

*Address to Supreme Council by Most Worshipful Brother Larry Grandy at the 2016 Annual Session in St. John's, Newfoundland*

When I was installed as the Grand Master in 2014 I chose three areas of concentration that in my opinion would be certainly beneficial to our Craft and I want to take just a couple of minutes to talk about it for a few minutes. First and foremost is education. Education is the centre of Masonry and in 2009 I served as the co-chair at the all Canada Conference and during that conference I presented a paper based on the minutes of the very first ever conference held in 1947. And these minutes were given to me by a brother, R.W. Bro. William Scott, a very good friend of mine and it was a fascinating exercise to take those minutes and to examine all the issues that were brought forward at that first ever conference. And of course the idea was to see how closely it was related to what we talk about today. Well by far the most important of all, that spanned a total of 21 long type written pages, was the topic of Masonic Education. A brother, R.W. Bro. George Wood, who was then the Grand Senior Warden of Prince Edward Island, introduced the subject with the following words, he said: "Masonic Education is all embracing, never ending. There is no horizon that places a limit on our endeavors, and until we lay down our working tools of life more light should be our goal. And as we ourselves search for and discover additional light, so should we be ever ready to impart our knowledge to those who seek our guidance. This my brethren must be one of our aims at every opportunity we must make it our business to spread more light through Masonic Education. After all Masonic Education is not only just interesting and exciting on its own, it is also an important role in making Freemasonry more relevant to its members. And it is also a tool to help convince society as a whole of our relevance in this day and age. In Masonry, we are told to seek the light and light in Masonry my brethren, is knowledge. From knowledge comes information and understanding.

The second this that I zeroed in on was membership. And this has been a concern for many years. Not only in just Freemasonry but many other organisations as well. Now how do we attract new members, new Masons, particularly the younger generation? Can we improve membership by making it easier for the young man to join? Should we loosen the rules on proficiency as they progress through the degrees? Should we lower the dues? Be less rigorous in the examination of new candidates? Well I feel that the answer to these questions, clearly stated by a young three year Mason, his name was Timothy Bonnie and he spoke from his website "Freemasonry Resources" and I want to give you his quote: "There is one basic problem with all that I have been told by long experienced Masons about what younger Men want. None of them seem to have ever asked any younger Mason if easier Freemasonry is what we really want and in fact I have come to believe that easier Freemasonry is not what younger men want who join our fraternity." He concludes with the following "We want Freemasonry of our grandfathers and our fathers. We want to be challenged, stretched, educated, and trained. We want the opportunity to take our rough ashlar and begin to smooth them. We want to be Freemasons in the fullest sense of the word." And I sincerely believe that the first concentration of Masonic Education will automatically and positively affect membership. The well informed Mason will attract others.

And the third thing that I concentrated on was community involvement. Visibility within the community of course is most important. But just to be visible however, should not be our main aim. Supporting activities and being involved for the betterment of our community is where our efforts should be directed. I know that many of our lodges are active within the community and it's wonderful to know that. Now three or four years ago we had a Past Grand Master right now, M.W. Bro. Max Guires, who had as his theme "Reaching Out" and this brethren is good advice. I was sitting down having a coffee at Tim Horton's in Bolton, Ontario where my daughter and family live one morning, and I looked up and there was a

phrase that flashed across the television screen and I said to myself 'now this is a phrase that I can use'. Here it is "Always remember that the best part of being in your community is to be involved." I'll repeat it one more time "Always remember that the best part of being in your community is to be involved in it."

Thank you.