



# GRAND LODGE FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA MASONIC MEMORIAL TEMPLE  
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*Via electronic mail and postal mail*

March 7, 2016

Most Worshipful P. Dwight Hastings  
Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee  
Grand Lodge of Tennessee F. & A. M.  
100 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Suite 4  
Nashville, TN 37203-3726

Dear Most Worshipful:

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity which I had to meet with you and your Deputy Grand Master at the recent sessions of The Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America.

I understand that the *Tennessee Masonic Code* includes the following provision in 6.204 (27) of Chapter 2 of its Penal Code:

To engage in lewd conduct. To promote or engage in homosexual activity.  
To cohabit immorally in a situation without the benefit of marriage.

I understand that participation in homosexual activity subjects the participant to discipline in your Grand Lodge because such activity is against the moral law. It has come to my attention that two Tennessee Masons were recently suspended from Masonry by your Grand Lodge for violating this provision of the *Tennessee Masonic Code*. As you know, I have made a statement about this subject to the Masters and Wardens of our lodges in California.

I have also considered whether such discipline is in violation of the General Regulations of Masonry or other standards of recognition. The General Regulations of Masonry include Anderson's Constitutions of 1723. Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 oblige a Mason to obey the moral law. The moral law prescribes the standards to which the actions of people should conform in their dealings with the Supreme Being, each other and themselves. However, the moral law includes only those sectarian rules and principles on which all men agree. Consistent with this point, Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 oblige a Mason to that religion

in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves. Thus, no discussion is allowed in a regular lodge of Masons on any sectarian rule on which Masons have differing yet genuinely held beliefs, nor may a regular lodge or Grand Lodge take a position on any such rule. The Standards of Recognition of the Commission on Information for Recognition of The Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America address this point also. Among other requirements, these standards condition recognition on a Grand Lodge's prohibition of the discussion of religion. By this prohibition, we live up to the centuries-old aim of our fraternity - to unite men of every country, sect, and opinion and cause true friendship among those who otherwise would have remained at a distance.

I acknowledge that some Masons genuinely believe that homosexual activity violates the moral law and the teachings of their religion, but other Masons genuinely believe otherwise. In my view, the question of whether homosexual activity violates the moral law is a sectarian issue on which all men do not agree. Accordingly, a regular Grand Lodge should not take a position on such an issue. To the extent that 6.204 (27) of Chapter 2 of your Penal Code is invoked to discipline a participant in homosexual activity because such activity is against the moral law, such discipline is a sectarian stand which is inconsistent with and does not subscribe to the General Regulations of Masonry. It undermines the great purpose and precepts of Freemasonry and unnecessarily causes disharmony in the fraternity.

Under Section 409.010 of the *California Masonic Code*, the Grand Master may suspend recognition of any Grand Lodge for its violation of any of the requirements of this section for recognition until the next Annual Communication of our Grand Lodge.

I have no choice but to exercise my authority as Grand Master of Masons in California pursuant to Section 409.010 of the *California Masonic Code*. I therefore intend to suspend recognition of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee F. & A. M. by the Grand Lodge of California until the next Annual Communication of our Grand Lodge. I will be informing all California Masons of this action and explaining to them its impact on Masonic Communication with a Mason of your Grand Lodge.

Sincerely and fraternally,

  
M. DAVID PERRY  
Grand Master