Praise for *From Mason to Minister – Through the Lattice*

From Mason to Minister – Through the Lattice is a captivating journey of courage through a world of secrets, soul-searching, and ultimate success. An intriguing and inspiring read from shadows to sunlight!

William J. Federer
Best-selling author, nationally known speaker, and presenter of ***American Minute*** on radio
and Internet at AmericanMinute.com
President, Amerisearch Inc., St. Louis, Missouri

Neil is an accomplished writer and poet and his gifts show up loud and clear in this autobiographical book of his journey through Freemasonry toward the solid rock of Calvinism. Having come there myself along a very different road, it truly amazes me to learn how God leads His elect in various ways back to the great Jehovah Elohim without Whom no one can come to God. I heartily recommend this readable book.

Rev. Professor Emeritus Dr. Francis Nigel Lee
Queensland Presbyterian Theological College
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

By its very nature, Freemasonry is shrouded in mystery and cloaked in secrecy, which has led inevitably to much misunderstanding and misinformation. It is here Brother McKinlay's book comes to the rescue. Neither an apologetic nor a polemic, it is the memoir of his conversion to Christ after his personal membership in Freemasonry, how he moved ***From Mason to Minister.*** His journey, seen ***Through the Lattice*** (Song of Solomon 2), is charming, engaging, informative, historical, and, most of all, Biblical. It is unique – as is typical of Nordskog Publishing – and answers some questions about a controversial subject. It is a book to be enjoyed.

Dr. J. D. Watson
Pastor-Teacher, Grace Bible Church, Meeker, Colorado
Author of ***A Word for the Day*** and ***A Hebrew Word for the Day***

I read a lot of books. Many different kinds. Some just for entertainment. The ones I look out for most keenly, however, those that I seek like pearls without price, are books like this. Books that get me in touch with God. As a Christian (though not a Calvinist) I consider this to be treasure. Especially so given that I know the person whose experiences are related. There is a sense (it seems to me) that only literature of this kind is actually important.

Billy Scobie
aka Alexander Tait, Author of ***Whisky in the Jar*** and ***The Cup,***
and the upcoming novel ***Upon This Rock***
Alexandria, Dunbartonshire, Scotland

From MASON *To* MINISTER

Through the Lattice

Neil Cullan McKinlay

Nordskog Publishing inc.
Ventura, California
2011

From Mason to Minister
Through the Lattice
by Neil Cullan McKinlay

Copyright © 2011 by Neil Cullan McKinlay

International Standard Book Number: 978-0-9827074-7-0
Library of Congress Control Number: 2011920376

Theology Editor: Ronald W. Kirk
Manuscript Editor: Kimberley Winters Woods
Managing Editor and Book Design: Desta Garrett

Cover Painting: *Airless Spaceman*, by Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, the author's brother, who also inspired the cover design.
Cover Photo: *Ocean Sunrise*, by Ken's Photos–Ken Sjodin

Copyright notice: Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version, "NKJV" Bible. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "NWT" are taken from The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, www.watchtower.org/bible/toc.htm.

Scripture quotations marked "NIV" are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "KJV" are taken from The King James Version of the Holy Scriptures.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise – without prior written permission.

Printed in the United States of America

Published by
Nordskog Publishing Inc.
Nordskog Publishing, Inc.
2716 Sailor Avenue
Ventura, California 93001, USA
1-805-642-2070 • 1-805-276-5129
www.NordskogPublishing.com

Member
Christian Small Publishers Association

Dedication

To my father and my mother,

Stuart McKinlay and Catherine McKinlay (nee Nugent),

with grateful thanks to the Triune God.

About the Author

Neil Cullan McKinlay was ordained as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1998. He became an Australian Army Chaplain in 2008.

He is married to Dorothy, and they have three grown up daughters: Jennifer, Nina, and Fionna.

Neil is Canadian born, but was raised in Scotland. Dorothy and he migrated to Canada from Scotland in 1980 and began a family. They moved to Australia's sunny shores with their three daughters in 1990 and have resided there ever since.

Neil writes for a monthly Australian writer's magazine called ***FreeXpresSion.*** He self-published a collection of these writings in a book titled ***The Song of Creation and Other Contemplations*** (ISBN 0-9757588-7-X).

His big brother Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh is a constant encouragement to his faith and was instrumental in the writing of ***From Mason to Minister***.

Author's Preface

There are many books, tracts, and pamphlets that have been written by Christians that seek to illustrate the incompatibility of Christianity with Freemasonry. Indeed there have been books and articles written by Christians who are Freemasons attempting to demonstrate the opposite! Though I am a Christian, this book is not an attempt to sway the reader either way. I simply wish to tell the story of how I, by the grace of God, was converted to Christianity after joining, and then regularly attending, Masonic lodges in Manitoba, Canada.

Are the pillars of Masonic morality the same as those that undergird Christianity? Again, the purpose of my book is not to spell out the answer to this. Therefore, rather than attempt to answer that question here, I'll simply let you, the reader, make up your own mind. I hope you will be pleased to come on a journey with me as I recall events in my life, some of which were life-transforming. I'll engage you in a little history, adventure, geography, theology, some humour, and philosophical musings. Sure, you might not always agree with everything I say, but that doesn't mean we can't still be friends on the journey. All I ask is that you come with me. I'll try to anticipate questions and comments you might like to make, but you will have to pardon me if I do all the talking!

It's not my intention to expose Freemasonry to criticism, ridicule, or scorn. There are exposés aplenty dating back hundreds of years. There is no need for another! However, for the purpose of relating my story I will need to mention in a general way something of the lodge workings. Please forgive me if you think I've gone too far. A quote from a book, that helped me early on to understand the inner workings of Freemasonry (in Canada) should suffice to allay any fears Freemasons may have that my book is yet another in the long list of Masonic exposés. I apply the following quote to what I also have written:

> Does the writing of a book such as this violate the obligation of secrecy? No. Freemasonry is not a secret society; it is a society with secrets. The secrets which a Mason pledges himself never to write or to see written consist of certain of the ceremonies and modes of recognition. They do not include Masonic truths, which are accessible to all. They may be found in the VOSL [Volume of the Sacred Law, i.e., the Bible], but their discovery and their interpretation are left to each man. The prime object of Masonry is to assist our brethren in discovering these tenets and principles.
>
> (*Beyond the Pillars*, Grand Lodge of A.F. and A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario, 1973, 99)

I am a Christian, a Calvinist, Reformed in my theology, and an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church of Australia. My story begins in Scotland, moves to Canada, and finishes in Australia. I didn't plan it that way – I'm not that good at planning things – it's just the way it happened in the Providence of God. For the record, I cut my ties with Freemasonry in 1990 when, with my young family, I left Canada for Australia.

Contents

About the Author vi

Author's Preface vii

Introduction 1

Part One: Pre-Masonry 5

Geographical, Philosophical, and Religious Background 7
Gateway to the World 10
A Sense of Adventure 11
Solomonic Insight 12
An Expanding Life and Worldview 16
Going Round in Circles 17
Hudson's Bay Company 20
Entered Apprenticeships 23
"Fangs" of Conscience 26
Further Solomonic Insight 27
The Centre of the Universe 29
The Braes o' My Childhood 32
Colliding Universes 34

Part Two: Masonry 37

Three Questions 39
Punishing Vice and Rewarding Virtue 41
The Water of Pappert Well 43
I Don My Apron 45
The Book! 46
The "One and Many" Problem 47
National Anthems 52
Old and New Testaments, Red and Blue Lodges 54

The Masonic Temple 56
Post Tenebras Lux (After Darkness Light) 58
The Letter G 60
Circling God 61
Solomonic Insight 62
Who Is the Supreme Being? 64
The Trinity 68
A New Chapter 70
A Dog, a Bird, and a Donkey 73
Christianity and Freemasonry 75
Quatuor Coronati 79
The Architect of the Universe 80
Something to Crow About 81
Three in One 82
Lost in Space 85
Lonely Journey 87
The Stone the Builders Rejected 88
The Ineffable Name 92
God's Mercy 94
Armchair Conversion 98
Further Solomonic Insight 101
Welding Pen (Sheep Pen) 102
My Mum's Passing 103
Postcards from Australia 104

Part Three: Ministry 107
Australia 109
Pacific Roar 111
"Best Laid Schemes o' Mice and Men" 112
The Day the Universe Changed 114
Which Church? 115

By Road and By Sea 118
Being Reformed 120
Dorothy's Conversion 123
Sawing Logs 125
Called to the Ministry 126
Christ Honoured at Australia's Centre 128
Innisfail and Babinda 130
Seeing through New Eyes 133
Compassionate Nature 136
Christian Liberty 137
They Builded Better Than They Knew 140
Minister Meets Mason 142
Dad's Funeral 145
God's Covenant of Peace 147
Eden's Garden 150
Turning Fifty 153
Solomon's Temple 155
Freddy 158
Christ's Kingdom 159
Wee Jamie 163
True Peace and Harmony 165
Reflection 166
Nina and "Popeye" 169
Reconciliation 170
Fionna and the Chipmunks 174
Christ Moments 174
New Life and Worldview 179
The Chief End 182

Glossary 183

Publisher's Word by Gerald Christian Nordskog 187

Introduction

A MASON is one who builds edifices of stone. A minister is one who edifies or builds up people. Freemasonry is that which seeks to build up its members by using analogies from the building (and the destruction and rebuilding) of Solomon's Temple. Solomon's Temple was a magnificent work of art. The specifics for the construction of the Temple were given by revelation of God. Though perfectly functional, everything to do with the Temple symbolized something greater. King Solomon himself is a type; Jesus Christ is the greater. Christ is the anti-type. It is to Him that the Temple and everything in it pointed. And every animal sacrifice made at the Temple pointed to the Ultimate Sacrifice.

Solomon's father, King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, was a man of war. Solomon was a man of peace. The glory and splendour of his kingdom was not just the magnificent Temple in the great City of Jerusalem. Rather Solomon's reign was a time of peace like there had never been on earth since mankind rebelled against God in Adam in the Garden of Eden. This peace typified the peace that God had promised the Prince of Peace Himself would bring.

Before Solomon started building the Temple, God invited him to ask of Him anything he wanted:

> Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? (1 Kings 3:4–9)

The Lord God granted Solomon's petition and also promised him things he didn't request; things such as riches and honor. But even the wisdom God granted Solomon was a ***type*** of one greater than Solomon: Jesus Christ, who is Wisdom incarnate.

> And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men – than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. (1 Kings 4:29–34)

As a lost sinner, dead in my trespasses and my sins, as a leafless tree on the frozen wasteland of a severe winter, I asked, nay, I

begged God to let me know Him, to let me have a deep and intimate relationship with Him. He replied by giving me His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a gazelle
  or a young stag.
Behold, he stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
Gazing through the lattice.
My beloved spoke, and said to me:
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.
For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come,
And the voice of the turtle dove
Is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grapes
Give a good smell.
Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!
O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret places of the cliff,
Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice;
For your voice is sweet,
And your face is lovely."

– Song of Solomon 2:8–14

New Life and Worldview

It's great being able to see God's fingerprints and footprints all over His creation. How could I have been so blind for so long? And how could I have considered the theory of evolution to be even remotely true? I'm glad my childhood "brain imbalance" is gone now that God has given me new life. Before He converted me, I read the Bible only from my own point of view. Now I read it from God's point of view! The worm on the ground with his worm's-eye view is now soaring as an eagle in the heavens with an eagle's-eye view of creation!

From the vantage point of God's Word, I can now see the Trinity as revealed in time – the past, the present, and the future! I can see what happened in the beginning. I can see something of what God is doing in the world today. And I can see the glorious future He has in store for those who, because of His condescending grace, love Him.

God created the heavens and the earth at the very beginning. He has redeemed it and is progressively renewing it. And in the end, He will have completely renewed the heavens and the earth.

Creation's renewal began with the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He is the Son of God, but also the Son of Man, including being made of the dust of this creation. Thus, the dust of creation was sanctified the moment Jesus entered into Heaven upon His bodily ascension. He is coming back with the same body He had when He died on the cross and was raised again.

Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Those who heard Him say this thought He was talking about the Temple in Jerusalem, but "He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:21). If Masonry had focused as much attention on Jesus Christ as it did Solomon's Temple, surely it would have helped me and countless others avoid a lot of the pitfalls, cesspools, swamps, and minefields superintended by the evil one! I am thankful that One greater than Solomon is here. I am thankful for His resurrection and His ascension into Heaven.

When He returns, all the graves and the sea will give up their

dead, which is to say that our dead and decayed bodies will be regenerated, i.e., brought back to life in imperishable form. God made us in the beginning – He is able to remake us in the end. Those who belong to Jesus will face a future of eternal bliss because of God's grace. Those who have rejected Him will suffer eternally in the fires of Hell because of their sins. Jesus has satisfied God's justice for all those redeemed by Him.

I believe I'll see my mum and dad, my wife, and my grown children on the new earth, along with everyone who has been saved by the grace of God. All will have been raised physically from the dead. I believe that there will be fish, birds, and land animals (including monkeys and chipmunks!) on the new earth, though perhaps we will not find Diamond the dog, or Jock the jackdaw, Squawk the crow, Jamie the Sydney Silky, Popeye the goldfish, or Freddie the rainbow lorikeet. Though they all brought me joy, it is possible that these "old friends" may be gone forever. Heaven is everlasting life for man on the new earth with Jesus Christ. It is not about floating on clouds with a harp and a halo! The future is solid. It is concrete. It is real. It is not a theory or a philosophical equation. It is every bit as real as the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ.

> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There will be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:1–4)

My old professor, Dr. Francis Nigel Lee, makes some insightful and helpful comments on these verses:

> The intimation that there will be no more Sea certainly seems to indicate that there will then indeed be Land and

Air and even River-water on the New Earth. Consequently, it will not be a brand-new and essentially different Earth, but rather our same Earth – re-new-ed and per-fect-ed. The material resurrection bodies within which we shall then live on that equally material and renewed Earth will be re-new-ed (yet not be brand new). They will not be essentially different bodies from those we now possess – but the same bodies as it were "re-tread-ed." They shall, says the Westminster Confession of Faith (32:2), be "these selfsame bodies and none other." On the other hand, though the New Earth to come after the Final Judgment will be essentially the same as this present Earth – it will indeed have a rather different appearance. Negatively, the New Earth will be without our Sea – and without man's sin or any of its consequences. And positively, the New Earth will then be this present Earth – developed to perfection. For at that time "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things [shall] have passed away."…O Christian – let us then long for the advent of "that city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God!" Meantime, let us thank Him for the wonderful foretaste of that city which we enjoy here and now in the Christian Church and in our Christian work in all fields of endeavour! Let us eat and drink and do all things here and now to the glory of God, knowing that our labours for the Lord are not in vain – and that our works follow us into glory! Let us firmly trust that we will indeed yet inherit the renewed Earth – and all its fullness! Too, let us even now bring all the natural resources of the Universe as well as all the cultural honour and glory of every Nation – into God's Kingdom. Thus shall we then…be able to enjoy it all not only today – but also both tomorrow on this present Earth, and forever in the hereafter too! So on then, Christian soldiers! Onward to victory! (Dr. Francis Nigel Lee, ***John's Revelation Unveiled***, Ligstryders, 1999, 292–3; 303–4)

The Chief End

It's little wonder that we encounter God in Christ everywhere we turn, for the Apostle Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says of Him,

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:15–17)

J. M. Spier offers this fitting response, "[Man's] heart is the transcendent concentration point of all temporal functions, and from it he can direct his glance toward Him, through whom and unto whom are all things" (*An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*, Craig Press, 1954, 65).

I am thankful to God that He was and continues to be gracious toward me all the years of my life wherever I go on His great planet earth. I thank God for condescending to reveal Himself to me in His only begotten Son, and that He is patient with me. May He continue to be glorified as I enjoy Him daily now and forever. I thank Him that He was with me every inch of the way from Mason to Minister!

Behold, he stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
Gazing through the lattice.

The End

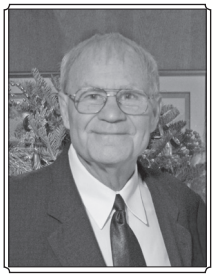

PHOTO BY BRENT NIMS

The Publisher's Word

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful; all things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify.

(1 Corinthians 10:23, NKJV)

NEIL MCKINLAY is quite an unusual fellow. First, his whole life appears as a poem, almost a Wordsworthian pastoral ode. He obviously loves God's creation and he obviously loves life. It makes sense then, that Neil McKinlay would travel the globe in search of his God and Savior.

How he found His Savior and Lord in pilgrimage is the story we now present. The poet unfolds his story with the relish and vigor of his youth. He captures our attention as he wanders like a cloud, because he strikes a responsive chord in our hearts. We would all love to be as sensitive and as sensible. Neil tells a man's story. He has worked hard, in earnest. The word ***earnest*** itself might comprehend the whole of Pastor McKinlay's story, were he not so inclined also to stop, smell the roses and simply enjoy the sky, the birds, the rural landscape – and their Creator. Moreover, he will entertain you with his travelogue and guided tour of places and things exotic for many of us. Yet he will also bear his soul in treating things that have tried it.

Lest we mislead the reader, this is also and fundamentally a story

of how this seeker of life's meaning found a down payment in the fellowship of Freemasonry and its institutional deference to God. Most opposing treatments of Masonry merely attack and condemn the institution. Ordinarily, this approach does not win those who need the most to hear the truth. Rather, here you receive a measured, grateful, and even loving treatment of the institution, which necessarily concludes that there is yet a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Those who wish to read an accurate portrayal of Freemasonry will be pleased. Those who may be primarily familiar with Scottish Rite Masonry should find explanations of the differences between it and the York Rite lodge intriguing and sensible. For us Yanks, we know that many of America's honored founding fathers were lodge members, yet as Christians we harbor nagging reservations about this association. For men, so easily prone to error and in need of godly correction, it is refreshing to find a reasonable explanation for how apparently godly men might have associated themselves with an organization now so widely associated with the occult.

To expand this thought a bit further, we would share one intriguing example in *The Writings of George Washington*. Mr. Snyder, a clergyman, wrote Washington to alert him of increasing subversion of American Masonic lodges with the doctrines of the Illuminati. Washington responded in writing on September 25, 1798 from Mount Vernon. Washington could not comment on the book to which Rev. Snyder alluded, but confirmed the "nefarious and dangerous plan and doctrines of the Illuminati."* (This influence in America arose out of some misguided sympathy with the French Revolution, and so a number of men embraced its philosophies and policies of the Enlightenment and French Revolution.) He responded that he would only correct an error in the understanding of the good minister, that Washington did not preside over any lodge nor had he visited

* The Illuminati was begun in 1776 (same year as the Declaration of Independence in America) by Johann Adam Weishaupt in Bavaria area of Europe (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XIV, 1911, 320); an anti-Christian, anti-civilization secret society of evil men who wanted to destroy existing cultural advancements and refinements by devious methods and deception (satanic influences). It eventually led to the tyranny in France (and elsewhere in Europe) of the French Revolution and its wicked tactics, as compared to the American system of Liberty under Christ.

a lodge more than once or twice in thirty years. Washington further observed that he did not believe that the American lodges would become contaminated with the evil influence of the Illuminati. In a second letter to Rev. Snyder (October 24, 1798), Washington further explains that he did not question that the doctrines of the Illuminati and Jacobinism had infected the United States. He says that he rather meant merely to say, "I did not believe that the lodges of freemasons in this country had, as societies, endeavored to propagate the diabolical tenets of the former, or pernicious principles of the latter, if they are susceptible of separation."* In other words, Washington believed that his American brethren possessed sufficient character not to succumb to the evil occult of the Illuminati, which parallels the beliefs of the ancient pagan power religions – the worship of the Baals.** Unfortunately, he over-estimated the wisdom of his American brothers, for not only has the Scottish Rite become the mainstream division of Masonry here, but America quickly lost its profound Biblical understanding of life in general, resulting in the deterioration of American Christian liberty that we know so painfully well today. Sorting out such details can give us a clearer picture of the historical reality and give us better ammunition for living for God more wisely.

Let us then enjoy the engaging story of Neil McKinlay as he seeks God *Through the Lattice*. As Paul the Apostle declares, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful; all things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify" (1 Corinthians 10:23, NKJV). Let us allow him to lead us, from his peculiar perspective, both to appreciate the good things we find in this life, and to discern and reject the things that do not edify so well.

Gerald Christian Nordskog
Publisher
Thanksgiving, November 25, 2010

---

* Jared Sparks, *The Writings of Washington* (Boston: American Stationers Company, 1837), Vol. XI, 314–315, 337.

**Rousas John Rushdoony, "The Meaning of Theocracy," www.theamericanview.com/index.php?id=668.