



PAPER

Fund-amentals According to Fred & Charlie



Summary: A Freemason's charity comes from a big heart, not a big wallet.

Fred and Charlie were driving home after the Provincial meeting.

'You look a bit bushed', said Fred sympathetically.

'Been a busy day', replied Charlie. 'Spent a couple of hours this morning shifting furniture for old Harry. He's moving into a retirement home and his kids didn't want the bits and pieces. Changing the subject, I thought it was a good meeting this afternoon', Charlie continued. 'Goodly number of Masons and lots of ladies in attendance. Gets more popular by the year... and the Address contained a lot of meat. Matter of interest, what did you make of that new Trust Fund, Fred?'

Fred waited for a quiet stretch of road. 'Remarkable! I suppose Province's million-pound target could create say £30,000 a year in interest for local good causes. However raising half a million in the next two or three years does seem a bit ambitious, which perhaps suggests there may already be something quite substantial in the kitty.'

Charlie raised an eyebrow. 'We already have one Provincial benevolent fund. Why on earth do we need another?'

'I'm not privy to the Province's high finance, Charlie, and can only guess. One might compare them together as Little and Large. Lodges collect money for the Provincial Benevolent Fund which is distributed in relatively small amounts to meet the urgent needs of Masons and their families - call it charity in action The Trust will act as a holding for much larger donations, legacies, bequests, that sort of thing. As its size grows, it will earn oodles of interest for good causes while the donors' capital remains untouched, still working for Masons over the next ten, twenty, fifty years, as the donors would have wished. Interest of say £30K could be used for really major projects too. It makes very good sense.'

Charlie protested: 'But, Fred, seriously... many of the chaps are really getting stretched for cash. No Lodge evening goes by without requests, demands even, for the Master's own annual charity, Lodge building repairs, the Benevolent Fund; it never ends!'

'You give what you can afford', said Fred enigmatically 'Without detriment to yourself or family.'

'But fund raising is now something of a curse', Charlie persisted. 'Alms in the Temple, three colours of raffle tickets at the Festive Board, the copper bowl, a Dutch auction, the 'heads or tails' game. We never have a peaceful meal... I might soon have to carry indigestion tablets. Another thing, that bill for hall repairs (the new heating boiler and the leaking roof) could only be met by our own interest-free loans.' Charlie's blood was up. *'If I'd wanted to spend all my evenings fund-raising, I could have joined Rotary or the Lions and saved myself the cost of all that regalia.'*

After a pause Fred replied gently: *'You know you don't mean that. Look, even if the young chaps are cash-lite, always remember a Freemason's charity comes from a big heart, not a big wallet. You can give time, not money. There are lots of ways of ways to help the Lodge and support charity, by using our own talents, skills and resources.'*

'Exactly so, Fred. You told me in Lol that Charity was in a Mason's DNA.'

Fred nodded.

'You also told me that Charity comes from 'ascaris', the Latin for 'agape' or brotherly love'

Fred nodded again.

'Well you don't love you brother by ignoring him in a crisis, and then slipping him a tenner afterwards to salve your own conscience. Brotherly love surely is about giving your brother all the emotional or physical support he needs at the time he needs it (as with old Harry) just as you would hope he would do for you; it's not about money.'

Fred agreed, but made the point that not every Mason is free or willing to give up an afternoons to pick up litter along the hedgerows, or paint a village hall. Others may be too old, frail or infirm to help, so it becomes awfully tempting when you're told 'it's all for charity' to open up the wallet instead and buy yourself a clear conscience with a few more raffle tickets. The fact that few Masons have a clear picture of who they are actually helping suggests that fund raising is the real driver and not brotherly love.

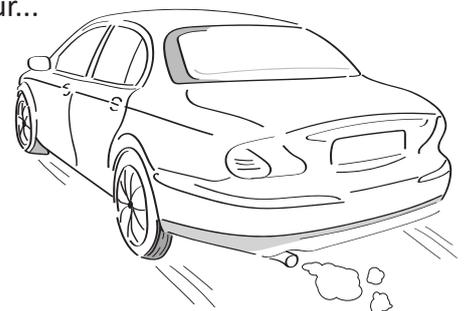
'That seems a bit hard, Fred.'

'Fund raising for a good cause, MacMillan, Barnados, Help for Heroes, Save the Children, is all very, very commendable, Charlie. Working together raising the money can be great fun too. Lots of organisations, Lions, Rotary, Soroptimists, Buffalo, etc., are very professional and successful at it. We can do that too. But never let that distract us from the quality that makes Freemasonry supreme and different from all the others, our core principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; the physical and emotional support of our fellow human beings.'

'It's worth a thought', reflected Fred.

'It's worth a thought', reflected Charlie.

They drove home in a companionable and very constructive good humour...



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Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
 - Followed by 'any questions'
 - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
 - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: *'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'*. Rudyard Kipling

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

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Fred and Charlie character drawings courtesy of Eddie Wildman.

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