



**The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and
Accepted Masons of Virginia**



Committee on Masonic Education

DEO Presentation Program Paper

**SPREADING THE CEMENT
OF BROTHERLY LOVE AND AFFECTION**

Adapted from a paper by Worshipful Robbie Robinson
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Have you ever attended a Lodge that seemed very cold and impersonal? Have you ever wondered how this could happen in a Masonic Lodge? Do you think this could ever happen in your own Lodge?

A Lodge in that condition has lost the ability to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection among the Brethren. It has allowed the Trowel to remain idle, giving it a tarnished surface, where once it was shiny and bright. Now, only spiders building their cobwebs can claim it for their own.

If we allow our Brother to feel unwelcome or detached from his Lodge, we are failing to live up to our obligations to foster and share the peace and harmony, which is so essentially necessary for a Lodge to prosper and grow.

On the other hand, a Lodge with a well-worn and regularly used Trowel will find its members always ready to extend their hand in warm friendship and fellowship to one another. In such a Lodge, the strong bond

of brotherly love and affection is found whenever and wherever the Brethren meet and greet each other. There are many opportunities to teach the Brethren the use of the Trowel, but it should begin with the Mason, who instructs the candidate in his proficiency.

The Worshipful Master plays an important role in creating a warm and welcoming environment in the Lodge that gives the Brethren a reason to keep coming back to their Lodge. It begins with a warm welcome to every Brother, who enters the Lodge. This small effort, greeting a Brother with a smile and a simple “Hello Brother Bill, how is the family?” or “Welcome Brother Jim, it’s so good to see you again,” lets each member know that he is entering the sanctuary of his Lodge. This interchange between the Brethren fuels true friendship and brotherly love within the Craft.

It is not only to your own Lodge Brethren that you should extend this friendly recognition; you should make a special effort to welcome your visitors. If necessary, walk across the room to say hello to a visiting Brother, get his name and inquire about him and his family. Don’t be surprised if he responds the same way to you with a warm handshake and a friendly smile asking about you and your family. This friendly recognition is an essential element in strengthening the Mystic Tie that exists between Freemasons.

It is up to each of us to shine up our Trowel. If we see a Brother we don’t know or recognize, we should walk up to that Brother, extend our hand in friendship and introduce ourselves to him. After all we are all Brothers of the Craft, “among whom no contention should ever exist, save that noble contention of who can best work and agree.” If we are to give

substance to the claim that we are all Brothers, we need to show through our actions that warmth and friendship, which is at the heart of the Masonic relationship. Undoubtedly, we will be greeted in the same manner with reciprocated friendship and brotherly love.

Of course, sincerity is the key. We should never allow the greeting of our Brethren to become an empty gesture. We should seek to communicate a sense of genuine friendship and fellowship. This, more than anything else, spreads the cement that allows a Lodge to strengthen the peace and harmony among its members.

When we notice that we have not seen some of our Brethren in a while, we should take the initiative to call them to see if they have been sick or if there are other reasons why they haven't been attending Lodge. If we find that a Brother is under the weather, we should report this back to the Lodge, and perhaps go and see him. The Brother will really appreciate having someone from the Lodge calling or visiting him and showing their concern. This goes a long way toward spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection.

In sum, our goal must be to constantly work at building that fraternal fire which keeps a Lodge strong, and its Brethren living by the tenets of our Institution – which are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. In this regard, it is important that we listen closely to the charge at the closing of every Master Mason's Lodge, and particularly the phrase, when around the sacred altar, we are reminded of "how we meet, how we act, and how we part." If we take that lesson to heart, and always show consideration for our Brother's

well being, we will be properly using the Trowel and, thereby, strengthening the Mystic Tie with our Brethren.