

Report on Selwyn Stevens

“Spiritual Deceptions”

Seminar on Freemasonry at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Seattle, Washington,
September 14-15, 2002.

The meeting began with a contemporary worship song, sung and played by Rector Dr. John Roddam. Then Roddam thanked the approximately 30 - 35 attendees for coming, commented that he was glad to see that his e-mailing list was working. He then said that there was no fee, passed around a collection plate, introduced Selwyn Stevens from New Zealand.

I found Stevens to be a pleasant man, reasonably intelligent, and a pretty fair speaker, and significantly -- unlike Ed Decker, for example -- Stevens appears to genuinely believe in what he is doing.

[EDITORS NOTE: *It is important to note here that St. Luke’s in Seattle has a colorful history in Christendom. It is one of the origins of the Pentecostal Spiritual Warfare Movement of the 1960’s. Greatly oversimplified, this movement believes in a type of millennialist apostolicism -- the idea that the Christian is under constant challenge by Satan and his minions for his very soul, and that by certain acts deemed by them to be “of the antichrist,” the Christian so challenged and his descendants become cursed by God. These curses are identified by certain characteristics or “bad fruits.” These include (1) blessings lost, (2) abilities limited, (3) position and circumstances reduced, (4) the quality of life affected, (5) future posterity also affected.*

Disregarding the obvious common sense of the nature of life as having its up’s and down’s, and in equally obvious disregard of the New Testament Scriptures guaranteeing the Christian (1) his rightful inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, (2) God’s continuing protection from all evil, and (3) the concept of salvation by unmerited grace, this group of neofundamentalists is trying to blame every evil on everyone and everything except themselves. Instead of spending their time in true ministry, i.e., feeding the hungry, watering the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison, spreading the Gospel to all nations, these self-styled Prayer Warriors spend the majority of their time and energy in what are called Intercessory Prayers -- not for themselves, of course -- but for those who have become what they perceive to be inadvertent recipients of one or more of the curses.]

Stevens made it clear from the onset that his main focus was not on Freemasons themselves, but on what he called the “spiritual defilement” of the descendants of Freemasons, and cited Old Testament Scriptures referring to curses going to the “third generation.” Yet several times during his presentation he erroneously referred to certain Masonic rites as “worship,” and while refusing to come right out and say that Masons worshipped the Devil, he made numerous statements about any worship other than worship of Christ as “worshipping the other guy.”

During the first hour, Stevens presented a reasonably accurate history of Freemasonry, including visual aids showing the various degrees and rites. One glaring error was that he failed to identify the Shrine as an entirely social and philanthropical organization, he wrongly claimed that the tongue-in-cheek fraternity “hazing” of the initiation ceremony contained some kind of solemn Moslem religious ritual.

Then he went into the usual antimasonic techniques of (1) trying to link modern Freemasonry with the Illuminati, Gnosticism, Astrology, Kabbalists, Theosophists, Deists, Mormons, what he calls "The Watchtower," the "Orange Lodge" and other "lodge-type" organizations he humorously referred to as the "Zoo Lodges" (Elks, Moose, Eagles, etc.); (2) showing how Freemasonry distanced itself from Christianity using a handful of quotes from obscure Masonic references, claiming each to be "Masonic Authorities" (there are no Masonic Authorities -- each Grand Lodge is a separate and distinct organization, and every Mason has a right to his own opinions); (3) and, of course, falsely depicting the obligations of the degrees and their penalties as being in opposition to biblical teachings.

Stevens claimed that the blindfolding of the Entered Apprentice candidate and then symbolically bringing him from darkness into light can't apply to a Christian, because since Jesus is the only light, therefore a Christian can't ever be in darkness. Once again Stevens completely missed the point of the symbolism: when mankind was brought from darkness to light at the creation of the world, it was long before Christ was revealed to the world. In Trinitarian Christianity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all of one substance and are therefore all present at the creation. The first thing God created was light, not in the sense of sunlight, moonlight, and starlight which weren't created until day four, but in the sense of wisdom, knowledge, and eternal good. If Jesus is the only light, then Jesus was the first thing created by God (a first-century Christian heresy), in complete contradiction to Romans 12:36 which clearly states that all things (including the light of wisdom, knowledge and eternal good) are created by, for, and through Jesus.

Stevens claimed that Freemasons are afraid to leave the Fraternity because of the penalties stated in the obligations, even though he did acknowledge that the harsh eighteenth-century language has been toned down in recent years in many jurisdictions. What Stevens failed to disclose was that the symbolic penalties are only for revealing the so-called "secrets of Freemasonry." There is no penalty whatsoever to a Mason who demits from a Masonic Lodge.

Stevens claimed that the Freemason's Solemn Oaths, sworn on the Holy Bible, contradict Jesus' admonition not to swear at all (See Matthew 5:33 and James 5:12), to the point where Stevens said Christians should not swear to tell the truth on a Bible in the courtroom, stating that "it is the Pagans who want to do that." Yet every Bible Dictionary in my library indicates that there are two types of oaths found in the Bible, simple, frivolous oaths and the solemn oaths sworn to God. The *Zondervan Bible Dictionary* says it best:

By the time of Christ the OT law regarding oaths (Exod 22:11) was much perverted by the scribes, and Jesus therefore condemned indiscriminate and light taking of oaths. The lawfulness of oaths is recognized by the apostles, who called on God to witness to the truth of what they said (2 Cor 11:31; Gal 1:20).

2 Corinthians 11:31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

Galatians 1:20 Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.

Revelation 10:5-7 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

Stevens' strict interpretation of the Matthew and James verses above is called "wooden literalism," a concept rejected by all but the most extreme legalistic Christian Reconstructionists. Apparently someone forgot to tell the Apostle Paul and the Seventh Angel that they would be condemned to hell for swearing to tell the truth before God. Either that, or Stevens doesn't know any more about the Bible than he knows about Freemasonry.

Stevens claimed that calling the leader of the lodge "Master" contradicted Matthew 23:9 which he claimed said "call no man master." Here, Stevens, the Rector, and the entire audience showed either their ignorance of the Bible or their unwillingness to acknowledge Stevens' blatant misrepresentations, as none of them challenged that statement. I have more than 20 Bible versions in my collection (including the Textus Receptus and Byzantine Majority Greek texts and the Latin Vulgate), and not one contains any word translated as "master" in verse 9. Without exception, *pater* is translated as "father." I am currently the Master of my lodge, and I can assure you no one thinks of me as either their spiritual or earthly "father." Stevens shows here how even he cannot stay true to his own wooden literalism, because he referred to his own sire as his "father" at least three times.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *An interesting observation: nearly all vehement antimasons including Stevens have unresolved relationship issues with their now-deceased Freemason fathers.*]

Stevens claimed that in one of the obligations, Freemasons are required to keep the secrets of other Masons, including criminal activities other than murder and treason -- like rape. He elaborated by claiming another obligation prevented Masons from raping the wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, etc., of other Masons, and asked why it did not include all women.

Here Stevens really shows his ignorance of the true nature of the Masonic fraternity. From the very beginning, the Entered Apprentice is charged "*to be exemplary in the discharge of your civil duties, by never proposing or countenancing any act which may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society; by paying due obedience to the laws under whose protection you live, and by never losing sight of the allegiance due to your country... to practice the domestic and public virtues. Let Temperance chasten, Fortitude support, and Prudence direct you, and let Justice be the guide of all your actions. Be especially careful to maintain, in their fullest splendor, those truly Masonic ornaments, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.*" In the charge given to all Masons at the close of the meetings, it is emphasized again: "*These generous principles extend further, for every human being has a claim upon your kind offices. Do good unto all.*" "Violating the chastity" is not synonymous with rape. It means the Mason cannot seduce, cohabit, fornicate, have consensual sex or in any way even give the appearance of any form of licentious behavior with any woman who might be related to a Mason.

Then Stevens went completely over the top when he claimed that the Masonic tradition of referring to calendar years in A.L., *Anno Lucis*, meant "in the year of Lucifer." It actually means "in the year of light" and refers to the symbolic biblical year of the Creation of the World (A.D. + 4000 years). Various other Masonic degrees use *Anno Inventionis*, *Anno Benefacio*, *Anno Depositionis*, *Anno Ordinis*, and *Anno Mundi* -- none of which can be even remotely connected with Lucifer, the fourth-century invention of Jerome, the Roman Catholic monk who was in charge of translating the Bible from Greek into Latin. (The only English language Bibles containing the word "Lucifer" are those translated from the Latin. Bibles translated from the original Greek and Masoretic Hebrew texts do not contain the word at all.)

At this point Stevens reiterated his thesis: curses are the result of disobeying God's word, and logically, he asserts, since Masonic ritual (according to Stevens) is in opposition to Christ's teachings, curses on Masons and their descendants are inevitable, and therefore certain prayers to intercede on behalf of the accursed are required to sever the curse from them.

Then he made some truly preposterous claims: (1) every major move of God (religious revival) began right after Freemasonry was removed from the church, (2) 50% of predominantly Roman Catholic Guatemala is now Evangelical Protestant (translate that as neofundamentalist), and (3) 30% of the membership of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand has resigned.

In one of the surprisingly few Bible references Stevens used to support his thesis, he read Romans 10:1-4, claiming Freemasons are can't be Christians because they are "seeking to establish their own righteousness." Of course nothing could be further from the truth. In my jurisdiction, the Grand Lodge of Washington, right from the beginning, the Charge to the Entered Apprentice contains these words:

As a Mason, you are to regard the volume of the Sacred Law as the Great Light in your profession; to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice; to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains. In it you will learn the important duties which you owe to God, your neighbor and yourself: To God, by never mentioning His name but with the awe and reverence which are due from the creature to his Creator; by imploring His aid in all laudable undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support...

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *In the Grand Lodge of Washington, the only official Volume of the Sacred Law is the Holy Bible (King James Version)*].

Instead of seeking their own righteousness, Masons are instructed to use the Holy Bible as the standard by which they should live. In his zeal to condemn Freemasonry, Stevens apparently missed that part. And had he continued reading in Romans 10 he would have learned that "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Stevens then presented a list of Christian denominations that he claims all reject Freemasonry, emphasizing the Roman Catholic Church. I found it interesting that he neglected to mention that nearly every revolutionary who brought to the Americas the ideals of democracy and freedom from European religious intolerance -- specifically Roman Catholic and Anglican persecution -- was a Freemason, including many of the Jesuit Priests who liberated much of Central and South America.

Stevens concluded his talk with a list of attributes that he called "the fruits of Freemasonry." I'm going to list those attributes now, but with this preface: *in Psychology 101 we learn that when someone speaks badly about you, it is a reflection of who they are, not who you are.* These are the characteristics Stevens sees in himself as reflected by his distorted perceptions of Freemasonry:

1. *Self-importance. Freemasons give themselves self-inflating titles.* This is a strange criticism to make in a church with Rectors, Bishops, and Archbishops; from a religion with titles like Your Eminence, Your Holiness, Your Excellence, Reverend, and Right Reverend; by a man from a culture that even today uses titles like Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Your Grace, Your Lordship, Your Ladyship, Your Worship, Most Honorable, Right Honorable, etc.

2. *Self-righteousness. Freemasonry is a religion that teaches salvation by works.* Freemasonry, at least in my jurisdiction, is not a religion because (1) it has no worship service, (2) offers no promise of salvation, (3) has no set of religious dogmas, and (4) it does not presume to tell the community of faith which practices are of God.

3. *Idolatry. Freemasons worship a false god known as GAOTU, the "Great Architect of the Universe."* Within the Square and Compasses emblem is found the capital letter "G." The G stands for God, the Grand (or Great) Architect of the Universe, a term first used by Martin Luther when describing the grand design of the universe. Masons, as noted above, are directed to God via the Holy Bible as the rule and guide of their faith.

4. *Unequally Yoked. Masons are forbidden to talk about Jesus in the Lodge.* To prevent discord and to keep the members focused on their philanthropic endeavors, sectarian religion and partisan politics are forbidden topics in the lodge room during the meetings. That courtesy is typically extended to refreshment times before and after the meetings. What Stevens fails to disclose is that in most jurisdictions, Masons are also forbidden to talk about Krishna, Krishna, Gautama, Buddha, Siddhartha, Alla, Allah, Mohamed, Mohammed, Muhamed, Mohomet, YHVH (I am), El, El Olam, El Roi, Shaddai, El Shaddai, Eloahor, Elohim, Yah, Yahweh, Adon, Adonay, Kurios, Jehovah, Elyon, Hupistos, and dozens of other descriptive terms for God in His many versions throughout the Bible and in the many different religions that recognize that there is one Father God. I say in most jurisdictions, because in some countries (such as Scandinavia) and in Prince Hall Masonry (fully recognized by the Grand Lodge of Washington) you have to be a Christian to be a Freemason. The ultimate irony here, of course, lies in the word "unequally." Freemasons meet "on the level," which means each Mason gives equal respect and courtesy to every other Mason, regardless of race, creed, color, religion, etc., and is therefore "equally yoked" in the philanthropic activities of the Lodge.

5. *Deliberate Deceit. In the Blue Lodge (first three degrees) Masons are taught to believe they know the meaning of the rituals, but the real meanings are hidden until later degrees.* To support this hypothesis Stevens read some obscure quote. As stated earlier, in the Grand Lodge of Washington right from the beginning we are taught right out of the Holy Bible about our duties to God, our country, our neighbor, and ourselves; and to strive for exemplary conduct, i.e., living according to the highest moral and social standards. I've been through the 32 degrees of the Scottish Rite and Shrine, and in my jurisdiction, degrees above the 3rd are simply explanatory of the first three.

6. *Secrecy. Masons are doing evil things inside the Lodge, otherwise they wouldn't have to hide them from the outside world.* What secret things are the Lodges doing behind closed doors? It can't be the ritual because there have been so many exposés written about degrees that in some jurisdictions the Masons actually learn the work from them. It can't be that they are planning a murder or an insurrection or any other activity that might get them brought up on charges of un-masonic conduct by visiting Masons. What does the *Holy Bible* say about secrecy? Stevens and his US partner, Larry Kunk of Ephesians5-11.org would have you believe that Freemasons fall into this category:

Ephesians 5:11-12 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

But we learn from Jeremiah that there are no secrets from God, and from Jesus, via the Gospel of Matthew that certain things -- specifically charitable deeds and prayers -- are actually *supposed* to be done in secret:

Jeremiah 23:24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

Matthew 6:3-4 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Three times Jesus says specifically that “*your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*”

Here is a quick peek into the Secrets of Freemasonry: of the almost \$3,000,000 a day that Masons in the US donate to charitable causes, some of it goes to scholarships for students in pursuit of religious studies and to sponsor trips to the Holy Land for pastors and ministers. Hardly “unfruitful.” A couple of years back, I remember watching a video tape where the Grand Lodge of England threw open its doors to the public and the press who got to watch it from start to finish. I guess Stevens missed that one too.

7. *Greed.* Several times his presentation Stevens alluded to some men, described as former Masons now in his organization, who had joined the fraternity to make business contacts and for financial gain. In my jurisdiction, the Grand Lodge of Washington, before a man can be accepted as an Entered Apprentice candidate, he has to answer four basic questions, the first of which is:

Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, that, unbiased by the improper solicitation of friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, you freely and voluntarily offer yourself a candidate for the mysteries of Freemasonry?

8. *False assurance of salvation.* There is no salvation, promised or assured, at least in my jurisdiction. It is “hoped” that the Mason will do what he has to do to die respected and eventually meet his Maker. But the means and manner of arriving there are between each individual Mason and his God. For Christian Freemasons, eternal salvation is only possible through the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9. *Freemasonry is a religion. Its buildings are temples, hymns are sung, there is a Chaplain, an altar, a Volume of Sacred Law, and prayers are offered.* Although I cannot answer for other jurisdictions, in the Grand Lodge of Washington our buildings are Masonic Centers; Masonic lyrics are sung, some to common hymn tunes that all the Lodge organists, know; there is an altar on which is placed the Holy Bible, there is a Chaplain, and prayers are offered before and after the meetings. The Congress of the United States is opened each day by a Chaplain, prayers are offered, and its buildings are often called “hallowed halls,” but that hardly makes the US Congress a religion. Presidents and Vice Presidents all swear an Oath of Office on the Bible, but that does not make the Office of the President a religion. What separates the Presidency, the Congress, and Masonic Lodges from being religions is that there are no worship services, and they fail the truest test of all: none of them qualify as tax exempt religions.

10. *False resurrection.* In the Third Degree, the candidate is taught the value of Fidelity by representing a character in a play. The character refuses to disclose secrets known only to Master stonemasons and is killed by disgruntled workmen from Tyre. His body is dumped in a trash heap, then hidden in a shallow grave in the mountains, until it is accidentally discovered 15 days later. The body is in such decay that it has to be lifted out or “raised,” then carried back to Jerusalem for a more decent burial. Where, exactly, does this “false resurrection” take place?

Stevens went on to describe Freemasons as angry, violent, spiritually blind, afraid, and cursed. (Remember, these are attributes Stevens sees in himself that are reflected by Freemasonry.) He then started winding down his talk by giving a few examples from his website of people supposedly becoming cured of debilitating illnesses by cutting off their connection with Freemasonry.

Not surprisingly, Stevens neglected to mention all the millions of people whose lives have been touched by (1) blessings gained, (2) abilities expanded, (3) position and circumstances increased, (4) the quality of life enhanced, and (5) and future posterity affected for the better, all thanks to the selfless philanthropic efforts of Freemasons they may never meet. Do these neofundamentalist zealots really think the parents of all those children helped by the Children’s Hospitals, Burn Centers, Speech and Hearing Clinics, and the myriad of charitable organizations and research centers supported by the Masonic Family really want these Prayer Warriors to cut them off from the “fruits of Freemasonry?”

Stevens concluded his presentation by making arrangements for the following evening to teach the attendees how to use the intercessory prayers at the end of his book to remove supposed curses from Freemasonry, Mormonism, “the Watchtower,” New Age religions, the occult, etc.

For two days I had psyched myself up for this encounter, praying that I might have an opportunity to set the record straight, and not lose my temper. At the end of the presentation, I identified myself as a Mason. I asked Stevens what he thought about Matthew 7:1-5:

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye."

Needless to say I didn’t even get to verse two before Stevens interrupted to inform me that those verses were directed to hypocrites, and not to him. That’s when I completely lost it. I stood up, waved my Bible at Stevens and the audience and told him that the Bible was for everyone -- including him. I said the Bible clearly says that a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Then I held up a copy of Brent Morris’ book *Masonic Philanthropies -- a Tradition of Caring* and said this is the real fruit of Freemasonry -- thousands of Masonic charities to the tune of nearly \$3,000,000 a day. I told Stevens that the Bible says we are to beware of false prophets who come in sheep’s clothing but on the inside are ravenous wolves.

I didn’t get any further than that before the Rector interceded. My wife, Beverly, bless her heart, then stood up, asked everyone to forgive my outburst, told them I was really a good Christian and that my heart was in the right place. Rector Roddam then closed the meeting with a short prayer.

After a brief cooling off period and short talk with the Rector, I apologized to Stevens for my conduct, and told him that I was sure he sincerely believed what he was doing was right, and promised to read his book if he would read mine. Stevens asked me to pray to God and ask Him if I should stay in the Lodge. The following (Sunday) morning before services in my church, I knelt before the altar of God and asked Him that question. God told me to go and read Psalm 56, and my eyes would be opened to the truth.

Psalm 56

*Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all day he oppresses me.
My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High.
Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.
In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?
All day they twist my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil.
They gather together, they hide, they mark my steps, when they lie in wait for my life.
Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger cast down the peoples, O God!
You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?
When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me.
In God (I will praise His word),
In the LORD (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me? Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God;
I will render praises to You, for You have delivered my soul from death.
Have You not kept my feet from falling, that I may walk before God In the light of the living?*

Then God brought another verse to mind:

2 Timothy 1:6 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

In the promo for my book, *David vs. Goliath?* I promise to expose antimasonic charlatans, world-conspiracy whackos, and profit-making "businesses masquerading as ministries." As I said from the beginning of this review, Selwyn Stevens is not a charlatan; and though his theology of perceived curses against the progeny of Freemasons is similar to it in many ways, it is definitely not the lunacy of the Judeo-Masonic world-conspiracy theorists. Stevens' program (and website) basically parrots the same disinformation as Kunk, Washum, Decker and others, and is obviously taken from the same poor sources. It's a pretty good ploy: first you plant the idea of Masonic curses, then (for a small contribution, of course) you demonstrate how to get rid of them. In short, Stevens is essentially a small-time traveling road show and bookstore. There's nothing new here, and he's not going to make much of an inroad at 25 books a weekend.