



THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMANDERS OF THE RITE

Researched and Compiled by
S.G.I.G. III Leonard W. La Rue 33° Co-Dean of Instruction
United Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite
Northern Jurisdiction, P.H.A., U.S.A., Inc

The originator and creator of the Commanders of the Rite was the late Sovereign Grand Commander John G. Lewis Jr. 33°, of the United Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, P.H.A. He envisioned a group of Grand Inspectors General coming together and putting their vast knowledge of Scottish Rite Masonry to work for the good of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and education of all 32nd Degree Masons.

Past Sovereign Grand Commander Lewis gave special instructions to the Illustrious Deputies of the Orient to organize a State body of Commanders of the Rite, as well as Concordant Chapters, wherever there was a Consistory.

An Honorary Thirty Third Degree Scottish Rite Mason has reached the pinnacle of the order. There are no other degrees above this one. The only grades above this are Active, and Emeritus Sovereign Grand Inspectors General.

The elevation to this Nobel honor however does not imply that you have reached the end of your labors and can now rest upon your laurels. On the contrary, as a Grand Inspector General (G.I.G.), the obligation to Scottish Rite Masonry increases significantly. **The G.I.G. in now considered a Teacher, Advisor, Counselor, Historian, Ritualist and Protector of the Order.** It is often said that Scottish Rite is the College of Freemasonry. If comparison is correct, then we may presume that the Grand Inspectors General are its Professors.

It is for this reason that candidates for elevation to this coveted degree must only be those Sublime Princes who have demonstrated a dedication to the Order and have acquired a keen knowledge of its innermost workings, anything less than that diminishes the purpose. The Mason who does not look beyond the forms and ceremonies of the institution fails, utterly fail to realize the import of its teachings. Its sublime truths are indeed mysteries to him. No Frater can fail to become wiser and better if he will pause on his way through the degrees and deliberately study the allegories and symbols so profusely set before him in Scottish Rite Freemasonry. No matter in what direction he may turn, the lessons of truths are set before him on every side, and it only remains for him to study their deep and hidden meaning.

The Commanders of the Rite is composed of learned Grand Inspectors General of all grades. They exist to provide guidance and wise counsel to Consistories and the Council of Deliberation in your State.

Over

The Commanders of the Rite must function to assist the Consistories in the application and implementation of the true meaning of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. Other functions are to help maintain a broad avenue of charitable programs (through suggestion and activities, if requested to do so by the Commander in Chief of your Consistory), and to produce workshops for Sublime Princes in order that they may better understand Scottish Rite Masonry. Another very important function is to offer their assistance to the Consistory in fund-raising projects and programs for the purpose of charity.

The Commanders of the Rite should provide a forum for the enlightenment and development of Illustrious Sirs, and Peers, through lectures, workshops and research assignments. The Rite should prepare its members for active roles in the development and guidance of all Scottish Rite Bodies; and promote programs and sponsor activities, which will enhance the image of Prince Hall Scottish Rite Masonry within the local communities and throughout the state.

The Commanders of the Rite must be active in their communities by volunteering to perform various civic services thereby demonstrating to the citizenry that Scottish Rite Masons are civic-minded men of honor and of good moral character. While there are certain prerogatives belonging to Grand Inspectors General, you must nonetheless, exercise them sparingly and with due consideration for your Commander in Chief. You should in spite of your *high rank remain humble and amenable* to the wishes of those elected to govern over the Consistorial bodies of the Order.

In addition to the many functions of the Commander of the Rite, there is also another major obligation! That obligation is to support your Consistory in any effort that may be needed (ritualistically or initiatory), and to encourage all the officers of the Consistory, Lodge of Perfection and Rose Croix to attend the Council of Deliberation each Year.

Within the Council of Deliberation, the Commanders of the Rite must be proficient in the reception of dignitaries, employing the proper methods of protocol prescribed by the United Supreme Council.

The Commanders of the Rite is an elite corps of, *Sovereign Grand Inspectors General and Grand Inspectors General*, who have dedicated themselves to the Order unselfishly. But remember, once you arrive, your job has just begun. Many may say I am a 33rd degree Mason, but you must attain the humility necessary to gain the deeper meaning from the adepts. The 33rd degree is not a promotion, it is an honor, it is not a decoration, it is a call to widen your spirit and a call to serve. You in turn teach your lesser informed brethren.

“Strange is our situation here on earth, each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to define a purpose”.

Albert Einstein

“Continue your labor”

LaR

5/01