

“ Testing and Responding”.

Category M2: Masonic Short Story.

Runner Up.

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When I was a young mason at the tender age of 24, I realised that my 'Uncle Rodger' was a Mason in the next Province to where I was brought up and raised. Uncle Rodger was a man to be revered as he ran his own business, he could do anything he wanted.

This Province was Cheshire and my Province was West Lancs, although due to former boundary changes my Lodge indeed met in Cheshire, but that is of no importance.

Well after I had taken my 3rd degree; I plucked up enough courage to ask 'Uncle Rodger' now known as Brother Rodger, or more accurately Worshipful Brother Rodger as he was master of his lodge, if I could visit his Lodge.

On the appointed day, I travelled to this Cheshire Lodge through the Mersey Tunnel to be received with a very warm welcome indeed. Worshipful Brother Rodger Wright had informed the DC that I was attending and as we had never sat in open lodge together; I of course had to be.....' tested'. Now you must understand that I had only visited a few lodges in my masonic career. All of them in my own Province and with Masons that I new well so I was never tested before and knew not what to expect.

The DC took me into another room, asked me to give him the 'first' degree salute, Easy one this was, I passed. Then he said well as you were the badge of a master mason here is the next question, I wasn't expecting this. It totally thrown off guard. The next question was 'On what where you raised' . A true and valid question and one I have used to test visitors to my Lodge when they were not known to members present, when I was DC of the lodge. Remembering when I was asked the same question all those many years ago. Relishing in the responses I received.

Now my response to this question might surprise you! I know what I should have responded with now. We all do, as it well know , but I as a novice Mason could not be so quick witted to pull out all those five points.

My response , 'Brotherly Love, relief and Truth' well it wasn't the best answer I know, but it sufficed and I was then enlightened to what I should have responded with a little bit of encouragement from the very friendly DC.

The ceremony was a good one, and I remember it well. The WM did a great job, so did all the officers

But my trial was not over yet, oh no! There was the festive board and I had been asked to respond. This would be my first time and I was very nervous very nervous indeed. I had expected that I may have to respond and as usual I had the necessary knowledge that I needed to respond with some words of gratitude to the fact I was there, and also to complement all the Brethren that had taken part..

I must tell you that this was a big Lodge and we had quite a number of brethren attending, I was overwhelmed by the fact that there was 3 times the amount of masons as I normally sit with at the festive boards, estimated as near 100 or so.

When it came to the response to the visitors I was indeed out-ranked and the response was actually given by three responders, I was the last in the list. Well of course all the protocol of giving thanks had been well and truly said, what was I to say.

Thinking on my feet, I looked around the room for inspiration, looking at the décor, the lights, anything I could latch on to.

I had to be honest, so I said. “ WM, brethren all, the truth is that all the good things have been said and I have only one thing to add. That the “flowers on the table are absolutely wonderful. “ The room exploded with rapturous applause. I heard one brother say . “ that’s the best response I have ever heard, that brother will go far, now let’s have a drink. “