

Chapter Six: Prejudice Proved

On December 6, 1992, Dr. Gary Leazer told me that the critique of The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume I, which he had commissioned, was completed. From Dr. Leazer's comments, and from my correspondence with Dr. Bill Gordon, IFW employee who did the critique, it was clear that the critique was negative. Once again, this raised concerns about the design of the study and for Dr. Leazer's predisposition to bringing a report favorable to the Lodge. Therefore, that same day, I wrote Dr. Lewis and asked to be allowed to see the critique and to write a response to it before it is quoted in a formal report.

After Dr. Lewis' September, 1992 instruction to Drs. Leazer and Robinson that all of the IFW be involved in the study, it is still a wonder that the principle contribution of any of the other members of the department was to produce a critique of my booklet, The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume I. If that critique had been written prior to the Convention as a means of opposing the motion to study Freemasonry, it may have had some validity. Once the Convention instructed the IFW to study Freemasonry, my booklet became irrelevant. Once the Convention instructed the IFW to study Freemasonry, the only document of mine which was relevant was the 630-page report which I presented to the IFW September 17, 1993. Why this critique was prepared and its use by Dr. Lewis will be discussed in detail later in this book. The 630-page report was presented to the IFW, was sent to the Administrative Committee of the trustees of the HMB, to the past presidents of the Convention, and to the Convention officers. Why no critique of this material was ordered by Dr. Leazer is a worthwhile question, also.

My December 6, 1992 letter renewed my request to be allowed to return to Atlanta to review the Freemasonry study's conclusions with the IFW before that report was issued to the Trustees. I had not written or called any of the IFW employees for two months to give them time to do their work. Because this was a critical issue, I implored Dr. Lewis to bring a strong definitive statement, and reminded him that a lukewarm, watered-down response will not be helpful to the evangelical purposes of Southern Baptist churches.

Throughout the process of interacting with the HMB, the tone of my correspondence was as this, "I would like to renew my

request." In that I was not a trustee of the HMB, I could not demand; I could only request. The next day, December 7, 1992, I faxed the following letter to Dr. Lewis:

"Last night, as I continued to think about the approach which the IFW seems to be taking to the study on Freemasonry, I had some additional thoughts. With a formal critique of the booklet, The SBC and Freemasonry, having been written, and with Dr. Leazer's intention to quote from that critique in the study presented to the HMB trustees, I believe the logic error of AD HOMINEM is being committed. Except as a historical document, which played a role in the initiation of this study, my booklet is irrelevant to the study being undertaken by the HMB.

Whether my booklet is factual or erroneous is irrelevant. The issue is what does the Masonic Lodge teach? If the Board wants to make me the focus of this study, it would more appropriately address the 630-page report which I presented to the HMB in September. If it is thought that the HMB can win some favor with Masons by discrediting me, I believe that is a mistake. If it is thought that the force of the study can be diluted by focusing upon my booklet rather than upon what the Masons stand for, that is a mistake...."

Repeatedly, the HMB appeared to be afraid of confronting the Masonic Lodge about their clearly occultic practices and teaching. That fear seemed to influence the study from its design to its execution.

To Ignore Message Discredit Messenger

Increasingly, Dr. Lewis directed his hostility toward me personally. It seemed that he thought, "If I can only discredit the messenger, then the problem will go away." The personal attacks upon me grew as Dr. Lewis' frustration with this assignment seemed to grow, and as he increasingly seemed to focus upon my involvement in the question.

In my December 7, 1992 letter, I reminded Dr. Lewis that I have only been the messenger. The Old Testament reminds us of God's judgment upon Israel for attacking the messenger because she resented or rejected the message. II Chronicles 36:16 states: "But

they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, til there was no remedy."

I know that I am not an Old Testament prophet. I cannot foretell the future. But the voice which I have raised, along with a chorus of others, concerning the destructiveness of our coddling the Lodge in our churches, is a prophetic voice. I said to Dr. Lewis:

"You can attack me. You can ignore me. But ultimately the harm of such action will come to the SBC, not to me. If Southern Baptists refuse to stand for the truth, they may prosper for a brief time, but finally their compromise will bring destruction."

Throughout the ages men have tried to succeed by avoiding the clear implications of the truth. It has never worked before, and it will not work now.

I also discussed with Dr. Lewis, the rumors about the Masons coming to the Convention in Houston. Some had reported that the Masons were organizing to send thirty thousand messengers to Houston. Whether they do or not, our only responsibility was to declare the truth. I asked Dr. Lewis if he could image Elijah, standing on Mount Carmel, attempting to dilute the truth of how objectionable Baal worship was to God because he feared that God might fail? I asked him if he could imagine Elijah fretting over whether the wicked would win and embarrass God, or hinder God's purposes upon the earth? I can't.

The reason Elijah could be courageous, I reminded Dr. Lewis:

"Elijah cared only for the truth and the glory of God. If the Masons show up in Houston, it will be a Mount-Carmel test for Southern Baptists. The question is, 'Will we through the diluting of this study on Freemasonry attempt to pour gasoline into the trenches around the Lord's altar rather than water, or will we stand strong for the Lord?'"

Compromise is the stuff of controversy, not truth. If the HMB brings a compromising report, it will engender controversy in the Convention for years to come. If the trustees bring a strong and truthful report, there may be a momentary reaction, but ultimately, good will come from it.

Because of all of these concerns, I asked Dr. Lewis:

"It is my request that the IFW Department and the HMB redirect their focus from me and my booklet to the Masonic Lodge and their teachings. It is my counsel that the HMB's only hope of not precipitating a disaster in Houston is to bring a strong, factual and conclusive report to the Southern Baptist Convention on the occultism of the Masonic Lodge."

The response to both of these letters was perfunctory and courteous. On December 22, 1992, Dr. Lewis responded:

"...I will share your request with Darrell Robinson, Gary Leazer, and Ron Phillips. I can give no assurance that time will allow either request to be fulfilled, but I will discuss it with them."

It is noteworthy that Dr. Lewis recognized my inquiries as "request", not demands." That will become important soon.

What Would You Do If You Were Not Afraid?

On December 8, 1992, I sent the trustees of the HMB copies of my December 6th and 7th letters to Dr. Lewis. A cover letter to them said:

"The issues which are raised in my letters to Dr. Lewis are critical. The pressure being exerted by Masons for the S.B.C. to compromise is great. All of us who care about revival, all of us who care about the souls of men and women, all of us who care about the glory of God must add our voices to the call for a serious, strong and conclusive report about Freemasonry. Above all, we must not succumb to pressure to compromise the truth.

Recently, a conversation between a prominent pastor in the S.B.C. and a friend of his was related to me. The friend called this pastor and told him of a difficult situation which he was facing. Asked for his counsel, the prominent pastor said: 'What would you do if you were not afraid? Now do that!'"

This is the only question for those who have been delivered from fear by the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Hebrews 2:14-18) Fear should never be part of the equation of truth for the Christian.

Because so much emphasis is placed upon success in the Convention today, I addressed the tension which exists between "faithfulness" and "fruitfulness"; I said:

"The question before Southern Baptists..."What would we do if we were not afraid?"...It is clear what the Masonic Lodge is. We do not have to be cautious or clever. We only have to be courageous.

God does not require fruitfulness of His children; He only requires faithfulness. If we are faithful to God and are failures in the sight of man, that is good; if we are faithful and are successful in the sight of man, that is good. All the success in the world will not make up for unfaithfulness to God.

As a trustee of the HMB, would you please contact Dr. Lewis and ask him to determine what he would do if no element of the fear of the loss of money, of influence or of numbers existed? Then, ask him to do that!

God bless you, as you are faithful. I pray that we will be fruitful, for God is therein glorified. But, fruitfulness is His responsibility; faithfulness is ours."

Again, there is no threat; there is no demand. There is only a heart cry for truth and courage. Two events would prove everything which I had ever suggested or feared about Dr. Leazer's prejudice for the Lodge. The first was his letter to a Mason friend in Tennessee in January, 1993. The second was his address to the Southeast Masonic Conference in August, 1993.

Dr. Leazer Writes A Mason

In February of 1993, I obtained a copy of Dr. Leazer's January 17, 1993, letter to a Mason in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He said:

"I appreciate all the help that Masons have been to me. Jim Tresner, editor of The Oklahoma Mason, and Abner McCall, former president of Baylor University, have each read the report and offered suggestions which I used. John Boettjer asked me to read the proof of the February issue of The Scottish Rite Journal which I did in December...James L. Holly is quite upset with me as I will not meet with him again to let him approve the report before it is submitted. He, of

course, will explode when he sees it...Holly is already marshalling his forces to counter-attack. It is essential that as many Southern Baptist Masons get to the SBC as possible...Give my regard to the other men at the temple. Perhaps I can get up to see you later this spring."

What had been suspicioned in July, August and September of 1992, is now declared in January of 1993: apparently, Leazer is in complete sympathy and in collusion with the Masons. His hostility to a brother-in-Christ is such that he makes up things such as "Holly is upset", "(Holly) will explode", and (Holly) is marshalling his forces". Leazer is speculating about Holly in the same way he has speculated about the Lodge. He has a preconceived notion, and facts will not dissuade him.

In a letter to Dr. Lewis, which was released to the press at the same time, I requested:

"Dr. Leazer's removal as the head of this study. The trustees of the H.M.B....should determine whether or not Dr. Leazer should be asked to resign from the HMB staff as he appears to have confessed to collusion with the Masons in this study....

The rejection of the study prepared by Dr. Leazer and the preparation of an honest and objective study without Masonic oversight...."

Dr. Lewis responded to the disclosure of Dr. Leazer's letter in a February 22, 1993 press release in which he said:

"As to the current status of the project, the IFW has completed its work as directed by the SBC in Indianapolis, ie, (sic) a study of Freemasonry. That study has been reviewed by a number of directors of the HMB and will be sent as information to the full board prior to the March meeting...

Due to the controversial nature of his involvement and to the fact that his work is completed, I have requested that Dr. Leazer not be involved in development of the report or the recommendation."

The inadequacy of this response is that Dr. Lewis does nothing about the fact that the entire study, upon the basis of which

a report to the Convention is going to be made, has been prepared by a man who is prejudiced in favor of the group he was to study. Dr. Lewis' removing a few of the most blatantly prejudiced statements from Dr. Leazer's draft does not change the fundamental nature of his work. Unfortunately for the SBC, apparently, Dr. Lewis either shared Dr. Leazer's prejudice for the Masonic Lodge or was so afraid of their reaction to a strong and definitive study, that he was happy to use this biased study as a basis of presenting a compromising report to the Convention. One is left to wonder what Dr. Lewis' response would have been if Dr. Leazer had not already "completed his work."

Remember, Dr. Lewis' concern, stated by himself, is that the HMB will lose money regardless of the decision the HMB reaches. Apparently, he thinks Dr. Leazer's A Study Of Freemasonry has something for everyone. Therefore, everyone will continue to "pay for" the activities of the HMB. Unfortunately, the "paying for it" will not be in giving money, but in pastors and churches paying the price of pain and suffering as they are ravaged by the Masonic Lodge. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what the SBC could have done in evangelizing the lost, if it had taken a courageous stand for the Lord.

Dr. Leazer's Keynote Address To Masonic Conference

On August 6, 1993, Dr. Leazer spoke to the Southeast Masonic Conference at the Airport Inn North, Atlanta, Georgia. His address confirmed every question of his prejudice and bias, and helped Southern Baptists understand their origin. In the "Keynote Address" entitled, "Opportunities For The Future", Dr. Leazer said:

"It is an honor to receive your kind invitation to speak to you...I knew the assignment (to study Freemasonry) was a no-win assignment from the very beginning because there were and still are very powerful voices within my denomination calling for the complete condemnation of Freemasonry..."

Remember Dr. Lewis' assertion of a "no-win" situation, for him because of financial loss to the Board. For Dr. Leazer, apparently, this "no-win" situation was the result of "powerful voices". One is left to wonder at the source of such power, and the identity of these voices. Leazer continued:

"I know many of you feel relief that the Southern Baptist Convention did not condemn Freemasonry, but you should not be satisfied with the report adopted by the Convention. You cannot agree with the eight points critical of Freemasonry which are found in the report. I hope you will respond clearly and quickly to each of these points..." (emphasis added)

Leazer places himself in opposition to the recommendation made to the Convention, and publicly opposes, even while an employee of a Convention agency, a decision made by the Convention, suggesting that the Convention is wrong in even gently criticizing the Masonic Lodge. It would be interesting to know if Dr. Leazer made this speech on HMB time. Did he take Cooperative Program funds to encourage the Masonic Lodge by accepting an invitation to speak to them while "on the clock" at the HMB? Did Dr. Leazer prepare the text of his address to the Masonic Conference on HMB time?

Leazer also recommends that the Masonic Lodge take action against the SBC in overturning even the compromising report which has been adopted. It is unconscionable for an employee of the SBC to encourage hostile action toward the Convention by a group which the Convention has declared by majority vote has "many tenets and teachings which are not compatible with Christianity."

Report and the Study

Dr. Leazer's acknowledgment that his study does not support Dr. Lewis' report has already been discussed. It was in this speech that Dr. Leazer said:

"My study (Leazer) does not agree with the conclusions in the HMB report, but the report, not my study, is the official position of the SBC." (emphasis added)

His Study, although being promoted by Dr. Lewis as a major contribution to the Christian community, is not the official position of the SBC. That position is the six-page report which was voted on at the 1993, SBC in Houston. Leazer distanced himself from the report. He calls the HMB's 75- page A Study Of Freemasonry, "my study". Remember Leazer's July 13, 1992 letter to me in which he proposed to do most of the research himself. Recall Dr. Robinson's press statement in the July 22, 1992 Baptist Standard:

"He (Leazer) can involve others as he sees fit." Leazer did the study; Leazer wrote the study, and Leazer owns the study. Only after the most negative comments about "anti-Masons" were removed did Dr. Leazer seek to distance himself from the report.

The reality of "who wrote the study" was confirmed by a letter from Dr. Leazer in the December 16, 1993, Florida Baptist Witness; Dr. Leazer said:

"Dr. Lewis stated that the 'inclusion of my name as author of the first draft was improper.' I, alone, was paid for writing the study per Home Mission Board staff manual guidelines. The administrative committee also voted to give me an additional two weeks vacation because of the extra hours I put into the research and writing of the study. None of the other department staff received this compensation. If my name on the draft was 'improper,' why was I, alone, given this compensation?"

Trustees of the HMB and the SBC should distance themselves from Dr. Leazer's study because it is not a sound document.

Lewis Judges Some Of Leazer's Statements To Be Libelous

In his November, 1993 letter to the Florida Baptist Witness, Dr. Larry Lewis states that some of the statements which were removed from Dr. Leazer's original draft of the study "could have been libelous." Is it possible for an objective, scholarly work to include statements about individuals which would be "libelous"? In any court of law, an absolute defense against libel is truth. If what you say is truthful, you cannot be found guilty of libel, no matter how derogatory your comments are about others.

Even Dr. Lewis, who himself has made unfounded accusations against the same people whom Leazer opposed, judges Dr. Leazer's statements to be untrue. One is left to wonder at the motive for putting untrue statements about "anti-Masons" into a supposedly scholarly, objective study on Freemasonry? Could it be bias and prejudice for Masons, bias and prejudice, which is the result of admiration and affection of Freemasonry, developed long ago, which now clouds the vision of the man who is to inform the SBC about Freemasonry?

Dr. Leazer denied making libelous statements about anti-Masons; in his letter, published in the December 16, 1993, Florida Baptist Witness, he said:

"Concerning (Dr. Lewis') statement that some of the draft 'could have been libelous', I welcome a legal opinion."

Dr. Lewis Objects To Dr. Leazer's Design

Dr. Lewis correctly, but belatedly, agrees with my concern about the design of the study, stating to the Florida paper:

"Dr. Leazer's initial draft was edited because it did not follow the guidelines he was given. The study was to focus on the beliefs and teachings of Freemasonry, not on what individuals claimed about Freemasonry." (emphasis added)

This is a correct understanding of the Convention's charge, and one which I pressed upon Dr. Lewis as early as July, 1992, but one which he rejected until the prejudice of Dr. Leazer could no longer be denied. Yet, even while affirming my understanding of the intent of the Convention's direction to the HMB, Dr. Lewis continues to defend and promote a study done by a man who rejects this position, and who compromised the HMB's integrity by producing a study which is tainted with prejudice and bias.

Masons: Renewal, Not Reform

Dr. Leazer's address to the Southeast Masonic Conference, continued:

"I appreciate the call in this month's issue of The Scottish Rite Journal calling for a 'renewed effort on the part of all Freemasonry today to re-energize our Fraternity.' The ball is in your court; you have the momentum if you will take advantage of it..."

How sad that the SBC has given Freemasonry momentum, not by studying the Lodge, but by compromising in that study. Leazer continued:

"I would recommend that each issue of your Grand Lodge periodicals include an article discussing a specific Masonic teaching....

There are a number of positive steps you can take immediately...Your very survival as a fraternity depends upon it...I find that The Masonic Renewal Committee of North America is on target..."

Why would an employee of the HMB's IFW make recommendations of how an organization, which he was assigned to study, can propagate its interests? Recall the discussion of Freemasonry's desire to renew, but not reform from chapter five. (See p. 73) Masons are not interested in reform, and apparently, Dr. Leazer is encouraging them not to do so. Why would a Christian employee of the HMB, no longer the head of the IFW, but still an employee, encourage the Masonic Lodge to renew, but not reform? Recall the discussion from chapter five (see p. 62) of Dr. Lewis' desire simply to reform the Lodge.

Scottish Rite Journal Follows Leazer's Suggestion

The January, 1994, Scottish Rite Journal carries the complete text of Dr. Leazer's speech to the Southeast Masonic Conference. On page 54, a note appears at the bottom. It states:

"Note: the Scottish Rite gladly accepts this suggestion, and every upcoming issue will contain at least one article focused on Freemasonry and religion."

Masons take Dr. Leazer's work seriously and respond to it, Southern Baptists should take Dr. Leazer's work seriously and repudiate it!

Jim Tresner Important To Leazer

Dr. Leazer continued his address to the Conference, giving specific recommendations for advancing the kingdom of Masonry:

"Develop positive relationships with clergy, newspaper editors and other media personnel...I have seen my father who is a Master Mason participate in (funeral services)..."

Booklets explaining Freemasonry such as the excellent 'Conscience and the Craft' by Jim Tresner, would be helpful to give to pastors and other church leaders. In my opinion, Jim Tresner, is the most knowledgeable and articulate Masonic writer today...."

Tresner is an important figure in the SBC's attempt to get at the truth about the Masonic Lodge. As shall be seen in the critique of A Study Of Freemasonry, Tresner's unpublished manuscript,

Perspectives, Responses and Reflections, made an important contribution to Dr. Leazer's study of Freemasonry. More than anyone, Tresner seems to have provided Leazer with his paradigm, with his schema, for organizing his support of the Masonic Lodge.

Tresner is repeatedly quoted in A Study Of Freemasonry. He was also quoted in the Chicago Tribune saying:

"It appears that if Masons are asked to choose between their Southern Baptists Churches and the Lodge, that the Lodge will not be the loser."

This is also the man who reviewed the manuscript of A Study Of Freemasonry, making suggestions for the changing of the study, which suggestions were used by Leazer. (See previous discussion of Leazer's January 17, 1993 letter to a Mason, p. 81.) The question occurs to me, "When did Leazer meet Tresner, and how long have they been acquainted?" Why would Dr. Leazer, an employee of a Southern Baptist agency, admire, support and recommend a man who would delight in Southern Baptists choosing Masonry over their churches?

Leazer Suggests Anti-Masons Are Liars

Leazer's contempt for "anti-Masons" is repeated as he continued in his speech:

"I would caution you about accepting invitations to debate anti-Masons. Remember, if they videotape the debate, they can edit it...Small insignificant individuals (emphasis added) and groups can and will boast of debating the whole fraternity rather than just individual Masons...during my research...Holly and others twisted my words to suit their desires...."

In July of 1992, Dr. Leazer accused me of questioning the honesty of the employees of the HMB, although I had never done so. Now, he blatantly states that "anti-Masons" will edit and selectively quote Masons in order to prove their points. The obvious inference by pro-Mason Gary Leazer is that all negative statements and facts about Masonry are false, made by the ill-motivated or the ill-informed. In Dr. Leazer's assertion, "Holly and others twisted my words to suit their desires...", the kettle may be calling the pot black, as shall be seen later. I defy Leazer to show one misapplication or misrepresentation of his words by me!

Later, in reviewing A Study of Freemasonry, which is being distributed by the HMB and praised by Dr. Lewis, we will see that Dr. Leazer's prejudice for Masons and against "anti-Masons" is evident throughout. And, we will see that A Study Of Freemasonry is not a document to be praised by anyone who values truth, objectivity, scholarship, and the "Baptist Faith and Message".

Small Insignificant Individuals

How Christian is the concept "small insignificant individuals"? Would fearful Nicodemus in John 3 be "small insignificant" in Dr. Leazer's eyes? Would the woman at the well in John 4 be "small insignificant" in Dr. Leazer's eyes? Would the woman taken in adultery in John 8 be "small insignificant" in Dr. Leazer's eyes? Tradition has it that Zacchaeus, in Luke 19, was a small man, but was he insignificant? Does Dr. Leazer's neglect of interviewing Black Freemasons indicate that they are the "small insignificant individuals" of whom he speaks?

Has the HMB developed a strategy to only evangelize the Baby Boomers and neglect the powerless, the poor and the pathetic? I know they have not, but what does HMB employee, Gary Leazer, mean by "small insignificant individuals"? Are "anti-Masons" the "small insignificant" people whom Leazer denigrates? Have those of us, who oppose the occultism of Freemasonry, put ourselves into a category such that the HMB would "write us off" as "small insignificant individuals"? Isn't this concept the kind of elitism which is characteristic of the "spirit of Freemasonry", which is not the Spirit of Christ? Isn't it true that the "tolerance" of the Masonic Lodge is simply an arrogant statement of condescension toward those who are "small insignificant."

Masonic Mission Transcends Message of Messiah

Dr. Leazer's contempt for "anti-Masons" continued as he said:

"You must attempt to understand the mind set of the anti-Masons. They tend to see everything as black and white, right and wrong, us and them..."

It would be worthwhile to compare this comment with Isaiah 5 and with the Sermon on the Mount. What is wrong with "see(ing) everything as black and white, right and wrong..."? Where is the error in the Bible declaring good and evil, holy and profane? Why

is moral relativity so helpful to the Mason and his defender? Leazer continued in his address to the Southeast Masonic Conference:

"I understand the Masonic position that each writer speaks only for himself, but I think you are sometimes your own worst enemy when you recommend certain books to your readers..."

Why is Dr. Leazer willing to allow the Masonic Lodge to avoid all responsibility for their writers, when in A Study Of Freemasonry the Masons tell him what books and publications are authoritative? (See A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 14) Why did he not examine these books, once they were acknowledged by Masons to be authoritative? This idea came directly from Jim Tresner's Perspective, Responses & Reflections. Leazer continued:

"Masons will never be able to satisfy every anti-Mason. Some depend on the sale of their books, videos and speaking invitations for their lively-hood (sic)."

It is interesting that Dr. Leazer has announced that he is going to "write a book" about the study of Freemasonry. I would assume he is going to do it for sale, and not to give away. For his livelihood, Dr. Leazer only had to depend upon the tithes and offerings of local Southern Baptist churches. Why would he blanketly impugn the motives of fellow Christians, simply because they disagree with him?

Leazer continued his address to the Masonic Conference:

"Others strongly disagree with the Masonic mission which 'transcends all religious, ethnic, cultural, social and educational differences.'..." (emphasis added)

If one examines this statement, made by a self-proclaimed "scholar" of the Christian faith (recall Dr. Leazer's July, 1992 letter to me in which he asserts that he is a scholar, p. 16.), one is shocked. Dr. Leazer's statement, the Masonic Mission "transcends all religious, ethnic, cultural, social and educational differences", is apparently quoted from an unidentified source. However, Leazer apparently quotes this as a statement of his own belief. He did not say, "As Masons define their mission."; he said, "Others strongly disagree with the Masonic mission...". This is a declarative statement of the nature of Freemasonry with which Dr. Leazer is apparently expressing agreement.

How can anything "transcend" the truth of Holy God? How can anything be above the Revelation of Jesus Christ? Yet, Leazer declares that "Masonic truth" goes above and beyond "sectarian" Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and other religions, and by the "Masonic mission", organizes them into one world religion of the new aquarian age.

In 1980, the Curator and Librarian of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, Allan Boudreau, PhD, said:

"In this new Aquarian age, when many individuals and groups are working in various ways for the eventual restoration of the mysteries, an increasing number of aspirants are beginning to recognize that Freemasonry may well be the vehicle for this achievement..." (Foreword to The Meaning of Masonry, W. L. Wilmshurst, p. 4)

Surely, Dr. Leazer, though he is a scholar by his own claim, does not mean what he said? Surely, Dr. Leazer — doctoral graduate of a fully accredited seminary, with dissertation in an interfaith witness area — does not believe that the Masonic Lodge has any knowledge, understanding, truth or activity which even supplements, let alone supplants or is superior to the truth of the Bible.

Leazer Concludes Masonic Conference Address

Leazer continued his encouragement of the Masons:

"Education is one of the keys in responding to charges leveled by the anti-Masons. This education can never end. It is the life blood of Freemasonry..."

This is the foundation statement of "secular humanism" of which the Masonic Lodge is one of the principle advocates. Moses declares that the Word of God is the life of God's people. (See Deut. 32:46-47) But, the Word of God requires the submission of the reason of man to the Revelation of God. Masons love education, but they reject revelation. The dynamic and spirit of the Masonic Lodge is the very antithesis of the Christian faith. (See chapter seventeen, pp. 259ff) for further discussion of the role of education in the Masonic mission.)

Leazer concluded his keynote address to the Southeast Masonic Conference:

"I hope you will consider the criticisms in the study which I wrote. I wrote it out of no malice toward

Freemasonry...During my research I received over 2,000 letters, over ninety-five percent of them were from Masons or Eastern Star ladies. Almost without exception the writers of those letters as well as the individual Masons I talked with were the finest men and women anyone could want to know. I wish I could say the same about the other four or five percent of the letters which were from anti-Masons. I sincerely believe that it is possible if you take advantage of this window of opportunity. If you do, the future will indeed be bright for Freemasonry."

When this speech came to Dr. Larry Lewis' attention, he requested Dr. Gary Leazer's resignation for "gross insubordination." Dr. Lewis also said: "Dr. Leazer's name-calling and disparaging remarks about several individuals is inexcusable." (It is noteworthy that Dr. Lewis has made the same disparaging remarks about several of those individuals. He has made those remarks publicly and privately, yet he wishes to condemn Dr. Leazer for doing what he himself has done.)

Leazer's Dismissal

There is one issue about Dr. Leazer's dismissal which raises a question. In the exchange of letters which has taken place between Drs. Lewis and Leazer in the Florida Baptist Witness the question has been raised as to whether Dr. Leazer clearly understood that any further comment, after February of 1993, about the Masonic issue would result in his dismissal. While it is probable that conversations were held in which Dr. Leazer was told such, the question which arises is, "Why, in such an important matter, was a document not generated and placed in Dr. Leazer's personnel file specifically telling him the circumstances which would result in his dismissal?"

In virtually any employment, when a disciplinary action is taken, and when stipulations are made about future conduct, which would result in dismissal if violated, that is documented in writing with all parties witnessing that document. Why the HMB does not have a letter signed by Drs. Lewis, Robinson and Leazer explaining the understanding which they had reached about the restrictions upon Dr. Leazer's activities, is a question Southern Baptists have the right to have answered.

Lewis Labels Leazer's Actions "Inappropriate"

In a letter to the editor of the Florida Baptist Witness published in the November 25, 1993 issue, Dr. Lewis said:

"(Leazer's) inappropriate actions throughout this affair (emphasis added) proved ample cause to suspect additional occasions of such actions, and the review did uncover such correspondence."

Dr. Lewis declares that by February of 1993 he had judged Dr. Leazer's conduct "inappropriate...throughout this affair". He further stated that the February, 1993 investigation revealed additional evidence of Dr. Leazer's compromise of the study. Southern Baptists have a right to see that evidence. Dr. Lewis has a responsibility to explain to Southern Baptists why he continued to use and endorse a study done by the man whose actions he judged "inappropriate...throughout".

Dr. Lewis revealed that his February, 1993 investigation, demonstrated conclusively Dr. Leazer's prejudice. Yet, he continued to use Dr. Leazer's prejudiced product for a basis of reporting to the SBC. He continues to distribute Dr. Leazer's prejudiced product, heralding it as a scholarly and objective study. Why?