Degree when it says "The Almighty Architect never intended that our temples should remain damaged … but has given us the faith to repair and, if necessary rebuild upon the ruins of our former temple …". It explains the design of the Secret Vault and what was secreted there, and it reveals the secrets which were lost at the death of Hiram Abiff, and, more importantly, why it was they were "lost" when, as every Master Mason knows, three men knew them. It builds on the concept of merit and reward for labour which were developed in the Second Degree, and it tells the new Royal Arch Mason what is expected of him. And it tells him of the relationship Freemasonry and he has with the Deity by firmly linking the ineffable name of the Deity with the Grand Word of the Order.

**Managing our Chapters**

If we are to ensure that the workings of our Chapters are enjoyable, productive and not at all embarrassing to those participating we must manage our Chapters. But by "manage" I don't mean just "management". "Leadership" is also involved.

Some years ago I heard Chris Laidlaw on National Radio interviewing Kevin Roberts, a New Zealander and world-wide CEO for Saatchi and Saatchi. Laidlaw asked Roberts a question and hearing the reply commented that it was leadership. Roberts said that it wasn't leadership, it was management. When Laidlaw asked him about the difference, Roberts said "Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right thing!"

If our Chapters are to survive, at the very least by not losing members apart from the obvious implications of age and infirmity, we have to promote a culture which embodies leadership, management and team work. We need to establish:

- What are the "right" things we need to do for our Chapters
- What is the "right" way to do them

An oft-quoted presentation which was given by RW Bro Greg Goding of Queensland at the Craft Northern Division Annual Conference[7] in 2009 mentioned five things which he considered essential to the survival of a Lodge (or, in our case, a Chapter):

- Perfect harmony
- Effective handling of business
- Superb ritual and ceremonial
- Enjoyable refectory proceedings, and
- Elimination of the “cringe factor” in all our activities.

These are all outcomes of good, sound and successful leadership and each of them implies an aspect of good, sound management.

Harmony should be a given and it if is not then we should be taking a hard look in our respective and personal mirrors! It is implied in the exhortation given to the Officers at the Installation in a Chapter regarding precept and example and is an obligation every one of us is required to observe.

Effective handling of business may from time-to-time pose difficulties because not all of us are skilled and able administrators. It does not mean that we should strive to keep the business part of our meetings as short as possible. It does mean that we should strive to be as effective as possible and that we should organise ourselves to ensure that everyone is completely conversant with what the Chapter needs to achieve. This is essentially a management consideration but leadership is needed from those who have ability and can help train others. This is an area in which the establishment of small committees to assist those who have accepted governance roles will greatly enhance the business activities of a Chapter. For example a committee or group may assist the Scribe in his communication duties: someone to assist with notice papers and someone to assist with newsletters and letters. Someone may develop a web page for the Chapter and someone may take responsibility for publicity. Another committee or small group may assist the Treasurer.

There is probably little doubt that the area which most affects the view we have of our Chapter is the standard of ritual and ceremonial. It is an area in which we can all contribute merely by trying our best and it is ALWAYS obvious when a Companion has been striving to do his very best. It is equally obvious when he has not. It is also an area which can be greatly enhanced if we do not leave it all to one or two Companions. The responsibility for presenting good ritual belongs to all of us—not just the Director of Ceremonies or the First Principal. Certainly they provide leadership—but then so do all of the senior and experienced Companions. A ritual committee could take responsibility for planning ceremonies, allocating duties and ensuring that every charge has not only a presenter but also that it is understudied by one or more other Companions. It could be responsible for liaising with other Chapters for assistance as appropriate so that our Candidates are offered the best possible experience.

It doesn't take much imagination to make our refectories more enjoyable. A little humour (not the telling of risqué stories) and innovation can go a long way to make the occasion memorable. And it isn't dependent, necessarily, on a recent practise of dropping out certain toasts and replies. Don't forget that one of our objectives is self-development and if making a short address—or toast—is part of those objectives then dropping them prevents Companions practising and enhancing their skills. The process can be improved if a small group of Companions, a committee, accept responsibility for planning our refectory proceedings: for ensuring the catering is adequate and yet affordable; and for planning social events which involve our families and other Chapters.

The "cringe factor" is not necessarily the worst aspect of some of our meetings and should not be overemphasised. It is true that some comments from “the old codgers” may turn a new member off and it is equally true that the worst example of a “cringe factor” is the criticism of a Companion who has difficulty with ritual but who has clearly tried to present it as best he can—who has evidently put in work even if he is not particularly successful. With gentle persuasion those who cause us to cringe can be convinced to ameliorate their criticisms. But we must not forget that for many of those who do criticise from the stance of long membership and recollection, Masonry has been their life too. If their stance has to be toned down because of the adverse effects they have on the Chapter, it has to be accomplished with kindness and discretion.

The five “Goding” points are not the only aspects which can contribute to the well-being of a Chapter. Education is another area which is sadly neglected and which requires both leadership and management.

We need to provide leadership in our Chapters and manage them such that we can proudly introduce someone into our midst and feel secure in the knowledge that nothing in our activities will embarrass him, or us, and drive him away, and that he too will take pride in the workings of the Chapter. We must provide leadership and example to those who have less knowledge and are less confident. We must ensure that no one Companion feels disenfranchised. And we must ensure that no Companion is overburdened merely because he is able and is a willing workhorse. I venture to suggest that 5 years is the maximum term anyone should be expected to occupy an administrative office.

**Promoting the Order**

Even if we manage to apply leadership and management to our Chapters to ensure that we do not lose our existing membership we still need to promote our Chapters—to gain members to offset natural attrition and to provide for growth. How can we achieve that? And, indeed, why?

A dilemma faces every Master Mason when he has been raised.

He has been informed, in his First Degree, that he should make every endeavour to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge, an exhortation which is reinforced in the preceding phrase when he is recommended to study such of the liberal arts and sciences as lie within his attainments. If he has listened diligently during his first degree, and subsequently thought about what he has heard, he will appreciate that the full scope of Masonic philosophy was outlined in the lecture of the First Degree Tracing Board: the three principal virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity; the four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice; and that the distinguishing characteristics of a Freemason are Virtue, Honour and Mercy.

But he has also been informed in his Third Degree, which concentrates on his spiritual nature and in particular that aspect which relates to his mortality, that the genuine secrets of a Master Mason were lost by the death of just one person.

His dilemma is:

- Why should he extend his knowledge?
- How does he extend his knowledge of things Masonic?

The short answer to the question of why he should extend his knowledge is predicated on the basis of all education: that it is comprised of three parts

1. Knowledge
2. Experience
3. Personal development

He will know he has been given a little knowledge and has been brought to this point by his personal development. But he knows his experience, at least in a Masonic sense, is very limited.

There is a further reason although probably he will not be aware of it at this early stage in his Masonic development and experience. The preface to the Rules of the Constitution of the United Grand Lodge of England contains the following statement:

> *By the solemn Act of Union between the two Grand Lodges of Free-Masons of England in December 1813, it was ‘declared and pronounced that pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch’.*

> *At the Quarterly Communication of 10 December 2003 the United Grand Lodge of England acknowledged and pronounced the status of the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch to be 'an extension to, but neither a superior nor a subordinate part of, the Degrees which precede it'.*

Rule 71 of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand states:

> *Grand Lodge recognises only the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Master Mason, Mark Master, Excellent Master and the Royal Arch as being pure Antient Freemasonry.*

These quotations from Supreme bodies – the United Grand Lodge of England which has *de facto* status as the recognizing authority of almost all Masonic organizations world-wide, and our own primary constitutional jurisdiction – seem to tell us that there is something more to Freemasonry than just Craft Masonry. So they reinforce the why and also give a pointer as to the how.

Obviously he can endeavour to study Freemasonry for himself. But that is a process that can be fraught: what should he study and how can he be sure that the information he gets is sound? Like many sources on the Internet (of which there are thousands), books, magazines and articles have to be treated with a certain circumspection, if not scepticism. Many of our well-meaning Brethren often present questionable material as fact because their own knowledge and understanding is limited.

For that reason alone the rituals of another Order offer perhaps a better and more reliable source of information.

The question then may well be not whether the Master Mason should join another Order, but rather what Order, or Orders, should he join so that he may profitably extend his knowledge and understanding of Masonic philosophy?

You will recall the quotations I cited earlier in this paper when considering the history of the Order. To understand better why the Royal Arch should be a logical progression from Craft Freemasonry we need to further consider how the form of Craft Masonry was developed during the Age of Enlightenment. It is quite clear that the developers of the rituals of Speculative Freemasonry sought to de-Christianize it. Remember that this was a period of intense religious fervour – both Protestant and Catholic. Indeed that time, in the latter part of the 17th Century, was not far removed from the periods of religious persecution. A little over 400 years previously the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was burnt at the stake by the Inquisition. 200 years previous it would have been extremely dangerous to have bucked the desires of Henry VIII and 100 years prior Oliver Cromwell was doing his best to crush the established religions. The developers had a desire to cater for men of all religious persuasions and to allow for freethinkers in their midst. So when the first Grand Lodge was formed in 1717, and when Dr James Anderson published his Constitutions in 1723, there was no mention of the New Testament. On the other hand many of the appendant Orders which have been developed since have drifted back towards Christianity reaching the possible ultimate in the Rose Croix, or Scottish Rite as it is known in other parts of the world, which is heavily dependent on the Gospel of St John.

Why then the Royal Arch?

It does not add any new philosophy to that which is taught in Craft Masonry. Rather it further explains and expounds on the basic philosophy and links much of that which has yet to be explained in Craft Masonry.

Indeed, as Gardner explained, it is considered to be a more logical culmination to Craft Masonry than the Third Degree.

Others more close to home have commented on the relevance of the Royal Arch in New Zealand. Kerry Dalzell[8] writes:

*Various eminent New Zealand Freemasons have endeavoured to answer this question. I cannot do better than quote some of the more erudite writings.*

*C.G. Hedge wrote:*

> *"He should join the Royal Arch because:*
> *It is part of Masonry and is so officially defined.*
> *It enlarges his knowledge of the Most High and His goodness and honour.*
> *Without it he is an incomplete Mason.*
> *With it he has added the topmost stone and covered-in the building.*
> *It adds another link in the Chain which binds him to his brethren."*

*J.P. Glenie wrote:*

> *"So our search is ended; we have found what all men seek. We know at last that Freemasonry leads to the Deity Himself: that first declaration we make in the first degree is now at last explained."*

So, if the Royal Arch adds to the knowledge and understanding of Masonic Philosophy, how does it do it?

The most important point to understand is that the Order does not add to the philosophy which was introduced in the First Degree. What it does do, in three degree ceremonies, is answer questions which are left begging in the three Craft degrees.

The Craft ceremonies introduce to the Entered Apprentice the concept of a work ethic which is based on labour, accuracy and perseverance; to the Fellowcraft the necessity of supporting the work ethic of the First Degree with knowledge, understanding, justice and reward; and to the Master Mason a spirituality, particularly that associated with his mortality, and loyalty and integrity. But he is also told that he cannot have the genuine secrets because the murder of one of the main protagonists in the building of King Solomon's Temple caused them to be lost.

What questions do the degree ceremonies of the Order address and how do they answer them?

The first of the three degrees of the Order – that of the Mark Master Mason – takes as its allegory the building of Solomon's Temple and works on the theme of the work ethic introduced in the First Degree. It shows the candidate how the work was controlled and the measures applied to the quality control and the role of Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts. It explains the part the latter played in the training of the former, and then it picks up on the concepts of merit and justice introduced in the Second Degree ultimately pointing out the importance of intellect in interpreting the designs implicit in the construction of a building.

The second of the three degrees, the Excellent Master, takes the candidate over 400 years into the future and considers the implications of the return from Babylon of the Jews taken captive after the sacking of Jerusalem by the army of Nebuchadnezzar. It describes how the work of building the second temple – that of Zerubbabel – was restricted to descendants of the Jews taken captive and how they were tested and controlled.

The third of the degrees – the Holy Royal Arch – describes events which took place during preparation for the foundations of the second temple.

Between them, these degrees tell the Craft Mason how the work force at the building of King Solomon's Temple was organized, trained, managed and paid, and how the quality control which ensured a sound, stable building was implemented. They describe the controls put in place to ensure that only descendants of the Jews taken into captivity by the Babylonians would work on the Second Temple. And they finally show how the lost secrets were recovered and the reason why the loss of just one man could prevent transmission of the secrets.

In other words they answer some questions which newly raised Master Masons may have pondered but never found answers to.

- What was the true relationship between Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason?
- Why is it that the degree of Master Mason does not guarantee him the right to sit in the chair of Master of a Lodge?
- Why does a Lodge have a Master and two Wardens?
- Was the Temple of King Solomon as indestructible as our allegories imply?
- Given that three men knew the secrets of a Master Mason – Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abiff – why did the loss of just one of those cause the loss of the secrets?
- Were the lost secrets ever found?

Above all the three degrees of our Order provide a solution to that rather peculiar state in which the Craft Mason finds himself: that of having learned secrets which are not "genuine"!

If he joins the Order of the Royal Arch he will, as the catechism of the opening of a Lodge in the Third Degree suggests, have assisted in finding the genuine secrets by his own industry.

**Conclusion**

I do not wish to list any particular conclusions from the foregoing. Rather I wish you to draw your own conclusions. But I do wish to summarise and extend some of the points I have made.

I stated that I believe there are three steps to ensuring the survival of our Order:

1. Understanding
2. Management
3. Promotion

All of these three steps are critically essential—leave one out and our ambitions will inevitably fail:

- If we don't understand it we cannot successfully promote it.
- If we don't manage it properly we will not be able to promote it.
- If we don't promote it we won't have anything left!

Each of these steps requires a plan with identifiable objectives and each objective needs a method of assessing its success or failure.

For example the success of a plan to promote a Chapter is easily measured by the number of Companions it exalts, and, almost by proxy, the number of new Brethren it assists in initiating into its support Lodges. Each Chapter should set a target for the number of Companions it needs to exalt each year.

The outcomes of management plans are not quite as easy to assess but measures can be developed. For example, if a conscious plan is developed to communicate where possible electronically—to send as many notice papers and minutes by email, say—a suitable measure may be the reduction in overheads for the year (it costs at least 70¢ to send a notice paper and the minutes by post: the cost of sending them by email is zero). A target objective may be to encourage every member to subscribe to an ISP for the reception of email.

Another measure may be the effect the loss of key Companions will have on the Chapter. How often has the sudden death of a Scribe/Treasurer caused chaos in one or more Chapters? Succession planning is an integral part of sound management and a suitable management objective would be to have every key position covered by understudies, assistants and/or officers-in-training.

It is near impossible to assess our understanding—how many of us would be prepared to undertake a test or sit an examination? And yet many of us have had to do so in our employment. But understand it we must if we are to be able to answer the questions I posed. If we can't answer them our ability to promote the Order and our Chapters will be severely limited. Perhaps this is a measure of how successful we have been in developing our understanding.

The solution is in our hands.

You may recall an old adage: "If it is to be, it is up to me."

If every one of us does not participate in each of the three steps to the very best of our abilities I can assure you we face a very bleak future.

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[1] Piako Royal Arch Chapter No 48 Summons August 2008

[2] "The Freemason at Work", Harry Carr, Sixth and revised edition, A Lewis (Masonic Publishers) Ltd 1981, ISBN 0 85318 126 8, p 395.

[3] Laurence Gardner "The Shadow of Solomon" Harper Element 2005, ISBN 13 978 0 00 720761 9, ISBN 10 0 00 720761 1, p xxii.

[4] ibid p 148

[5] Ibid p 163

[6] Ibid p 163

[7] RW Bro Greg Goding PAGM, Special Envoy for the Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Queensland, "Order In The House: Where Will You Plant Your Seedlings", February 2009. Presented at Grand Lodge of New Zealand, Northern Division, Annual Conference, 2009.

[8] K.W. Dalzell, PAGDC, 1st Principal, Research Chapter of NZ No. 93, "The Craft and Royal Arch Masonry", a lecture presented to William Ferguson Massey Royal Arch Chapter No 61, 6 April 2009