

From a talk delivered at a meeting of the Masonic Association of the 2nd Kings District at Glendale, N.Y. on Feb. 4, 1970 by R.W. Robert S. Emslie, Jr., Executive Director of the New York Masonic Youth Foundation, Inc.

### ORDER OF DEMOLAY

If you can picture in your mind a vast army composed of more than three million young men between the ages of 14 and 21, you can perhaps visualize the magnitude of the Order of DeMolay, because that is the number of young men who have knelt at altars in DeMolay chapter rooms and pledged themselves to lives of clean citizenship during the past 50 years.

In 1919, Frank S. Land was a 29 year old secretary of the social service department of the Scottish Rite bodies of Kansas City. He was a good man and an able one. But he was lonely. He wanted a son; he wanted a boy who could say "Frank Land is my father." It was in that year, 1919, that Mr. Land met Louis G. Lower; Louis was 16 years old, then -- right on the threshold of life. Mr. Land found Louis on a night of tragedy for the boy. His mother was sobbing and friends of the family were arranging the funeral of his father. Louis was just at the age when a boy needs, more than any other time in his life, the guiding hand of a man. Mr. Land reached out his hand to Louis, spoke a few words to him, and the boy accepted his invitation to visit with him at his office the next day.

Louis Lower had become Mr. Land's first son. He found that boy in a home left void by a father's passing. He could take the place of that departed man. He could do what he always wanted to do -- bring up a son. Here was clay for an artist; here was a son for a man. Far into the night, time after time, Mr. Land talked to the boy. The boy should have been in bed hours before, but Mr. Land had been 16 years without Louis. He had molding to do. That was how Frank Land made his first bid for that immortality which fathers can make for themselves upon this earth.

Louis brought eight other boys of his age to Mr. Land's office. He talked with them all. He chatted with them about their work, their parents. They learned to confide in him. They even called him, "Dad", in a quite natural and manly way. It was through these nine boys that Frank Land discovered himself. He realized for the first time in his life that his wanting a son had made him a father, not to one boy, but to any boy. He perceived with astonishment that boys loved him immediately, that he held them, fascinated them. Here was a gift. He could have stopped with Louis Lower; he could have stopped with nine boys. But Frank Land was one to hold a torch high and light the faces of the multitude. So he said, "Bring in all your pals next Wednesday night and we'll make a club of it."

On the night of April 1, 1919, 31 boys met at Frank Land's office to drink his coffee and eat his sandwiches. They went away from there late that night with something far more than that. And they knew it. They returned the following Wednesday, and by that time Mr. Land had laid his plans for the organization, the greatest conception of a youth movement since Baden Powell thought of Boy Scouts. It was born of Frank Land's goodness of character and his want of a son. It was built out of dreams of boyhood at the edge of life's enchanted forest. And it was practical, too.

After several meetings it became apparent that the new club required a name. "Dad" Land had frequently read to the boys about famous characters in history. Jacques DeMolay, the last Military Grand Master of the Order of Knights Templar, was the favorite historic hero of the youthful crusaders who started the "Mother Chapter of the World." They admired the courage he displayed by perishing at the stake rather than betray his fellow knights to enemies. For this reason his name was given the new organization. Truly a fitting title to an Order that inculcates citizenship courage in young men.

Frank Land had watched his boys closely. He saw in them the love of God, but a tendency to mock religious forms as they were. He saw in them a love of parents, but the love was shamefaced. He saw in those boys the stuff of which generous patriots are made -- not flag wavers. World War I was just over; men were talking about the soldiers' betrayal, of profiteering, of political graft, of pulling the wool over good men's eyes. These boys talked the same way. They laughed at patriotism. Like so many misguided youths of today, they pretended to be modern, sophisticated. Frank Land saw all that. He resolved to teach them fidelity to the fundamental ideals of this great nation.

To these boys, Mr. Land laid down seven precepts as the foundation for their club: Love of Parents, Reverence, Courtesy, Comradeship, Fidelity, Cleanness, and Patriotism; a powerful array of the qualifications that make for real manhood. Around these precepts the impressive DeMolay ritual was written by Frank A. Marshall, a Kansas City newspaper editor, long prominent in Masonic activities. Simple, beautiful, and forceful, the ritual makes a deep impression upon the minds of the boys being initiated.

There are two degrees in DeMolay initiation. The ceremony of the Initiatory Degree, which inculcates the seven cardinal virtues in the minds of the youthful candidates, is one of great solemnity and dignity. It is a service of consecration in which a candidate dedicates himself to unfaltering love of God, Home and Country. The dramatic DeMolay Degree teaches the lesson of fidelity. It is much like going to a theatre and witnessing a thrilling drama.

This wonderful Order emphasizes the same basic moral and ethical teachings that Freemasons receive when they are initiated. They learn to put their trust in God, and to aid and assist their fellow men by being honorable, courageous, and responsible citizens.

The purpose of DeMolay appealed to the Masonic fraternity in Kansas City, and the Scottish Rite Bodies became sponsors of the Mother Chapter. Since then, all chapters have been sponsored by Masonic bodies just as they would sponsor any wholesome and worthwhile movement. This sponsorship is one of the finest contributions to good citizenship the Masonic fraternity has ever made. The sponsoring body may be a Blue Lodge, a Scottish Rite or York Rite Body, a Shrine Temple or Club, a Masonic District Association, or some similar Masonic group. Masonic sponsorship enables DeMolay chapters to have dependable, consecrated adult leadership and the use of Masonic buildings to house DeMolay activities. However, when a boy applies for membership he sees stated, right in the petition, that the Order of DeMolay is not a junior Masonic organization and does not assure him future membership in Masonry. But let's not kid ourselves. With proper Masonic encouragement and the image of the Masonic fraternity that is projected by examples of good works by the

Chapter "Dad" and his Masonic associates, these young men soon learn to look forward to the day when they are 21 years of age and are eligible to apply for membership in Freemasonry.

A question that is frequently, and quite properly, asked is, "How many DeMolays do join Masonry?" The number and percentages vary, of course, from place to place but it is believed that the figure is over 50%. Several localities have reported as high as 80 to 90% of their DeMolays are petitioning Masonry after reaching their majority. Statistics will be more accurate as years go by, for already many Grand Lodges have taken steps to include the question, "Are you a Senior DeMolay?" on their standard Masonic petition. What has been proven is that wherever there is a strong chapter with able advisors, you will find a large percentage of Senior DeMolays going into Masonry. This is logical, for when the advisors, who are Master Masons, are men whom the boys of DeMolay age can admire and respect, they are certainly also influenced by the conditioning they receive because of meeting in Masonic Temples and participating in ritual and DeMolay functions that parallel Masonry. DeMolay and Masonry have a great deal in common and can mutually benefit one another.

An indication of the way former DeMolays are saturating our fraternity can be found in the fact that Senior DeMolays are occupying prominent leadership posts in Freemasonry in increasing numbers each succeeding year. There is scarcely a Masonic organization that hasn't had a Senior DeMolay as its presiding officer. Thousands have served as Worshipful Master of their Blue Lodges, and nearly 200 have served as Grand Master in their respective States, including our own distinguished Past Grand Master, M.W. Harry Ostrov.

In addition to the activities in chapter rooms, DeMolay offers many other interests to its members. Some of these projects, most of which are part of the program in use in all chapters, include: traffic safety, civic service, distinguished service awards, DeMolay Week, blood donations, get-out-the-vote campaigns, and athletic competitions that include football, baseball, basketball, golf, tennis, hockey, track and other specialized sports. But like any other activity, the boy or young man will only get out of DeMolay what he puts into it. If he enters wholeheartedly into the activities of the chapter, he will find that the returns are both material and spiritual. He will form lasting friendships, and among other things he will learn responsibility and self-reliance.

I would say that the outstanding benefit of membership is development as a leader and as a substantial citizen. In DeMolay, the training is entirely supplementary to that received in the home, school and church. Fundamentally, he learns to stand on his own feet in the midst of other young men and to express himself clearly. He gains confidence more surely and speedily, and we have the testimonials of hundreds of thousands of Senior DeMolays, all of whom say the same thing -- that DeMolay gave them that extra something that enabled them to climb the ladder of success much faster than would otherwise have been possible.

With their decision to build proper and better character in the leaders of tomorrow, the sponsoring body passes a resolution of sponsorship, pledging itself to supervise, guide, and assist a DeMolay chapter. Basically, the sponsoring body agrees to provide a minimum of six Master Masons to serve as advisors to the chapter; to assist in providing a

place for the chapter to meet; and to furnish not only interest in the chapter activities, but also to provide the moral responsibility of seeing that the chapter functions properly.

The immediate supervision of every DeMolay chapter lies in the hands of an Advisory Council. This Advisory Council is the key to the successful operation of any DeMolay Chapter. The chapter will be just as strong as its advisors are, for the advisors provide the experience, the continuity, and the personal example that the DeMolay boys need to effectively run a chapter. One of the members of the Advisory Council is designated the Chapter "Dad" and he is the main counselor and advisor to the chapter members. This Chapter "Dad" is a friend to whom the young men can take their problems with the expectation that they will receive the necessary help and understanding which they are seeking.

Normally, each member of the Advisory Council will be assigned specific duties to assist the chapter, such as in the area of ritual, social affairs, athletics, civic affairs, finances, or other similar categories. The Chapter Advisor is the principal member of the Advisory Council and serves as its spokesman. Eighty percent of all chapters also have a Mothers' Club, which provides many useful services.

Each chapter has a line of 23 officers, whose stations closely parallel those found in the Blue Lodge. The three Councilors and the Treasurer are elected; the remainder are appointive. In a normal functioning chapter, the officers and members of the chapter actually run and administer the chapter's functions and activities with only counsel and advice from the advisors.

Here is how you can help. You, as a Master Mason, can be of invaluable help to this wonderful youth movement in any of several ways. (1) Offer your leadership talents as an Advisor; you need not be a member of the sponsoring body. (2) See if some Masonic organization of which you are a member wants to sponsor a DeMolay chapter. (3) Urge your son, nephew, grandson, or other young 14 to 21 year old relative to join DeMolay. (4) Look around for other eligible young men in your neighborhood or among the families of your friends for possible new members, and remember that membership in DeMolay is not limited to sons of Masons, but is open to any young man of good moral character. (5) Boost and help DeMolay at every opportunity that presents itself. (6) Make a financial contribution to the Masonic Brotherhood Fund and allocate your gift to the Masonic Youth Foundation.

The Order of DeMolay has received a revival of interest during the past several years, which is a most significant and encouraging Masonic development, for boys are the raw material upon which the future of Freemasonry depends. Much of the Craft seems to have just discovered the boys of the Masonic community and there is a natural interest between the two groups.

We hope that, in due time, nothing will be nearer the hearts and minds of our brethren in this Grand Jurisdiction than their intense interest in youth and the places they are destined to fill in our society. He, whom we now call a youth, is someday going to talk for us, to sit where we are sitting and, if he pleases, to carry on the policies you admire and sponsor. He will control Masonic organizations, your City, your State, and your Nation, your churches, schools and corporations,

your books, and all the other communications media. In his hands will rest the fate of American humanity.

It is precisely for these reasons that the enemies of our country, always in presence, seek to capture the minds of our youth. They hope to control the thinking of young people and poison their minds against the traditions and the principles that have made our republic great.

The Order of DeMolay, with its emphasis on personal character building, good citizenship and leadership training, offers a tremendous opportunity to combat such evil forces. That is one of the primary reasons why Masons all over this great Empire State should be active supporters of the DeMolay movement and, in every way possible, by their thoughts, actions, and deeds give their stamp of firm approval upon the ideals, the aims, and the purposes of the Order of DeMolay.

DeMolay today has over 165,000 members in 2,500 chapters in 12 countries around the world. The organization's purpose is to offer the teenage boy of today a wholesome occupation for his spare time, the best of environment, worthwhile associates, and an interesting and complete program of all-around youth development. Any organization with such laudable purposes and goals is important to every right thinking and interested citizen of this nation.

Before he died in 1959, Frank S. Land, the man who wanted a son, became "Dad" to nearly three million active and Senior DeMolays. Brother Land could not take his own son by the hand and lead him when he was little. He could not take him by the arm when he was older and show him the way he should go. But without leaving Kansas City at all, he adopted these nearly three million young men, all over the world. He left the print of his character. They were his sons. They looked like him -- inside. Surely he sleeps a good sleep, like Jacques DeMolay, knowing that he is immortal to his sons. DeMolay kept a secret like a man. Frank Land, like a man, entrusted one to generations.