

## **Why I Joined** by Randy Ogburn

For most of my life, I knew that my Dad and Grandfather were Masons. Somehow, it was a minor detail to me; in other words, it wasn't in the forefront of my knowledge.

After I married my wife, Joy, things started falling into place for me. I started to think more like an adult. I started asking Dad some about the Masons -- what they were about, what went on at the meetings, etc. Dad wasn't sure what he could tell me or what he couldn't, so he told me very little. This concerned me, because Dad and I had always been very close. Now he had a "secret". I began looking for answers to that secret.

My answer at that time came harshly. I work for the Department of Transportation, and I was working on a survey crew at the time. We passed by a Masonic Lodge. I recognized the square and compasses, but what I saw next rattled me to the core. Beside the S&C was the emblem of the Eastern Star there -- to me it was an inverted pentagram! The only ways that I had seen an inverted pentagram used at that point in my life was on a few rock and roll albums, or anything that was Satanic related.....wait a minute.....Satanic related!?

The guys on the survey party and I talked about this during lunch. From the conversation, one of the guys happened to be a Mason (which I now know as a Prince Hall Mason). Another guy was a Mason from Georgia; he showed the other guy his dues card. The third was not a Mason, nor was he a church going member. As we talked about the subject, the Masons were very reserved and calm about the topic. The third was very confrontational about it. He told all that he'd read about conspiracies, etc.; he went on to say that there was no such thing as a 33° Mason. Young and naive, I believed what he said over the two Masons.

The next time I saw Dad, I had to ask. I didn't think Dad knew he was in such an organization (I knew if he thought for a second it was Satanic, he'd be out). He answered me quietly, as usual. Mom was the vocal one, telling me that it was a great organization, that she was so proud of Dad and her Dad. I remember thinking, "Mom, you've never been to a meeting! You have no clue of what goes on behind closed doors. He won't even talk to you about it. Something's wrong!"

When I left that day, I was really down and frustrated. I lived with this for a while. I prayed for Dad and myself. One day, I began browsing the Internet, looking for information about the Masons. My first findings made me sick to my stomach. They talked about, you guessed it, conspiracy, Baphomet -- all the things I worried about. I kept on looking, however. Eventually, I started finding some websites that were positive. As time passed, I found that the small handful of positive websites outweighed all the negative sites in everything they said.

It still bothers me some about Eastern Star. Why they had to invert the pentagram I'll never know....

Needless to say, I went to Dad and told him I wanted to become a Mason; I'd researched it and was ready. Of course, there was "drama from Mama"-- she was really proud that I'd reached that decision.

Dad put me in touch with Brother Jeff White, a member of our church. Jeff got me a petition, and saw to it that everything was taken care of. I had to wait from November until February to begin initiation! It about killed me. In the meantime, the guys at the lodge let me stand with them at a Masonic funeral. I couldn't wear an apron, or participate in the funeral, but I got to stand there. That meant more to me than anything.

Finally, my day came. I went through my degrees and was raised by my Dad. I found out that Dad was not really active in the lodge until I came in. He had COPD (respiratory problems) when I joined, but he was able to make it. We attended lodge together when his breathing would allow him. Now he cannot go with me; the doctors think he may have a degenerative muscle disease. He suffers from double vision and cannot walk without assistance. I'll always be glad that I joined when I did. It was a time when my Dad's "window of health" was such that he could be there.

Thanks to Mom, Dad, Jeff and all the countless others who stuck by me and were patient during my time of Masonic rebellion. I'm a better man now, and trying to improve every day.