

The Winds of Change  
by Paul E. Heilman

In the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, a ship is tossed about by a sudden storm. Waves pound the ship and rock it back and forth, back and forth, to the brink of capsizing. The crewmen are afraid, and as the storm worsens, they panic. Will they control the ship or surrender to a watery grave?

What of their families? Their wives? Their children? The men reach deep within for strength and the will to persevere. They scramble to take the ship back from the sea. When the storm passes and the waters calm, the relieved sailors press on, intent on their quest of a new world.

Driven by a deep passion to show the naysayers their determination, commitment and courage, the crew would risk their lives time and time again. For when Christopher Columbus and his followers sailed from Spain centuries ago, they were bent on success. There would be no failure for these explorers and adventurers. Theirs was testimony of human will and commitment for the ages.

Like other pioneers, Columbus was not content with the status quo. For him, saying “it can’t be done,” was as much as a challenge to do and accomplish that very thing. We have benefited time and time again from those who said, “it can be done.” Engineers who sink oil drilling rigs deep into the sea. Scientists who find a vaccine for a dreaded disease. Lithuanians, Estonians, and Russians who believe they have a right to a democratic government.

You and I can learn much from such pioneers. As a new era dawns in our Masonic fraternity, as we approach a new century, who will set the pace for our fraternity, for our nation, for our world? Who will voyage through uncharted waters and brave the elements to advance our people? Will it be you? Will it be you? Are you willing to risk it all as Christopher Columbus, in pursuit of the dream of a better community, fraternity and even a better world?

Our journey through life is much like the voyage that Columbus made so long ago. Just as he constantly had to make decisions and changes in navigational course to reach the Americas, we must do the same as we cross the tempestuous sea of challenges our fraternity faces. Are we willing to make changes in our lives? . . . in our lodge? . . . in our fraternity? What should we change? If we figure out what to change, how do we make those changes?

The first objection to any new program or even thought is our highly visible and often expressed RC Factor. RC referring to “resistance to change”. If one has an idea and presents it to the members the first action is to find reasons why it won’t work rather than why it will.

Freemasonry tends to hide, bound in tradition, with the philosophy, “We’ve always done it that way and please, don’t rock the boat.” As one Past Grand Master once put it, “Don’t try anything new. For if it is successful the ones following get the credit and if it is not successful you get the blame”.

There are, however, lodges within our fraternity who have found or should we say “rediscovered” the real secret of Freemasonry and are building a home for their members and their lodge in their community. Doing so not by expecting that it was the responsibility of the Grand Lodge to provide them with the light for their path, but by remaining open to new ideas. Accepting that change is not only possible, but also probable.

This was possible only because the Masters of the lodge gave each member the autonomy to explore Masonry by his own path. Something not possible in the greater body of Freemasonry. Or could it be?

One ship sails east and another west as the same south breezes blow.  
‘Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale, that determines where we go.

Brethren, will we control our ship or surrender it to the disbelievers? Let us get about the business of fixing the problem, not the blame. May our sails be full, our ship steady, and may the good Lord be our Captain as we endeavor to reach our destination.