

Chapter Seven:

A Study of Freemasonry

As previously stated, my initial support of the report of the HMB trustees to the Convention was based upon its eight points, which show the absolute incompatibility of Freemasonry with Christianity, and because of the concluding paragraph which declared, "...many teachings and tenets of the Masonic Lodge are not compatible with Christianity."

At the time of my endorsing the report, I had not seen the 75-page publication, A Study Of Freemasonry by Dr. Gary Leazer. When it became available, I did not even purchase a copy, because I believed the matter was settled as well as it was going to be by Southern Baptists. I had seen a copy of the 107-page version of A Study Of Freemasonry which was sent to the trustees of the HMB in March, 1993. It was that document which I scanned in making my comments about the disjunction between the study and the report. (see chapter two of this volume, pp. 27ff)

However, Dr. Larry Lewis' continual promotion of this document as a "scholarly, objective, and thorough" examination of the Lodge, along with the Lodge's declaration that Southern Baptists have "joined them", has forced me to take time from other projects to examine this document.

Dr. Leazer's prejudice appears throughout A Study of Freemasonry. Anyone expecting an objective, scholarly study, would recognize this as a prejudiced, biased, subjective, non-scholarly work. Dr. Lewis' recommendation of this study causes one to wonder if he knows anything about Freemasonry.

In Section One of A Study Of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer quotes Jim Tresner's Perspective, Responses & Reflections six times. As was pointed out in chapter six (see p. 87), Dr. Leazer admires Tresner greatly. Throughout A Study Of Freemasonry, we will see Dr. Leazer either quoting Tresner, plagiarizing him or being influenced by him. Dr. Leazer quotes from Tresner's work, but he does not list it in his bibliography.

There seems to be little doubt that Jim Tresner exerted a greater influence upon Dr. Leazer's decision about the Masonic Lodge than anyone else. After reading Tresner's 102-page manuscript, I find the attitudes and ideas almost identical with those presented by Dr. Leazer in A Study Of Freemasonry.

In Section One of the Study of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer quotes the Historical Commission of the SBC in stating that no Southern

Baptist Seminary has ever had a thesis or dissertation on Freemasonry. What that proves, I am not sure. The fact that Southern Baptists have been and still seem to be afraid of the Lodge and its members could just as easily explain the absence of theses and dissertations on Freemasonry, as Dr. Leazer's implication that there has been no interest in the Lodge among Southern Baptists. In April of 1991, there was a paper written at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, entitled, "The Religious Aspects of Freemasonry: Is Freemasonry A Religion?" There could be others.

Leazer Accepts The Racism Of The "Regular" Lodges

After briefly reviewing the history of the motion to study Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer undertook an examination of the question of the relationship between so-called "regular Freemasonry", and so-called "clandestine", Prince Hall Lodges in America. Immediately, in the second paragraph of this section, Leazer's prejudice is obvious; he said:

"As a result of Hall's endeavor, a completely independent clandestine organization of Grand Lodges arose and spread across..." (p. 4)

Without definition or discussion, Leazer adopts white Freemasonry's racist designation of the Black Lodges as "clandestine." In the next paragraph, Leazer does define the terms "regular" and "clandestine". However, in contradiction of his claims of scholarship and objectivity, he has already demonstrated his willingness to accept white Freemasonry's racial prejudice as the framework through which to view Black Freemasonry.

In a scholarly study, a writer would have said something like:

"The dominant Freemasonry organization in the United States is white Freemasonry. This group refers to all Masonic organizations which they do not recognize or endorse as 'clandestine.' Black lodges in the United States are not generally recognized or endorsed by white Freemasonry, and are generally referred to as 'clandestine.'"

This is an objective statement, giving no value judgment as to the legitimacy of the claim, and certainly not tacitly endorsing the negative connotation of "clandestine" in reference to Black Freemasonry.

Leazer's prejudice for the Masonic Lodge, which makes him insensitive to the racial slur of "clandestine", is further demonstrated when he said:

"...This division between regular Freemasonry and Prince Hall Freemasonry is slowly being broken down." (p. 4)

Why does Leazer adopt and consistently use the term "regular" in regard to white Freemasonry? Why would he not use the term which the Prince Hall Lodges use in referring to the "regular" Lodges which is "Caucasian or white Freemasonry"? When you employ the rhetoric of one group, which is derogatory of another, and when you consistently use that rhetoric, you, in fact, adopt their prejudice.

What is Dr. Leazer's evidence for the statement "...this division between 'regular' Freemasonry and Prince Hall Freemasonry is slowly being broken down"? Dr. Leazer must give us evidence. He does not. On the contrary, he gives us overwhelming evidence of the continuing racism of Caucasian Freemasonry.

Leazer Accepts Masonic Anecdote As Evidence

Leazer further demonstrates both his prejudice and the anecdotal nature of his study when he said:

"According to Masons, this refusal to recognize Prince Hall Grand Lodges in each state stems from the position that there can be only one Grand Lodge in each state, rather than simply a reluctance to recognize Prince Hall Freemasonry." (A Study of Freemasonry p. 5, emphasis added)

The phrase "according to Masons" is anecdotal; it is not evidence. Such phrases, without supporting data, do not belong in a scholarly study. The conclusion which Dr. Leazer offers here appears to be based completely upon the opinion of Masons. In that no evidence is offered, it must be concluded by a reviewer that Dr. Leazer is willing to accept Caucasian Freemasonry's prejudice without challenge.

There is an extensive article, entitled, "History of Colored Freemasonry in The United States", in Mackey's Revised History of Freemasonry, Volume 6, pp. 2007-2038. One wonders why in a scholarly study Dr. Leazer would do no more in discovering the truth about this important matter than accepting the anecdotal word of a Mason?

Elsewhere, Leazer will criticize "anti-Masons" for making statements without documentation. (See A Study of Freemasonry, p. 57) Here, he does the very thing for which he condemns others. Who are these Masons who make such a claim? Why is their word valid for Masonry when Leazer argues that "anti-Masons" cannot make valid statements about Masonry, because "no one speaks for Masonry?" How can Dr. Leazer generalize from one Grand Lodge to another? His doing so suggests a uniformity of motive and action among Masons, when elsewhere Dr. Leazer denies such uniformity of motive and such conformity of action.

Why does he attempt to disprove the racial prejudice of the Masonic Lodges? Why does he excuse racist behavior by Masons, behavior which is so patently objectionable to Southern Baptist Christians? Why did Dr. Leazer not interview Black Freemasons?

The Ku Klux Klan and Freemasonry

Leazer's relationship with for Jim Tresner has already been noted; he again quotes Tresner, who said:

"(I have personal knowledge) of men [who] have been denied membership to (sic) Masonry on the basis of KKK membership." (A Study of Freemasonry, p. 5)

This is a direct quote from Perspectives, Responses & Reflections, written by Tresner. Why is this subjective, anecdotal statement taken as fact, when similar statements by "anti-Masons" are rejected by Dr. Leazer? How many Masonic memberships were denied to applicants who were Klan members? In what Lodges were these memberships denied? Where were these Lodges? What were the names of the people who were denied membership? Are memberships to Masonic Lodges ever not denied for Klan members? Are all candidates for Masonic membership questioned about Klan membership or sympathies? If not, why not? What was the response of the Klan members whose memberships were denied? Are these not questions which a scholar could be expected to answer?

Remember, a scholarly and objective study will be known by the questions which it asks, as much as by the answers which it gives. Dr. Leazer doesn't seem to have many questions **FOR** Masons, and he seems to have many questions **ABOUT** "anti-Masons". What is Leazer's standard for the accepting of information about the Masonic Lodge? It will become apparent very soon that the standard is: whatever is positive about the Lodge is true;

whatever is negative about the Lodge is false. If Gary Leazer accepts Jim Tresner as a valid source of information about Freemasonry, does he not, therefore, suggest that there are other valid sources?

In Perspectives, Responses & Reflections, Jim Tresner praises A Pilgrims's Path: One Man's Road to The Masonic Temple by John J. Robinson. Robinson has the following to say about racism in the Masonic Lodge:

"That recognition is exactly what is being sought by separate Masonic lodges maintained by about a quarter of a million black Americans. The organization is called Prince Hall Masonry, after its founder. Prince Hall was a free black living in Boston, here he and fourteen of his black friends were made Freemasons in 1775 by a traveling military lodge, No. 441, of the British 38th Regiment of Foot...the local American Lodges showed no desire to take in black Masons, so Prince Hall finally made application to the Grand Lodge of England for a charter to a new lodge...African Lodge was not welcomed by the other American lodges...in the same manner as white Masonry, which had condemned the black Prince Hall Masonic system as 'clandestine,' or unauthorized. When I began looking into Masonry, not one single Grand Lodge had given its recognition to the Prince Hall Masons..." (pp. 16-17, emphasis added)

This certainly does not support the statements which Dr. Leazer quoted from Tresner's Perspectives, Responses & Reflections.

Facts Refute Tresner's Testimony

On September 30, 1992, I wrote Dr. Leazer, and said:

"The enclosed article addresses a subject which is little known, i.e., the relationship between the Ku Klux Klan and the Masonic Lodge. While the majority of Masons are not Klan members, apparently, the overwhelming majority of Klan members are Masons. As this article points out, in its origins the Klan was an extension of the Masonic Lodge. It is difficult to document, but it is clear that the Lodge funded the Klan in its earliest and most violent days."

The article enclosed was entitled, "The Ku Klux Klan and Regular Freemasonry". It was published in the Spring, 1992, edition of The News Quarterly, the official publication of the United Supreme Council, 33rd Degree, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, Prince Hall Affiliation, United States of America. This article is a reprint from The Phylaxis, 1982, which stated:

"This paper has been written in response to Alphonse Cerza's naive assertion 'that there is no 'color line' in Craft Masonry' and...Brent Morris' encouragement of 'how fitting for a Black Freemason to discover the truth' concerning Albert Pike. To paraphrase John Serman, 'I dislike casting doubts on the complete integrity of Caucasian Freemasonry, but in seeking the truth, one must take that risk.'" (emphasis added)

Brent Morris Challenged By Black Freemasons

It is noteworthy that on page forty-five of A Study Of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer quotes an article written by Brent Morris in his attempt to discredit the relationship between the Kaballa and the Masonic Lodge. Here, a national, official and authoritative Black Freemasonry publication questions the integrity of Brent Morris. Later it will be shown that Morris misuses his source when trying to prove that there is no relationship between the Kaballa and Freemasonry. Dr. Leazer adopted Morris' conclusion and in a "scholarly work" perpetuates the error Morris initiated.

Alphonse Cerza Challenged By Black Freemasons

Also, on page sixty of A Study Of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer quotes Alphonse Cerza. Cerza is a Mason who has written a history of "anti-Masonic" movements. Notice that this national Black Freemasonry publication calls Cerza "naive", when he says there is no color line in Craft Masonry. Can Cerza's history of "anti-Masons" be trusted, when Black Masons are willing to "cast doubts on (his) complete integrity"? When Black Masons don't trust Cerza's scholarship, and Leazer does, one wonders why?

Cerza's scholarship is addressed in footnote number one in "The Ku Klux Klan and Regular Freemasonry" (News Quarterly, Spring, 1992 Edition, p. 23), states:

"Alphonse Cerza, The Prince Hall Organization, June 9, 1980, presented before the South Dakota Lodge of

Research is a classic example why Caucasian Freemasons should not be allowed to write about the Black man and Prince Hall Freemasonry, for there is a deliberate exclusion of racism and the role of 'regular' Freemasonry as a racist organization." (p. 23)

The question raised by this official national Black Freemasonry publication, is the same question which we have posed to Drs. Leazer and Lewis: "Why would you allow white Freemasons to comment on racial issues in the Lodge without balancing their testimony with comments from Black Freemasons?"

A January 30, 1965, Saturday Evening Post described a Ku Klux Klan meeting at the Masonic Hall in Hemingway, South Carolina. The Saturday Evening Post article is entitled, "We got nothing to hide: Ku Klux Klan is moving boldly into the open in a last ditch fight against integration." The article stated:

"There was nothing clandestine about the meeting. On the afternoon of the meeting, in the Masonic Hall in Hemingway, ladies of the Klan sold barbecue, slaw, cake and soda pop, and passed out literature extolling the noble purposes of the order."

"The Ku Klux Klan and Regular Freemasonry" also quoted Charles C. Alexander's "The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest" which stated:

"...In 1923 the Klan claimed that 500,000 Masons were citizens of the Invisible Empire of the KKK...so many Masons joined the Klan that in some communities the Masonic Lodge became simply an adjunct of the local Klan unit..." (quoted in The News Quarterly, Spring, 1992, p. 21)

The News Quarterly reported that the Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado, stated:

"Denver needed the Klan...because the Catholics and the Jews were taking over and we had to do something, 'So we went down to the Masonic Lodge and organized.'" (The News Quarterly, Spring, 1992, p. 21, quoted from 1981 publication by Robert Alan Goldberg)

On page 41 of Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado, Goldberg stated:

"The Masons provided a second fraternal home for 85 percent of the early joining Klansmen and 70 percent of the late joiners....

The Masonic Lodge was an especially fertile source of recruits...Another Mason, Darius Allen, contended that the Colorado Springs Klan was made up mostly of people of the Masonic Order." (quoted in The News Quarterly, Spring, 1992, p. 21)

Why did Dr. Leazer ignore this entire issue? Why did he simply accept the word of his friend, Jim Tresner? Why did he show a callous indifference to the beliefs and feelings of Black Freemasons? Why did Dr. Leazer ignore the obvious racism of the Masonic Lodge, a racism which continues unabated to this day? Why didn't Dr. Leazer investigate the charges in this article, which he received in early September of 1992? Why is Dr. Leazer so intent upon portraying Caucasian Freemasonry in such a positive light? If Dr. Leazer is so willing to accept secondary sources, which are favorable to Caucasian Masons, why does he ignore this secondary source which is derogatory to Caucasian Freemasons?

Dr. Leazer and the Masons will argue that one article written by Black Freemasons does not establish the relationship between the Klan and the Lodge. They are right. But, this article does demonstrate that there is a literature about this matter which can be examined. In my own files I have numerous other articles on the same issue. Why didn't Dr. Leazer even mention the other side of this issue in his "scholarly study"? He claims in his design of his study that he is going to show "both sides". Apparently, however, there are some sides which Dr. Leazer would rather leave undiscussed. Why?

Authority in the Masonic Lodge

In the discussion of the relationship between black and white Freemasonry, Leazer said:

"The Lodge tends to follow the lead of the general society, rather than being a leader in racial reconciliation." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 5)

If there is no authority in Freemasonry such that Masons can be held accountable for their teaching, then why does Leazer affirm, and upon what authority does he affirm, that they tend to follow the leadership of the general society? If Lodges "tend

to follow the lead of the general society", is this not evidence and admission of the influence of the Scottish Rites of America? Would it not be important in a scholarly study to identify these "general societies" and then to describe where they lead the Masonic Lodges?

The reality is that where it supports his bias, Dr. Leazer argues that there is uniformity and conformity among Masons. On the other hand, when the information is derogatory, Dr. Leazer flees to the shibboleth that no Mason writes or speaks for anyone but himself. We will return to this question as we continue to examine A Study Of Freemasonry.

Leazer then adds to this comment, the following: "However, racial reconciliation is slowly occurring in the Lodge." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 5) Where is his evidence? The paltry statistics which he cites is not evidence of Grand Lodges moving toward racial reconciliation; it is evidence of how deeply seated bigotry is in the Masonic Lodge. The leaders of Black Freemasonry, as recently as the Spring of 1992, affirmed their assertion that Caucasian Freemasonry is racist. In an objective study, a scholar would have pursued the question of racism beyond the opinion of his friends, Caucasian Freemasons.

Balance Required In A Scholarly Study

The need to measure the claims of racial harmony made by Caucasian Freemasons with the concerns of racism held by Black Freemasons was illustrated in the design of a biography on the life of Oral Roberts. In Oral Roberts: An American Life, an outstanding, objective and scholarly work, published by Indiana University Press, author, David Harrell, reports:

"...I was startled during a conversation when Oral, after agreeing to arrange several interviews for me with his friends, cautioned me, 'I think you should talk to people that don't believe in us...You have to get the whole story.'"

Such objectivity, on the part of both the author and the subject of his work, is admirable. Such objectivity on the part of Dr. Leazer would have been demonstrated by his subjecting the words of his friends to their detractors. It would have been demonstrated by asking Black Freemasons what they think of the racial reconciliation efforts of Caucasian Freemasonry. Alas, when one's mind is set, one's method is adapted to it.

White & Black Masonry Like Southern & Independent Baptists

Leazer's prejudice for the Lodge is demonstrated by his suggesting that an analogy exists between white and black Freemasonry and Baptist churches:

"...A parallel in Baptist life would be an independent Baptist church, which is not part of a local Southern Baptist association. Neither the independent Baptist church nor the local Southern Baptist association recognizes the other as a cooperating entity, although each knows the other exists." (p. 4)

Is this scholarship? To suggest an analogy between white Freemasonry's rejection of the legitimacy of black Freemasonry, because of the racism of white Freemasonry and the separation between Southern Baptists and Independent Baptists, is fanciful! Southern Baptists do not contend that Independent Baptist churches are not legitimate churches. The division between Independent Baptists and Southern Baptists in no way, not in one single element, is analogous to the division between the so-called "regular" or white lodges, and the so-called "clandestine", or Black lodges. No doctrine separates white and black Freemasonry; they were only separated by the racial prejudice of the white Lodges, and remain separated for the same reason.

Leazer's analogy reminds one of the attempt by Ahab to seduce Jehoshaphat into joining him in battle. The conclusion was Jehoshaphat's declaring, "My people are as thy people and thy people as mine." (II Chronicles 18:3) That was a lie then, and it is a lie now. Southern Baptists and Masons presently have nothing in common. Southern Baptists and Masonry, both conceived in bigotry and racism, have parted company, as Southern Baptists have repented of their sin, and have truthfully and actually sought racial reconciliation.

Leazer's Study Flawed From The Beginning: Why Didn't Leazer Interview Black Freemasons?

It is of interest, and of critical concern for Southern Baptists, why Dr. Leazer began a study on Freemasonry in America with a superficial, anecdotal analysis of the relationship between white and black Freemasonry. It is of further interest, and of critical concern, for Southern Baptists as to why, when he chose to begin

his study with comments on the racist aspects of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer did not interview a single black Freemason? And, Leazer's only suggestion for examining Black Freemasonry is the offering of the names of two books which his friend, Jim Tresner, himself a Caucasian Freemason, recommends.

One is left to wonder how black Freemasons would view a "scholarly study of Freemasonry in America", which ignores their Lodges completely, accepts the white Freemasons' designation of them as "clandestine", and makes no attempt to ask black Freemasons if they believe that the white Freemasons are moving toward "racial reconciliation." If Dr. Leazer announces that he did interview Black Freemasons, his problem is compounded. Why weren't their comments, positions or opinions worthy of mention in a Southern Baptist "scholarly" study?

Leazer Modifies Masonry Vocabulary: Euphemisms Remove The Sting?

Section two continues to reveal Leazer's prejudice. When he gives the names of the officers of the Masonic Lodge, Leazer assigns them innocuous and inoffensive synonyms in his attempt to take the edge off the blasphemous titles of the officers; he said:

"...officers of the Blue Lodge include the Worshipful Master (president or chairman), the Senior Warden (first vice president or vice chairman), the Junior Warden (second vice president or vice chairman)..."
(A Study Of Freemasonry, pp. 5-6)

Masons are not willing to change the names, and do not recognize such euphemistic titles of their officers. Why would Dr. Leazer suggest that this is what these names mean to Masons? What is his authority? Is it not just his own prejudice for the Lodge manifesting itself?

For his authority, Dr. Leazer references Tresner's Perspectives, Responses & Reflections: What he does not say is that this entire paragraph is a direct quote from Tresner's work. This single example of plagiarism is not as significant for the Convention as is the overwhelming evidence of the profound influence that Jim Tresner and his Perspectives, Responses & Reflections had on A Study Of Freemasonry.

Leazer Continues to Accept Anecdotal Evidence

Leazer continues with his apologetic for Freemasonry, stating:

"Masons are not allowed to ask others to join, but this prohibition is sometimes abused." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 6)

Leazer could have quickly determined how aggressive Masons are in recruiting candidates by a brief poll of Southern Baptist deacons and pastors. But, true to his prejudice, he accepts as fact the word of Masons, while demanding that "anti-Masons" have careful documentation of everything they say. A scholarly study on Freemasonry would have said:

"Masons contend that they are not allowed to solicit membership."

Leazer, always defensive of and for the Lodge, accepts their statements as true. In this organization of free-spirited Freemasons, i.e., no one speaks for the Lodge, and "every man believes and does what he wants", Leazer discovers numerous consistencies from one Mason and from one Lodge to another. Leazer's discovery of patterns of practice and teaching which allows him to say that Masons who act differently are acting in abuse of their Masonry, establishes that there are teachings and practices for which all Masons can be held accountable. We will return to this point as we proceed through a critique of Leazer's study.

Requirements For Being A Mason

Leazer again shows his prejudice, and his desire to paint the Lodge in the best possible light, when he said:

"There are only three requirements to join the Lodge: the individual must (1) be a man (2) of good reputation who (3) believes in God." (p. 6)

The truth is the name, "Freemason", announces that only "free born" men may apply for membership. From the beginning, that has meant "white". In fact, the Southern racist's epigram, "free, white and twenty-one", is of Masonic origins, as are the terms, "black ball" and "hoodwink".