

[Every year the Waikato Lodge of Research, meeting at Rotorua in New Zealand, invites a distinguished researcher, often from overseas, to deliver a paper designated the Verrall Lecture, so named after the foundation Master of the lodge. This is the Verrall Lecture for 2004, subsequently published in the Transactions of the lodge, vol 14 #1, March 2005.]

## AT A PERPETUAL DISTANCE: *Liberal* and *Adogmatic* Grand Lodges

by Tony Pope

### Introduction

The question is sometimes asked, by Masons and non-Masons: ‘How many grand lodges are there in the world?’ The answer depends in part on what is meant, or assumed to be meant, by *grand lodge*. Let us first assume that it includes *grand orient*, because the main difference between the two is merely a system of government. To assume otherwise would be to omit old friends such as the Grand East (= Orient) of the Netherlands and the Grand Orient of Italy. Next, let us assume that it does *not* include provincial or district grand lodges, or their like, which are subordinate or administrative divisions of a particular grand lodge. Finally, let us not base the answer solely on the grand lodges which are in amity with our own, because that number—and their identity—will vary from one jurisdiction to another and, because new grand lodges are formed and old ones fade away, will vary from one year to the next. Neither will insertion of the word *regular* be of much assistance, as we shall see shortly.

Even if we widen our definition to include all bodies which claim to be Masonic and to work (at least) the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, no precise answer can be given. Australian and New Zealand grand lodges are each *in amity with* (recognise) around 120 grand lodges, plus or minus 10%, but their lists of recognitions do not coincide precisely. Using the American annual publication, *List of Lodges Masonic* (Pantagraph) as a basis, nearly 200 grand lodges enjoy recognition by Australian and New Zealand grand lodges *and/or* by those grand lodges recognised by ‘our’ grand lodges. This is the group of grand lodges sometimes termed *mainstream*, intersected by other groups such as the Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Affiliation. But there are groups which have no formal contact with the mainstream group, and under our widest definition almost 600 grand lodges have been identified. It is with *some* of these groups that this paper is concerned: those grand lodges which are *liberal*, or *adogmatic*, or both.

To understand why they are considered by the mainstream to be ‘beyond the pale’ and kept ‘at a perpetual distance’, we must examine the terms *regularity* and *recognition*, and part of Anderson’s *Constitutions of 1723*.

### Regularity and recognition

The terms *regularity* and *recognition* are considered at length in volume I of *Freemasonry Universal* (1998), and are quoted here with the consent (surprise, surprise!) of the authors:<sup>1</sup>

The terms ‘regular’ and ‘irregular’ are used to describe individual Masons, their lodges, and their Grand Lodges or other ruling bodies. ‘Recognition’ (and its verb, ‘recognise’) are used to describe the relationship between Masonic ruling bodies. These terms are often confused, with ‘regular’ being treated as a synonym for ‘recognised’, which it is not.

#### **Regularity**

Every autonomous Masonic body has its own tests of regularity, based on its perception of its own character. Thus, each Grand Lodge considers itself to be regular, and requires its constituents to abide by its criteria, whether clearly defined or not. Consequently, every Mason considers himself to be regular because he (or even she!) was ‘regularly’ initiated in a ‘regularly’ constituted lodge, chartered by his (or, indeed, her) Grand Lodge.

Within the closed system of the autonomous Grand Lodge, determination of regularity—or its converse, irregularity—is a relatively easy process, and entirely valid. Problems arise when the definition of ‘regularity’ of one autonomous body is applied to another autonomous body, because ‘regularity’ is a factor in determining whether Grand Lodge A should ‘recognise’ Grand Lodge B, and vice versa.

#### **Recognition**

If two autonomous Grand Lodges wish to establish and maintain a fraternal relationship with each other, it is customary for them to ‘recognise’ each other by formal treaty. This usually involves a comparison of the two systems, to determine if they meet each other’s criteria for recognition. Each Grand Lodge has its own list of requirements which, in most cases, may be summarised as follows:

- (a) Regularity of origin;
- (b) Regularity of conduct; and
- (c) Autonomy.

It is with the second of these, regularity of conduct, and its application to *liberal* and *adogmatic* grand lodges, that this paper is concerned.

Mainstream criteria of regularity of conduct vary slightly from grand lodge to grand lodge, but any substantial variation is likely to result in non-acceptance, or withdrawal of recognition, by others in the group. Henderson and Pope described the situation as:<sup>2</sup>

In 1929 the United Grand Lodge of England formulated what it called ‘Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition’, which (it stated) it had always applied to the question of recognition of another Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland each adopted a similar—but by no means identical—list. Other Grand Lodges have their own lists, again, not identical—and some have adopted the English list. The following are typical requirements of such a list:

1. The Grand Lodge shall have been regularly formed (‘regularity of origin’).
  2. Belief in the Supreme Being is an essential qualification for membership within the jurisdiction.
  3. Candidates are obligated on, or in view of, the open Volume of Sacred Law.
  4. The membership of the Grand Lodge and its lodges consists exclusively of men, and no Masonic intercourse is permitted with women’s lodges or mixed-gender lodges.
  5. The Grand Lodge is an independent, self-governing body with sole jurisdiction over the Craft degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason.
  6. Discussion of religion and politics within the lodges is totally prohibited.
  7. An open Volume of Sacred Law, the square and compasses (the three great lights of Freemasonry) are always exhibited while a lodge or the Grand Lodge is open.
  8. The principles of the Ancient Landmarks, customs and usages of the Craft [*all undefined*] are strictly observed.
- Even with such a list, there is room for disagreement, for different interpretations (especially when translating between one language and another); and some Grand bodies omit one or more of these provisions, or add others.

Conditions 2–4 and 6–8 are requirements of ‘regularity of conduct’. For the most part, they trace their origin to the first publication approved by the premier grand lodge, Anderson’s *Constitutions* of 1723.

### Anderson’s *Constitutions* of 1723

*The Constitutions of the Free-Masons containing the History, Charges, Regulations, &c. of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity. For the Use of the Lodges*, compiled by James Anderson and published in 1723, is reported to have received approval at the general assembly of the premier grand lodge in June of that year. The book contains a mostly mythical ‘history’ of Masonry, based in part on the old manuscript charges, amplified by Anderson’s fertile imagination, together with ‘The Charges of a Free-Mason’, ‘General Regulations’, and other matters.

*Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia* draws attention to some of the ‘historical’ passages where Anderson’s imagination exceeds even that of his operative forebears, the first of which will suffice:<sup>3</sup>

In the *Constitutions* of 1723, we find at page 8 that “the Israelites, at their leaving Egypt were a whole Kingdom of Masons, well instructed, under the conduct of their Grand-Master Moses who often marshall’d them into a regular and general Lodge, while in the Wilderness, and gave them wise Charges, Orders, &c.”

That Anderson’s imagination was given free reign beyond the confines of the ‘history’ section of his work is evident by the wording on title page of the *Charges*:



THE  
CHARGES  
OF A  
FREE-MASON,  
EXTRACTED FROM  
The Ancient **RECORDS** of **LODGES**  
beyond Sea, and of those in *England, Scotland,*  
and *Ireland*, for the Use of the *Lodges* in LONDON:  
TO BE READ  
At The Making of NEW BRETHREN, or when the  
*MASTER* shall order it.

The existence of ‘Ancient Records of Lodges beyond Sea’ could only have been a lucky guess by Anderson in 1723, since the legends and practices of the *Compagnonnage* in France and the ordinances of the *Steinmetzen* in Germany had yet to be revealed, by Agricol Perdiguier (1841) and Paul Vogel (1785) respectively, and the customs and ordinances of the Paris guilds recorded by Étienne Boileau in 1268 bore no resemblance to the ‘Gothic Manuscripts’ (Old Charges) held by English and some Scottish lodges. Similarly, no ‘Gothic Manuscripts’ have been discovered in Ireland,<sup>4</sup> and the Baal’s Bridge Square dated 1507 and documentary evidence of speculative Masonic activity in Ireland prior to 1723 were only discovered after publication of the *Constitutions*.

The *Charges* themselves, as ‘extracted’ by Anderson, contain some startling innovations never found in the original, together with some confusing phrases typical of Anderson’s style of writing. Nevertheless, these charges have been adopted verbatim by many grand lodges, almost as Holy Writ, and often enshrined as Masonic ‘landmarks’. A great deal of ink has been expended on the subject of Landmarks, a term first used in a Masonic context in Anderson’s *Constitutions* of 1723, and upon which no two grand lodges or Masonic scholars can entirely agree. Only a few drops of ink will be spared on Landmarks in this paper; it suffices to point out that ‘Gothic Manuscripts’ themselves were not Landmarks—or, if they were, they have been altered many times by grand lodges. For example, in 1845 the United Grand Lodge of England changed ‘free-born’ to ‘free’ in the qualifications of a candidate for initiation.<sup>5</sup> Christopher Haffner argues that we should not take the ‘freeborn’ requirement ‘legalistically’, on the basis that the Old Charges are exhortations, not regulations; we do not comply to the letter with others of the Old Charges—to initiate only *youths*; that every Mason must be his own Master (self-employed); that all Masons shall work honestly on working days (so Masons who retire from work must retire from Freemasonry); that the *parents* of candidates must be honest (and therefore investigated before ballot).<sup>6</sup>

Fortunately, only the first of Anderson’s *Charges* and the final paragraph of the third need be considered here. The text is taken from *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia*, because the original is unavailable.

### ***The first charge***

The first charge reads:

#### I. Concerning GOD and RELIGION.

A *Mason* is oblig’d by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid ATHEIST, nor an irreligious LIBERTINE. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg’d in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation; whatever it was, yet ’tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be *good Men and true*, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish’d; whereby Masonry becomes the *Center of Union*, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain’d at a perpetual Distance.

The relaxing of the requirement that Masons in England be of the Christian religion, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, was undoubtedly an innovation, but one which led to the enrichment of Freemasonry by men of other faiths. Note that the Reverend James Anderson appears to equate a mere code of morality (to be good men and true, or men of honour and honesty) with a ‘religion in which all men agree’. Unfortunately ‘all men’ have yet to find such a religion.

The phrase ‘stupid atheist’ is one which causes difficulty of interpretation. Does it imply that there are two categories of atheist, stupid and not-stupid, or is ‘stupid’ merely an epithet, conveying Anderson’s opinion of *all* atheists? Coupled with this phrase is another: ‘irreligious libertine’. A libertine, in Anderson’s day, was a ‘free-thinker’, one who discarded accepted beliefs, including morality and religion. It can be argued that all libertines were irreligious, and the adjective was superfluous; therefore ‘stupid’ and ‘irreligious’ do not qualify the nouns ‘atheist’ and ‘libertine’, and Anderson is pronouncing against *all* atheists and libertines. However, our grand lodges have recently examined another phrase from the 18th century, ‘improper solicitation’, and have determined that it implies two types of solicitation, improper (proscribed) and proper (allowed). It re-opens the argument of stupid and non-stupid atheists.

But the whole problem can be circumvented by a careful re-appraisal of the context. Anderson says: ‘A *Mason* . . . if he rightly understands the art (of Masonry) . . . will never be a (stupid) atheist’. He uses the word *Mason*, not *candidate*, and refers to *understanding* Masonry, which many would argue cannot be rightly understood by a non-Mason (a candidate). Thus he appears to be saying that any Mason who rightly understands Masonry will never be (or become) an atheist (or, possibly, will never be a *stupid* atheist). That is not a direct proscription of the admission of atheist candidates, nor is it a clear direction to expel Masons who become atheists after admission. Since Anderson could not have obtained empirical evidence in 1723 to support his assertion, it would appear to be no more than the expression of a pious hope.

Whatever the outcome of such arguments, there exist a number of grand lodges which do not require their candidates to express a belief in the Supreme Being, and which leave it to the decision of individual lodges whether they use a VSL in their ceremonies, or in some cases forbid the use of a specific VSL and substitute a ‘symbolic’ blank-paged book. These grand lodges are open to atheists and non-atheists alike, making no inquiry as to the religious belief of a candidate. They describe themselves as *adogmatic*, and us as *dogmatic*. Well known examples are the Grand Orient of France and the Grand Orient of Belgium, but there are many others, not all of which use the appellation ‘orient’.

### *The third charge*

The final paragraph of the third *Charge* reads:

#### III. Of LODGES

...

The Persons admitted Members of a *Lodge* must be good and true Men, free-born, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report.

*Free-born* we have dealt with. That has been changed in many jurisdictions with no weeping and wailing, no gnashing of teeth or rending of garments. But *no women!* That is a different matter, an article of faith with many Masons in ‘our’ jurisdictions. The proscription is entirely up to individual grand lodges; they can exclude women if they wish—unless it becomes contrary to the law of the land—but what they cannot do is place reliance on our operative forebears for a precedent, or a Landmark. The French academic, Jean Gimpel, and the English Masonic scholar, Neville Barker Cryer, have demonstrated the contrary.

The following extracts are from an English translation of Gimpel’s work:<sup>7</sup>

The cathedral builders paid taxes and a close look at the tax register held by the municipality of Paris in the thirteenth century reveals some interesting facts. In the year 1292 the names of the 15,200 taxpayers subject to the *taille* were recorded . . .

...

There are 192 people whose business concerns stonework on the roll of the *taille*. They can be subdivided into 104 masons, 12 stonecutters, 26 plasterers, 8 mortar makers, 2 dressers, 18 quarrymen, 7 mason’s assistants, 3 pickmen, 2 pavers.

There is a vast difference in taxes paid by plasterers; they differ from 12 deniers to 4 pounds 12 sous. ‘Raoul paid 1 sou. Symon paid 2 sous. Ysabel, the plasterer, 3 sous. . . . Dame Marie, the plasterer and 2 children, 4 pounds 12 sous.’

...

Several women’s names crop up among the plasterers and even, although more rarely, among the masons, as these crafts were, relatively speaking, not too arduous. Naturally there were no women among the stonecutters and quarrymen. . .

...

Mortar makers, like plasterers, paid varying taxes. ‘Marguerite, 1 sou. . .

...

The quarrymen, makers of stone mortars and stonecutters constituted one branch of the family of stoneworkers. Plasterers, makers of mortar and masons make up the other branch. Étienne Boileau’s statutes confirm this. ‘The mortar makers and the plasterers are of the same rank and belong in every way to the same masons’ lodge’.

Neville Barker Cryer, in his book, *A Masonic Panorama*, gives us the following:<sup>8</sup>

In the records of the Corpus Christi Guild at York in 1408 it is noted that an Apprentice had to swear to obey ‘the Master, or Dame, or any other Freemason’; and, in case anyone should think that such a title meant perhaps only the Master’s living partner, it is worth noting that as late as 1683 the records of the Lodge of Mary’s Chapel in Edinburgh provide an instance of a female occupying the position of ‘Dame’ or ‘Mistress’ in a Masonic sense. She was a widow of a mason but she exercised an equal right with other operative masons and took the same ceremonies.

In 1693 we have the *York MS No 4*, belonging to the Grand Lodge of York, which relates how when an Apprentice is admitted the ‘elders taking the Booke, he or shee that is to be made mason shall lay their hands thereon, and the charge shall be given’. That this could have been the case seems all the more likely in that in 1696 two widows are named as members in the Court Book. Away in the south of England we read in 1714 of Mary Bannister, the daughter of a barber in the town of Barking, being apprenticed as a mason for seven years with a fee of five shillings paid to the Company.

Such, then, was the acceptance of women in the operative mason craft. As for speculatives, they do exist, in substantial numbers, in lodges and grand lodges of their own, and in mixed lodges. Many such are described as *liberal*, presumably in contrast to conservative us.

Some *liberal* grand lodges are also *adogmatic*, while others retain the requirements of belief in the Supreme Being and standard use of a VSL—mainstream regularity of conduct in all but the exclusion of women. Examples of the latter are three English grand lodges: the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF), the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons, (both for women only), and the recently formed Grand Lodge of Freemasonry for Men and Women. The OWF has two lodges in South Australia, both in Adelaide.

Examples of adogmatic liberal grand lodges are the Grand Lodge of Italy ALAM (mixed-gender lodges) and the Feminine Grand Lodge of France (women only, but admits male visitors).

In a category of its own is the International Order of Co-Freemasonry *Le Droit Humain* (Co-Masonry, or DH), a worldwide organisation with its headquarters in France, a multi-degree system for men and women in mixed-gender lodges, chapters and encampments, governed by a Supreme Council. In countries where it is sufficiently well represented, the lodges are grouped into a semi-autonomous federation. Basically, this Order is *adogmatic*, but in federations established in territory where the principal men-only grand lodge is dogmatic, the federation tends to be dogmatic also. Thus, in the Danish and Australian federations,<sup>9</sup> all DH lodges require a belief in the Supreme Being and standard use of the VSL. This was also true in England until recently, when the parent body insisted on a return to adogmatic practices, which resulted in a split in the English Federation.

Liberal grand lodges are by no means standard in their organisation. The following combinations occur:

1. Women-only grand lodges which admit male visitors (those which refuse admittance to male visitors probably do not qualify for the designation *liberal*);
2. Men-only grand lodges which admit women visitors;
3. Mixed-gender grand lodges, with all lodges of mixed gender;
4. Grand lodges which have some single-gender lodges and some mixed-gender, all of which admit visitors of both genders.

### **CLIPSAS, SIMPA and CATENA**

Some of the liberal and adogmatic grand lodges have formed associations of mutual interest. Two such are CLIPSAS (*Centre de Liaison et d'Information des Puissances maçonnique Signataires de l'Appel de Strasbourg*) and CATENA (Latin for *chain*, referring to the chain of brotherhood), both formed in 1961. A third, SIMPA (*Secrétariat International Maçonnique des Puissances Adogmatiques*), is a 1998 offshoot of CLIPSAS.<sup>10</sup> Membership lists of all three associations are included in **Appendix A**.

### **CLIPSAS**

At the instigation of the Grand Orient of France (GOdF) and the Grand Orient of Belgium (GOB), they and nine other men-only grand lodges met at Strasbourg because they were 'confronted with increasing intransigence and debarments of certain Obediences' and had 'decided to appeal to all Free-Masons of the world in order to unite them in a true and indissoluble Universal Chain of Union, in the respect of their sovereignty'. The outcome was a declaration of beliefs, rights, and intentions, signed by the eleven grand bodies, and subsequently by others.

The following points are extracted from the declaration, as posted on the CLIPSAS website in English, French and Spanish:<sup>11</sup>

- The signatories interpret Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723 (presumably the First Charge) as authority not to inquire into a candidate's religious belief or lack thereof, and to include atheists in their membership.
- The 'deplorable disbarments' (presumably by mainstream grand lodges) are considered a breach of the *Constitutions*.
- They consider that each lodge, as well as each grand lodge, should be free to decide whether or not a sacred book of a 'revealed religion' is considered to be one of the three great lights.
- Having invoked *their* interpretation of Anderson's First Charge, and the *Constitutions* generally, on the question of religion, nevertheless they make no reference to the 'no women' injunction in the Third Charge, and yet acknowledge that a woman may be initiated into Freemasonry.
- Any Freemason (male or female) who has 'received the Light in a just and perfect Lodge' may visit lodges of the signatories, provided the visitor's lodge or grand lodge does not prohibit such visits, and regardless of whether or not the visitor's lodge or grand lodge permits reciprocal visiting.<sup>12</sup>
- The signatories meet annually for a seminar on topics 'which concern the modern world', having studied these topics within the individual jurisdictions in the preceding year.
- CLIPSAS is not a 'Super-Obedience' and cannot give orders to the signatories.
- Each signatory has a single (voting) representative, usually its Grand Master, but the General Assemblies are open to all members of the signatory *Obediences* (grand lodges), including Apprentices. At an Assembly a seven-person Bureau (committee) is elected for three years, to manage the association between Assemblies; the Past President is an ex officio member of the Bureau.

Some of the signatories became mixed-gender grand lodges, and others joined CLIPSAS; by 1998 it numbered 44 grand lodges worldwide, with around 90,000 members between them. A majority of these

grand lodges were liberal but *not* adogmatic, in that they required their own members to believe in a 'Higher Being'. Many of these liberal grand lodges were quite small, numerically, and each had an equal vote. This did not sit well with the Grand Orients of France and Belgium, with about 40,000 members between the two, and only one vote each. They tried to introduce proportional representation and when they failed, they withdrew and formed SIMPA.

Nevertheless, CLIPSAS is alive and well, and in 2003 had 48 members. The administrative headquarters is in Luxembourg.

### **SIMPA**

Formed in 1998 at the instigation of the Grand Orients of France and Belgium, the constitution of SIMPA was ratified by 17 *Obediences*, some of which remained members of CLIPSAS.

SIMPA provides a central secretariat for its members, located in Belgium, and restricts membership to adogmatic grand lodges which subscribe to the 'principles' of absolute liberty of conscience, reciprocal tolerance, liberty, equality and fraternity. Between 1998 and March 2000 SIMPA gained three new members; the website has not been updated since.<sup>13</sup> Of the 20 members of SIMPA, nine are also listed as members of CLIPSAS.

### **CATENA**

The International Masonic Union CATENA was founded in 1961 by three liberal Grand Lodges from Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, as an international association of grand lodges and *independent lodges*, 'to provide personal contacts and joint activities' for 'symbolic' or 'blue' Masonry, separate from the 'International Union for High Grade Masonry CATENA'. In 2000 there were ten members, but in 2002 only seven were listed, including only two of the three founders. The headquarters is in Germany, but the official language of the Association is English, although there is only one English-speaking member. It is likely that membership is small because it is not open to *adogmatic* grand lodges, proclaiming clearly on its website:<sup>14</sup> *The foundation of Universal Freemasonry is the acknowledgement of a Supreme Reality in which we live and move and have our being.*

This has not prevented the two surviving founder members, German and Austrian, from retaining membership of CLIPSAS, but none of the other members of CATENA has dual membership. It is noted that there is no cross-membership between CATENA and SIMPA supporters. CATENA's requirements also include:<sup>15</sup>

- The association accepts only one member grand lodge per state or country.
- Member grand lodges must abstain from political and religious affairs.
- Although membership is open to male-only, female-only, and mixed-gender grand lodges, the single-gender grand lodges must be willing accept CATENA *visitors* of either gender to its lodges.

CATENA evinces a truly liberal attitude in the statement:<sup>16</sup>

Although CATENA furthers, without bias, the admission and cooperation of women in masonic Lodges, the individual decision of every Freemason is respected as regards joining whichever Masonic Obedience he feels is best for his own development.

The constitution provides for associate and full membership, although there do not appear to be any associate members. Legislative authority is in the hands of a *Curatorium*, comprised of delegates from the full members. A member *Obedience* (grand lodge) which has three or more constituent lodges has three delegates; a member comprising fewer than three lodges has one delegate. Delegates serve for three years.

Each year a festival is held, with a study theme, in one of the member countries. Further information, from the website, is contained in **Appendix B**.

### **Mainstream attitudes**

At some time soon after the formation of the premier grand lodge in London in 1717, a decision was made to open Freemasonry to non-Christians; the terms which were adopted were those of the First Charge as formulated in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723, and subsequently by changes in the rituals prior to and shortly after the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813. The initial change did not meet with universal approval, and was resisted by those who formed the *Antients* and dubbed the premier grand lodge *Moderns*. The change was subsequently ignored by the Scandinavian grand lodges, which remain steadfastly Christian.

Mainstream grand lodges have interpreted Anderson in various ways, so that on the one hand some Australian grand lodges have issued restrictive lists of acceptable VSLs (the Grand Lodge of South Australia

and the Northern Territory, and the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, in particular), whereas on the other hand some US grand lodges are prepared to accept *Wiccan* candidates and the *Book of Shadows* as a VSL. And while some grand lodges merely require their candidates to express a belief in the Supreme Being (or even a Supreme Being), others explicitly, or impliedly in their ritual, require members to believe in an afterlife, with reward or punishment—which goes well beyond the Anderson definition.

The Grand Orient of France (GOdF) not only accepted the Anderson formula, but subsequently extended it by removing any religious requirement, and this is generally believed to have been the cause of wholesale denunciation by English-speaking grand lodges in 1877 or soon thereafter. As a result, the Grand Orient of France has become a byword for irregularity among mainstream grand lodges; indeed, many mainstream Masons are probably unaware of any other adogmatic grand lodge, assuming the GOdF to be the only one. As a matter of historical fact, some US mainstream grand lodges had already withdrawn recognition from the GOdF for other reasons, and some maintained or re-established fraternal relations for a good part of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

Anderson's pronouncement, 'no women', while not having the operative precedent claimed or implied in his *Constitutions*, nevertheless has always been supported by grand lodges desiring to retain membership of the mainstream group. The average mainstream Mason has heard of 'Co-Masonry', and understands it to be an Order which 'claims' to be Masonic, where men and women meet in the same lodge, but has no idea that there are many such organisations, and others for women only.

Although the Order of the Eastern Star (OES), which has men and women together in 'chapter', took its inspiration from a Rite of Adoption, the average Mason does not regard the OES as a Masonic order. The attitude of mainstream grand lodges towards this Order varies; in the US and Scotland it, and other 'family' orders, are encouraged. The United Grand Lodge of England has always prohibited its members from participation in the Order of the Eastern Star, with the result that chapters in England, unless they can obtain the services of Scottish Masons, use women to fill the male roles. In Australia the grand lodges initially followed England's lead, but in recent years have softened their attitude to one of toleration, and then encouragement.

England has relaxed its attitude towards the women-only Orders (the Order of Women Freemasons and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons) by acknowledging their existence as feminine Masonic orders,<sup>18</sup> but maintains its hardline attitude to all mixed-gender orders, including the OES.

The Australian Federation of the International Order of Co-Freemasonry *Le Droit Humain* (DH) has lodges in every mainland state of Australia. New South Wales has a lodge under the Grand Orient of France. South Australia has two lodges of the Order of Women Freemasons (OWF).

In South Australia, the existence of DH and OWF are acknowledged, and OES encouraged. The OWF lodges do not permit visits to tyled meetings by male Masons, whereas the DH lodge does. There has been informal contact with all of these. Some OES chapters use lodge premises for meetings, and cater for some Masonic functions; Masons, particularly relatives of OWF members, participate in informal OWF functions; OES, OWF and DH members have attended untyled meetings of mainstream lodges for lectures, presentations, etc; and there have been occasions where mainstream Masons have visited the DH tyled lodge without incurring sanctions. In May 2001 the Grand Master entertained senior Grand Officers of the OWF from England informally when they visited the Masonic Centre. The formation of a mixed-gender committee, headed by a woman, to report to and advise the grand lodge, is the latest initiative of this grand lodge.

With great courage, this grand lodge has been 'pushing the envelope' in other ways. In October 2001 it determined that if one of its members lawfully visited a lodge of another jurisdiction where another visitor was lawfully present, whose grand lodge was not in amity with the Grand Lodge of South Australia and the Northern Territory, the SA&NT member need not withdraw from the lodge, and could fraternise with the 'unrecognised' visitor (the 'when in Rome' rule). In 2004 the Grand Lodge of South Australia and the Northern Territory exchanged recognition with the MW Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Georgia, a grand lodge which lacks recognition by either the mainstream Grand Lodge of Georgia or the United Grand Lodge of England.

History is full of examples where mainstream grand lodges have not hesitated to exert peer pressure to force a grand lodge to recant, from the unsuccessful attempt with the Grand Orient of France in 1877 to the successful operation to force the Grand Lodge of Minnesota to withdraw recognition of the Grand Lodge of



France in 2002. Thus far, none has challenged the sovereign right of the Grand Lodge of South Australia and the Northern Territory to make decisions on behalf of its own brethren.

## Conclusion

Regularity is a matter of definition by each sovereign body, and mutual recognition requires agreement by the parties directly concerned. The mainstream grand lodges have approximate agreement on essential issues, and peer pressure generally maintains the 'party line' among them. They are adamant that atheists and women are barred from membership or visitation in their lodges and grand lodges, and extend this ban to atheist and non-atheist members of adogmatic grand lodges, and to male and female members of liberal grand lodges. For the most part, they prohibit all Masonic contact between their members and the members of liberal or adogmatic groups. While they have the sovereign right to do this, to determine who shall join, visit, or associate with them, they do not have clear precedent from operative practice (as claimed by Anderson) on the issue of women Masons, nor an unambiguous direction from Anderson's *Constitutions* on the question of religious belief.

However, the claim of adherence to Anderson's *Constitutions* by CLIPSAS is questionable in the case of adogmatic grand lodges, and absurd in relation to liberal grand lodges. To its credit, CATENA makes no such claim in support of participation of women in Freemasonry, relying on operative precedent and modern attitudes of equality, and does not admit adogmatic bodies to membership.

While little is known about liberal and adogmatic grand lodges by the average mainstream Mason, some mainstream Grand Lodges, although denying association with adogmatic and mixed-gender bodies, are beginning to acknowledge the right of women to separate but equal participation in Freemasonry. It may be that women-only groups are not seen as a threat to membership numbers in those men-only grand lodges, but that mixed-gender lodges might prove fatally attractive. Such a threat remains potent only so long as an 'either-or' attitude is maintained, that a mainstream member may not visit a mixed-gender group, nor have dual membership with one. It seems likely that if *those* restrictions were lifted, neither current nor potential membership of the mainstream lodges would be substantially decreased. Perhaps they would be increased, by potential candidates who are deterred from joining because of current restrictions and attitudes. [There may also be a fear that some mainstream members pay only lip-service to the 'belief' requirement of mainstream grand lodges, in order to participate in Freemasonry in some form, when alternatives to mainstream Freemasonry are limited in their vicinity. This is a more complex issue, not explored in this paper.]

There are many mainstream Masons who have no desire to associate with liberal or adogmatic lodges, neither to visit them nor to receive their members as visitors. They are entitled to continue in their isolation, but there is surely room for more than one view in Freemasonry; its strength over the centuries has been its intellectual freedom and opportunities for the meeting of minds in harmonious circumstances. The purpose of this paper is not to encourage disobedience, nor to advocate the imposition of change where it is not desired, but merely to dispel ignorance and to stimulate discussion designed to explore possibilities,<sup>19</sup> to see if 'good' men and women members of liberal and/or adogmatic grand lodges must necessarily remain at a perpetual distance.

## Endnotes

- 1 Henderson, Kent & Pope, Tony: *Freemasonry Universal*, 2 vols, Global Masonic Publications, Melbourne 1998, 2000, vol 1 p 8.
- 2 *ibid*, p 9.
- 3 Coil H W: *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, revised edn 1995, Allen E Roberts (ed), Macoy, Richmond VA 1995, pp 146 et seq, citing Anderson (1723) p 8.
- 4 Coil, *op cit*, p 332.
- 5 Jones B E, "'Free" in "Freemason" and the idea of freedom through six centuries', in Harry Carr (ed), *The Collected Prestonian Lectures 1925–1960*, p 363 @ 373.
- 6 Haffner C: 'The Antient Charges and Prince Hall's Initiation', in *Philalethes*, April 1992, p 39.
- 7 Gimpel J: *The Cathedral Builders*, trans Teresa Waugh, Cresset Library edn, Century Hutchinson, London 1988, pp 62–5.
- 8 Cryer N B: *A Masonic Panorama*, Australian Masonic Research Council, Melbourne 1995, pp 21–2.
- 9 For a detailed study of the Australian Federation, particularly in South Australia, see George Woolmer's paper, 'The Masonic Orders in South Australia' in *Masonic Research in South Australia*, vol 1, South Australian Lodge of Research, Port Elliot 1995, pp 60–105.
- 10 Predecessors of CLIPSAS are outlined in an abstract of a paper by John P. Slifko, University of California, Los Angeles, 'Women's Involvement with International Freemasonry in the Twentieth Century', on the website <<http://www.shef.ac.uk/~crf/news/besantconf/slifko.htm>>.



- 11 <<http://www.clipsas.com/francais/clipsasenglish.htm>>.
- 12 A sort of unilateral recognition—similar to that accorded to lodges of Prince Hall Affiliation by Australian and New Zealand grand lodges a few years ago.
- 13 <[http://www.g-o-s.ch/simpa/index\\_fr.htm](http://www.g-o-s.ch/simpa/index_fr.htm)>.
- 14 <<http://www.catena.org>>, last updated in 2002.
- 15 Henderson, Kent & Pope, Tony: *Freemasonry Universal*, 2 vols, Global Masonic Publications, Melbourne 1998, 2000, vol 2 p 6.
- 16 website <<http://www.catena.org>>.
- 17 Coil H W: *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, revised edn 1995, Allen E Roberts (ed), Macoy, Richmond VA 1995, pp 257–70, particularly @ 269, 'Recognition of French Freemasonry'.
- 18 'Membership is open to men of all faiths who are law-abiding, of good character and who acknowledge a belief in God. Freemasonry is a multi-racial and multi-cultural organisation. It has attracted men of goodwill from all sectors of the community into membership. There are similar Masonic organisations for women', <<http://www.grandlodge-england.org/masonry/A2L-who-can-join.htm>>.
- 19 As do the Kellerman Lectures presented by Max Webberley, 'Let's swap secrets, lift landmarks and exchange egos' (*ANZMRC Proceedings 2000*) and David Slater, 'Mysticism, Masculinity and Masonry' (*ANZMRC Proceedings 2004*).

## Appendix A

### CLIPSAS members at 2003 (48)

#### Europe & Asia (21):

- Großorient von Österreich (Grand Orient d'Autriche)  
 +Großloge Humanitas Austria (Grande Loge Humanitas Autriche)  
 \*Grande Loge Féminine de Belgique  
 Grand Lodge of Denmark AF&AM  
 \*Grande Loge Française de Memphis-Misraïm (Association Memphis-Misraïm France)  
 \*Grande Loge Féminine de Memphis-Misraïm (France)  
 Grande Loge Mixte de Memphis-Misraïm (France)  
 +Universaler Freimaurerorden "Humanitas" (Germany)  
 \*Sérénissime Grand Orient de Grèce  
 Grand Orient Mixte de Grèce  
 Ordre Maçonnique International Delphi (Greece)  
 \*Gran Loggia d'Italia degli ALAM  
 Gran Loggia Massonica Femminile d'Italia (Grande Loge Féminine d'Italie)  
 \*Grand Orient de Luxembourg  
 Nederlandse Grootloge der Gemengde Vrijmetselarij  
 Grande Oriente Lusitano (Portugal)  
 \*Gran Logia Simbólica Española (Barcelona)  
 Grande Loge Symbolique Helvétique (Switzerland)  
 \*Özgür Masoniar Büyük Locasi (Grande Loge Libérale de Turquie)  
 Grande Loge Centrale du Liban (Lebanon)  
 Grande Loge des Cèdres (Lebanon)

#### Americas (19):

- Grande Loge Nationale du Canada (Québec)  
 Omega Grand Lodge of the State of New York  
 Serenísima Gran Logia de la Lengua Española para los Estados Unidos de Norte America (New York)  
 Grande Loge Haïtienne de St Jean des Orient d'Outre Mer (New York)  
 \*George Washington Union (USA)  
 Gran Logia Nacional de Puerto Rico  
 Grande Loja Unida de Paraná (Brazil)  
 Grande Oriente Nacional "Gloria Do Ocidente" do Brasil  
 Grande Loge Unie de Pernambuco (Brazil)  
 Grande Loja Maçônica Mista do Brasil  
 Grande Loge de la Caraïbe (Guadeloupe)  
 Gran Oriente Latino Americano (Chile)  
 Gran Logia Mixta de Chile

Gran Logia Femenina de Chile  
Gran Logia del Norte de Colombia (Barranquilla)  
Gran Logia Central de Colombia (Bogota)  
Grande Loge d'Haïti  
Gran Oriente de México  
Gran Logia de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela

**Africa (8):**

Grand Rite Malgache (Madagascar)  
Grand Rite Malagasy Féminin (Madagascar)  
Grands Orient & Loge Unis du Cameroun  
Grand Orient du Congo (Kinshasa)  
Grand Bénin de la République du Bénin  
Grands Orient & Loge Associés du Congo (Brazaville)  
Grande Eburnie (Cote d'Ivoire)  
Grande Loge Symbolique Maçonnique d'Afrique (Togo)

**SIMPA members at 2000 (20)**

**Europe & Asia (17):**

Grand Orient de Belgique  
Grande Loge de Belgique  
\*Grande Loge Féminine de Belgique  
Grand Orient de France  
\*Grande Loge de Memphis-Misraïm (France)  
\*Grande Loge Féminine de Memphis-Misraïm (France)  
Grande Loge Mixte Universelle (France)  
Fédération française du Droit Humain (France)  
\*Sérénissime Grand Orient de Grèce  
Grand Orient de Hongrie  
\*Gran Loggia d'Italia ALAM  
\*Grand Orient de Luxembourg  
Grand Orient de Pologne (Poland)  
\*Gran Logia Simbolica Espanola  
Grand Orient de Suisse  
Grande Loge Féminine de Suisse  
\*Grande Loge Maçonnique de Turquie

**Americas (3):**

\*George Washington Union (USA)  
Grande Loja Unida de Sao Paulo (Brazil)  
Grande Oriente de Santa Catarina (Brazil)

**CATENA members at 2002 (7)**

**Europe & Asia (6):**

+Großloge Humanitas Austria  
Grand Lodge "Humanitas Bohemia" (Czech Republic)  
+Universaler Freimaurerorden "Humanitas" (Germany)  
Groupement Maconnique de Loges Mixtes et Indépendentes (France)  
Jus Humanum Suecia (Sweden)  
The Order of the Ancient Free Masonry for Men and Women (UK)

**Americas (1):**

Grande Loja Arquetetos de Aquario (Brazil)

\* = member of CLIPSAS and SIMPA  
+ = member of CLIPSAS & CATENA

## **Activities of CATENA**

Each year, a Festival takes place which is organized in turns by the member organisations in their own countries. Every Freemason belonging to a member organisation may attend the Festival (together with close family or friends).

The program of the CATENA Festival usually consists of the following

- Welcome Reception
- Annual General Meeting of the Curatorium on Thursday or Friday
- Presentation of study themes
- Presentation and discussions of the contributions to the annual study theme
- Saint John's Ceremony (1°) on Saturday
- Closing Banquet on Saturday evening

Often, an initiation ceremony or another special ceremony is organised by the host member organisation on Sunday morning.

Usually, the Curatorium assembles for an Autumn Meeting in a centrally situated city, such as Munich, in order to discuss organisational matters (finances, preview of the next CATENA Festival and other activities etc.).

### **Festivals and Annual Themes**

Each year, a study theme is chosen. This theme will be studied by the members of the respective Lodges. Each Lodge then makes a compilation and the respective Grand Lodge finally prepares a compilation of those contributions. The results of the studies are presented and discussed at the Festival.

For reference, there follows a list of Festival places and study themes since 1990:

1990: Bernried	The symbolism of the initiation rituals
1991: Riccione	Masonic Ritual as a guideline in daily life
1992: London	The art of listening and the voice of silence
1993: Vienna	How does Freemasonry differ from all other organisations?
1994: Epe (NL)	Can Freemasonry remain unchanged in the world of today?
1995: Miami	The voyage—The Initiate's Path to 'Inner-self' Transformation
1996: Hamburg	How does Masonic Teaching guide you in the profane world?
1997: Sao Paulo	A Mason—born or made?
1998: Napoli	The symbolism of the solstices
1999: Harrogate	How may we create a greater interest in Masonic knowledge for our members?
2000: Neusiedl (AT)	What does Catena mean to you and what do you expect from it?
2001: Karlsruhe	Initiation as the center of Masonic work