

## **Masonic Commitment**

by Right Worshipful Lonnie L. Godfrey

Have you ever had the opportunity to visit some of the beautiful cathedrals that the operative Masons designed and built? One of the most magnificent structures is St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England. It is a place of striking beauty and reverence.

The first St. Paul's Cathedral was built in 604 A.D. on the site of the present structure. The great fire of London in 1666 destroyed that building, but after the fire, Sir Christopher Wren, a noted architect and reportedly a Freemason, was commissioned to design a new edifice. The first service was held in the new church on December 2, 1697, but the entire structure was not completed until 1710.

St. Paul's is of particular significance to Freemasons. A visitor notes the black and white marble squares forming a checkered pavement on the ground floor of the cathedral. Also, as an American, you are impressed by the American Memorial Chapel in the apse; a memorial to the American's who died in World War II. But, the most extraordinary part of St. Paul's Cathedral is surely the magnificent dome in the center of the cross-shaped edifice. One of the largest cathedral domes in the world, it rises 365 feet above the floor and weighs 65,000 metric tons. You can climb the almost 700 steps to the top of the dome for a magnificent view of London.

When comparing St. Paul's to the more modern buildings surrounding it, you are awestruck by the commitment of those operative Masons who built that structure. Those Masons had no modern cranes or machinery. The stones which form the enormous, impressive dome were all shaped appropriately, and then carried by hand 40 stories to the top. The commitment of those stonemasons to their work is obvious to this day.

Viewing this great work of our operative Brethren, led me to reflect on our commitment as speculative Masons. Our work doesn't involve the construction of buildings but rather Lodges of self-improvement and charity for others. One of our great Freemasons, Albert Pike, said it this way: "The practical object of Masonry is the physical and moral amelioration, and the intellectual and spiritual improvement, of individuals and society." Our speculative Masonic work isn't as obvious as building a cathedral, but perhaps it is more important. The stonemasons of yesteryear, who carried the stone some 700 steps to the top of St. Paul's, were dedicated to their work. The Freemasons of today must be no less committed to their important speculative work than their ancestors were in their operative work.

If we remain committed and dedicated to our Masonic mission today, we each have the opportunity to erect our own, equally impressive, moral and spiritual temple. Just as St. Paul's stands today as evidence of the commitment of the operative Masons of yesteryear, so too, by our example, our collective efforts as

speculative Masons, will leave a moral legacy that will extend well beyond the limits of our lives, and benefit our families, our communities, our country, and the world.