

## *Chapter 5*

### *The Cow Must Be Fed*

#### L

*Subsidize other organizations right and left; and, in the doing, ignore, neglect and starve the parent body.*

**THE LAND IN** Penn Township, in the northwest corner of Jay County, Indiana, is what is known as gently rolling, and good for grazing. I should know, for I grew to manhood on a farm in that community.

We kept cows on that farm. At an early age I mastered the milking technique while balancing myself on a one-legged stool. We milked those cows twice a day—morning and evening. *And twice a day we fed them.*

Perhaps it is indelicate of me to think of such plebeian pursuits in connection with the numerous organizations which present-day American Freemasonry is expected to support. If it is, I am sorry. But as I have thought about the subject over a period of years, I have come back repeatedly to the same earthy illustration of rural Indiana— that if you milk a cow dry morning and evening, some provision had better be made for her feed, pasture, salt and water.

For a long time one organization after another has sold Freemasonry on the premise that it should "give of itself," and that is all very true up to a point. But from where I view the scene, that point has long since been passed, so that now our Craft is giving of itself far in excess of its receiving.

We all have heard the pleasant and sentimental analogy of the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee— how the Dead Sea has no outlet and its waters therefore are sluggish and repugnant to life, while the Sea of Galilee, with an outlet, has fresh, life-giving water.

But no one as yet has invented a pretty little example to illustrate what happens when the sea has more outlet than inlet. And that is what we had better be considering in connection with Ancient Craft Freemasonry.

**OF COURSE I AM** well aware of the fact that my position opens the door to scathing denunciations. In all probability I shall be accused of hostility to our youth groups, the ladies' orders, the numerous fund-raising projects which wish to profit by their association with Freemasonry, the various rites and bodies and auxiliaries and side organizations clear down to the end of a long, long list. And all such feverish protest will be completely beside the point.

For many months I have tried to emphasize the fact that I have only good will for *all* groups dependent upon Ancient Craft Freemasonry for their existence. But I am getting

good and tired of seeing Symbolic Freemasonry used primarily as a Sugar Daddy, as a benevolent old gentleman whose chief reason for existence is to provide funds and housing facilities and a stock pile for candidates. Especially do I seethe when I see the parent body so blithely ignored, neglected and starved by those who drain off its resources with such profligacy.

And as usual, it is largely our own fault. The groups which are milking the cow without feeding her did not create the condition. We gave them the original idea. We could have developed a well controlled "Masonic Community" years ago, insisting on a proper sense of proportion for each segment of the community. We could have provided activities for a ladies' auxiliary (and one would have been enough), for two junior divisions (and two would have been plenty), and for all others willing to *work for* Craft Freemasonry without pumping the well dry. Our Symbolic Craft could have pursued its own ways with dignity, maturity and restraint, But no, like typical Midwestern Americans, we have gone overboard; we have made ourselves ridiculous by becoming obsessed with the "family" idea to the exclusion of everything else.

**CONSIDER JUST A** few signs of the times:

—The incident in which an American Grand Lodge was sold on a proposition to finance about 40% of the cost of erecting a new fraternity house on a University campus. After a \$1-per member solicitation campaign had yielded only about two-thirds of the quota, the Grand Lodge had to assume responsibility for the balance. As it did so, it was made very clear that the Grand Lodge was under no further financial obligation.

—The fact that in one American Jurisdiction official recognition already has been extended to *twenty* appendant organizations, with others knocking on the door each year. Another Jurisdiction recognizes eighteen.

—For the last few years I have taken the time and trouble to do some tabulating of visitations made by Grand Masters of various Jurisdictions in the United States. The results have been astounding. One Grand Master reported 79 visitations, 45 of which were to appendant organizations. (I counted them.) Another Grand Master made only 11 visitations to Symbolic Lodges— six of them to one Lodge—and during the same year he made 58 appearances before appendant organizations. Another Grand Master reported a score of 66 to 62, with Symbolic Masonry coming out at the little end of the horn.

—The regrettable incident in which the international head of DeMolay gave the Grand Master of one large American Jurisdiction to understand that DeMolay owed no allegiance whatever to Symbolic Freemasonry, and was under no obligation to abide by Freemasonry's regulations. To the everlasting credit of DeMolay, that statement was repudiated, but damage was done, at least to the extent that it raised some questions in the minds of thinking Masons.

—I can think of at least four Jurisdictions in the United States in which serious financial problems have arisen in Masonic Homes because of the unwillingness of the Eastern Star to accept its share of responsibility for providing operating funds to take care

of its own members. Indiana was one of them for years and years until steps were taken to correct the situation in 1962.

—The tendency to look upon Symbolic Masonry as an institution with no purpose other than to sponsor and pay for someone's pet hobby. Talking through my hat? Not at all. Right here in Indiana the process has penetrated Lodges to the extent that other groups are participating in the conferring of degrees, in Past Masters' Nights, in installation ceremonies, and in goodness knows what else. It has even gone so far as to move in on the traditional Feast of St. John the Evangelist and take advantage of a fine old Masonic festival to beat the tom-toms for other groups. I know whereof I speak.

—The fact that there are Lodge publications and "trestleboards" by the hundreds which serve no useful purpose for Ancient Craft Freemasonry whatsoever. To look at them one is moved to wonder sometimes whether there is a Masonic Lodge in the community. They have become mouthpieces and promotion sheets for groups which should be learning the fundamentals of self-reliance.

—It is a known fact that at least one youth organization upon which Freemasonry smiles actually uses the young people to *solicit petitions* for the degrees of Masonry. The sales talk is this: "If your father becomes a Mason then you, too, can dress up and look pretty and parade and perform like the others." I am not saying the organization operates in Indiana, but it might be so. Our Brethren would do well to find out whether such goings-on take place in our Jurisdiction.

NOW, **JUST WHAT DO WE** mean by subsidizing other organizations to the neglect of the Symbolic Lodge?

Ordinarily we think of a subsidy as a financial handout from a paternalistic organization or government. Most groups related to Freemasonry would be insulted if we told them they were being subsidized, and many do not expect an appropriation of funds—at first. Usually the subsidizing process follows a pattern something like this:

1. Attachment to Ancient Craft Freemasonry to profit by its name, its resources, its influence, its man-power. The current trend towards trying to persuade Grand Lodges to sponsor retirement homes without any financial obligation (*not yet*, at least) is a case in point.
2. A rent-free, utility-free place in which to hold meetings.
3. A place on the Masonic Temple calendar wherein certain nights in the month may be set aside for Lodge hall use to the exclusion of the Symbolic Lodge.
4. Appeals for "moral support" from Masons; then appeals for leadership.
5. Hints that funds would be welcomed.

After that comes diversion of manpower and funds which should be used for the work of Craft Masonry into a dozen, or score, of other organizations.

Finally, and worst of all, comes the "brainwashing" process to create a certain superiority state of mind in which Ancient Craft Freemasonry no longer is regarded as of any importance. I heard the Grand Master of Masons in one American Jurisdiction make a speech in which he actually *disparaged* Symbolic Freemasonry. He likened it to the kindergarten in the school system, and pointed out that once a pupil has completed kindergarten, there is no reason why he should have any further use for it. I heard him say it—a man, incidentally, who is greatly in demand as a Masonic speaker. Thank goodness it was not the Grand Master of Indiana.

**FORTUNATELY**, there are some encouraging signs. A few Masonic leaders here and there are awakening. I am thinking in particular of one Grand Master who had the courage to say no to the ridiculous practice of running hither and yon to extend official greetings in every organization which claims a relationship, however remote, to Freemasonry.

Another Grand Master was realistic enough to recognize that many of our problems today can be traced directly to the "57 Varieties" of appendant organizations which have attached themselves to Freemasonry. "The time is rapidly approaching," he said, "when this Grand Lodge may not only have to limit new organizations, but possibly curtail the activities of some already in existence."

One western Grand Lodge took a second look at appeals for funds from various youth organizations, turned down all requests and reminded the youth leaders that "one important part of their training is *to learn to stand on their own feet.*"

But it was California which made the ringing declaration that should be read and re-read by every Masonic leader in the nation:

"We believe the time has come to call a halt on these prerequisite organizations who grow fat on the false claim of Masonic affiliation, and in so doing violate our fundamental laws and principles, and in which the individual members thereof violate their obligations taken at the altar at which we all kneeled. These organizations believe that what they do is of no concern to the Grand Lodge. We sincerely suggest that their actions and conduct are the concern of this Grand Lodge. A Master Mason can bring reproach upon the Fraternity in ways other than being convicted of a felony or some similar offense. In many instances . . . the good name of Masonry is more lastingly harmed and causes our friends to wonder and our enemies to rejoice . . .

"There now exist enough, if not too many prerequisite organizations which have fastened themselves on the proud ship of Masonry like barnacles on a ship. The great American ambition to organize and promote is worthy of praise—but when Master Masons, often those who seldom see and rarely support a regular Lodge, begin to believe, and even boast, that their organization represents Masonry, we suggest that it is time to stop, take count and say, 'No more!'"

There are some encouraging signs in Indiana, also. Let me name just one:

Looking ahead to the Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year for Freemasonry in Indiana in

1967-68. the Executive Secretary of the Indiana DeMolay Foundation has been in touch with me on many occasions to offer the full support and "manpower" resources of DeMolay in staging that great celebration. It has been made clear that DeMolay does not want to dress up and parade and be in the limelight—that instead, the boys wish to do yeoman service quietly, without fanfare, wherever they can be used. In short, they are not asking what they can *get out of* Freemasonry; they are asking what they can *do for* Freemasonry. And that is a refreshing question we do not hear very often these days.

Am I too optimistic in suggesting that perhaps some long overdue thinking is under way? I hope it is, for *we had better think it through*. The present trend can have only one result, and that is to push Craft Freemasonry and the appendant organizations alike farther and farther into decline.

And this much should be borne in mind: *a check to one of the Masonic charities cannot repair the damage*. Organizations which expect Craft Freemasonry to furnish manpower and funds, time and leadership should remember that the good health and well-being of the parent is rather important if the family is to be protected, and that such things cannot be purchased.

**ALL OF US** have seen the spoiled, selfish, inconsiderate child with a case of "gimmies"—the immature juvenile who looks upon his father as a Santa Claus to supply his wants, and who thinks his Dad's only purpose on earth is to work and furnish the funds to gratify his desires.

Well, we are going through a similar period in American Freemasonry. Those who have attached themselves to our Craft have a bad case of "gimmies," and we have been encouraging them in it. And, like immature children, we seem to think it can go on forever without any necessity of looking to the source of our luxuries.

We had better be paying a little deference to the parent body. It was here laboring on the Temple for centuries before the "dependent" organizations were ever dreamed of. The minimum of our obligation is to think about that old parent with a little affection once in awhile ... to siphon a little manpower and energy and resources *into* the Ancient Craft Lodge instead of forever draining it off.

Yes, we might with profit paraphrase the ringing words of the late President of the United States in his inaugural address: "Ask not what the Symbolic Lodge can do for your pet organization; ask what your pet organization can do for the Symbolic Lodge—the fountainhead of all Freemasonry!"