

District of Columbia Supplement

Sir Knight Robb Mitchell

Right Eminent Grand Commander

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It has been over a year since we have met as Commanderies or Grand Commandery. The Chinese COVID-19 pandemic has kicked our butts, totally disrupted our lives and direction, and destroyed "normalcy" as we know it. Put aside "finger pointing", for a minute... there will be time enough for that. I was listening to the news recently and was distressed to learn that this is only phase 1, and that a new variant may be imminent... Holy MACKEREL!! Wait ... I did a small amount of research, and it appears that in about 4500 years of recorded history, there has NEVER be a cure for ANY virus, anywhere. WHOA!!!

People die, an inescapable fact. Pointing a finger at the perpetrators does not solve anything. What is needed are equal amounts of Science, Rationality, Hope, Work and most especially FAITH... Faith in science, in Mother Nature and especially Faith

NO... GOD isn't going to solve all our problems ... otherwise he would not have given us "free will". WE got ourselves into this (without blaming who) and WE need to think our way out of it. We have been granted the tools - free will, curiosity, (some - limited) intelligence, we HAVE the tools. The REAL questions are do we have the vision and foresight? Do we have the strength and fortitude? Do we have FAITH in ourselves, in GOD, and in the future of humanity?

Every day is a challenge/test/affirmation of our beliefs. As a Mason, a Templar, we are aware that the test is not one day at a desk; filling out a multiple-guess questionnaire... it is a daily and even minute by minute struggle and test of EVERYTHING that has gone before and has yet to be. Did you think that anyone was going to give you a "solve all" answer?? GOD, however you understand the concept, is a distinctively personal vision. Masonry does not, nor ever has, required you to specifically define GOD, only that you believe. This is the founding tenant of Masonry, and an absolute requirement of Templary.

Templary defines GOD through the Christian beliefs, handed down for almost 2000 years. Also, there are so few differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, that they are almost always put together as one. THEREIN lies the fundamental fact ... we ALL come from the same stalk ... our differences are minor, minutiae and insignificant. One says the Messiah has come ... another says he is coming ... the other says we will let you know when he checks in ... but they all speak of the same ONE.

Look at history (the history which none seem to dispute). GOD promised Avram (Abraham) he would be the "father" of a great nation. While the Hebrews claim that Sarai's (Sarah) child is the only legitimate heir to Avram, Hagarh (Hagar) Sarai's handmaiden, produced (in accordance with accepted practice of the time) Abraham's 1st born, Ishmael. According to Hebrew Law of the time (and undisputed even to today) BOTH are legitimate heirs to GOD's promise, to make a great nation of Abraham's seed. The brothers whose descendants became Judaism and Islam were both born to Abraham.

Now, today, to us, Christianity is the final (until GOD tosses in a wrinkle) distillation of the Hebrew variations. The ONLY major differences between Judaism and Christianity are the following points:

The Hebrews believe that the Messiah has yet to come, but will come and redeem all who have gone before.

The Christians believe that the "Christ" has come, and will come again with redemption for all who believe.

Also, Islam says that believers who submit to Allah's teachings will live with Allah, in the sight of GOD.

These are only small differences. By stripping away dogma, language and cultural differences, they all say almost EXACTLY the same thing.

> There is only ONE GOD.

> There are certain moral rules and customs that are inviolable and absolute.

> There are certain standards of conduct between humans.

Besides tolerance of others, there isn't a lot more to it. The rest is temporal and local dogma, created to remind and reinforce the basic tenets.

To end with a smile, it is my personal belief that an infinite GOD, with all the crap He has put up with, is looking down on us and laughing His head off and shaking it in disbelief at how stupid we are not to see His simple tenants and message. When I think about it, I shake my head and chuckle, and wonder if we will EVER get it right. (Pretty sure I hear GOD's big belly laugh at me)

In the Service of Christ,

SK Douglas N. Cohen

Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander

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Templar of the District of Columbia

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