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## REPORT BACK ON MASONIC WORLD CONFERENCE IN BRAZIL!

In May 2026, the GLSA will be hosting what will be the biggest Masonic event ever held on the African continent! The 20<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges.

In this Newsletter we provide you with a detailed report on the recent Conference held in Brazil, as well as some ideas on what will be happening in Cape Town and how it can all apply to each of our Brethren.

### 19<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges, Foz Do Iguaçu – Paraná, Brazil

The GLSA attended the XIX (nineteenth) World Conference with the Grand Master, MW Bro Godfrey Place, heading a delegation comprising the Grand Chancellor, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, Grand Master of Ceremony, VW Bro Achille Katumbay, Wor Bros Max Matjane and Sunday Ogunronbi and Bro Thulani Ngubane.



The host Grand Lodge paid special attention to the meeting and greeting of delegates at the Iguaçu Falls airport, sometimes at 02h00, ensuring that they were transported safely to their hotel. The registration of the delegates and their partners was equally well organised and the welcome cocktail party on the first night was well attended and much enjoyed. We will however ensure that the welcoming address by the Grand Master at the XX (twentieth) World Conference in Cape Town is short and interesting!

The main theme of the conference was “*Freemasonry as a means to a purposeful life*”. It focused on how the world has rapidly changed over the period from around 1950 until 2024 and then forecast what it may look like in 25 years from now. These factors are all relevant in how the world, and all of us who live in it, experience life. From a world where in 1950, roughly 70% of the population lived in rural settings and 30% were found in cities, it is forecast that in 2050 the complete reversal will have occurred with 70% living in the cities and only 30% living in rural areas. Rapid urbanisation has played havoc with the basic core principles which used to exist, namely strong religious communities, respect, rule of law and tight-knit local communities are now seemingly non-existent. People are living far more separate experiences, being isolated in their daily lives. With work habits having undergone massive readjustment due to the Covid pandemic, society suffers from seemingly irreparable fragmentation.



The style of the conference departed from the usual style where individuals presented papers on topics aligned to the conference theme. This conference was a hands on interactive one where delegations were split up into pre-determined groups. The main advantage of this soon became apparent as the debates showed that Masonic traditions and practices differ quite significantly on the various Continents. After watching a short, pre-recorded presentation on a particular theme or sub-theme, each group was given 5 questions addressing



aspects of the sub-theme to debate and record very simple short answers to these questions. The responses were captured in real time to be collated and summarised, a process which is still being finalised as we wait for the final documents to be released. A very high-level summary was presented by the hosts at the closing of the conference.

The sub-themes all have relevance in all Grand Lodges and are applicable to our Grand Lodge and our Country.

The Sub-themes which formed the core of the discussions were:

- *Freemasonry: Enabler of trust in times of distrust.*
- *Freemasonry: An enabler for deep connections.*
- *Freemasonry: Keeping current generations engaged and attracting future generations.*



These discussion groups allowed many ideas and challenges to be identified and discussed. It opened a window to view and understand that the challenges faced around the world, although all similar in many aspects, are different due to mainly to culture and practices. An aspect which seemed to run through all groups was the importance of Masonic Education as a means of creating an environment where Brethren derive value from their participation in Freemasonry. It appears that retention rates are higher where education is a formal but fun part of Freemasonry.



The discussion groups were further made up of brethren of varying ages, which provided an opportunity for the younger Brethren (age wise) to share their views. Most interesting was the discussion on the various age groups

(Baby Boomers, Gen C, Gen Y and now Gen Z) and how the impact of social media and instant news (including fake news) influences thought patterns and behaviour. It was evident that Freemasonry must adapt to the times to be relevant, without losing sight of its ancient landmarks and traditions.

The “Gen Z” generation for example tend to live in a world where they are almost “insular” or “isolated” from the old forms of clubs, societies and other societal organisations. Their reliance on modern technology and means of communication sees them experiencing “friends” on Facebook, but not having close “physical” friends where meaningful relationships are built. They appear to be seeking a “purpose” in life, hence many younger (Gen Z) get involved with global movements which address issues like Global Warming as they believe that society must be protected and we, as the human race, need to take care of our World to protect it for future generations.

As all these generations could, in some way or another, be potential Freemasons, communication with them was another key aspect discussed. It was stressed that communication must not only be focussed with regard to internal communication in the Grand Lodges, but also with the general public. By so doing the world should be made aware of the relevance of Freemasonry and the good it does in the world.



There was an opportunity for Grand Lodges to exchange gifts and sign treaties of recognition. The issue of treaties of recognition is seemingly important in the South American area, where many South American (Brazilian and Mexican) Grand Lodges were keen to enter into treaties with our Grand Lodge. We had to explain to



them the process which we follow for such treaties to be entered into, a process not undertaken lightly and on the spur of the moment. A treaty of recognition was signed with the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Paraguay (following our Grand Lodge process where the Grand Committee had agreed to enter into Amity with them on 20 January 2024). The signing of this treaty was followed with the exchange of gifts between the Grand Lodges with the added surprise when their Grand Master, MW Bro José Miguel Fernández Zacur, presented their Grand Lodge's

to share and experience some of the famous Brazilian traditions and dances (dance competition).

**MW Bro Godfrey Place**

**Grand Master: GLSA**



highest award to the Grand Master, MW Bro Godfrey Place and to the Grand Chancellor, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA.

The conference did not only focus on work and the delegates and their partners were taken with luxury buses to the Iguazu Falls, which are spectacular and where they spent a few hours viewing the falls, relaxing in an informal setting and enjoying delicious snacks and liquid refreshments with each other.

While the delegates attended the General Meeting, their partners were entertained separately with a delightful river cruise where they enjoyed samba music, delicious snacks and liquid refreshments. The partners were also entertained separately with interesting talks on subjects specially attuned to the interests of the fairer sex.



The conference closed off with a formal gala banquet and dance, where guests were afforded the opportunity

**20<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges, Cape Town, South Africa**

1. The 20<sup>th</sup> World Conference for Regular Masonic Grand Lodges will be held in Cape Town from Sunday, 17 May 2026 to Thursday, 21 May 2026.
2. All Brethren (irrespective of rank) from all Constitutions in South Africa (and the World) will be able to attend.
3. The conference will be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), which is close to the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.
4. Information regarding hotel accommodation close to the CTICC will be sent out in due course.
5. Registration for the conference will take place at the CTICC on Sunday, 17 May 2026 from 09h00.
6. A welcome cocktail party will be held at the CTICC on Sunday evening, 17 May 2026 from 18h30. All Brethren and partners may attend.
7. The conference will be in Hall 10 of the CTICC from Monday, 18 May 2026 to Wednesday, 20 May 2026. All Brethren may attend.
8. The general meeting of the conference will be held on Wednesday, 20 May 2026 where any amendments to the Rules will be discussed and determined and where the venue for the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Conference will be decided.

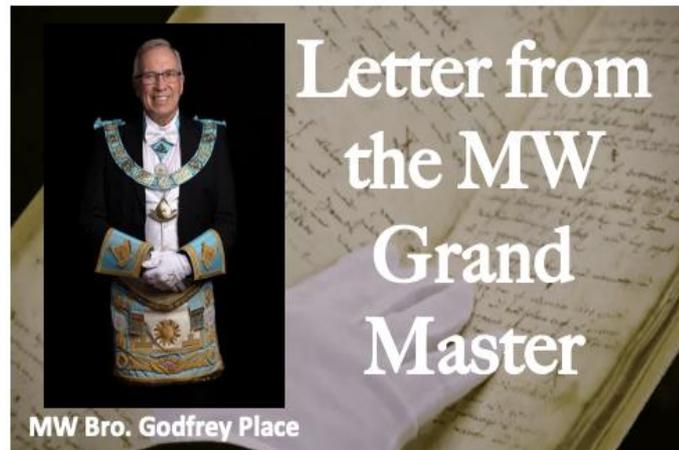


9. A farewell banquet will be held at the CTICC on Wednesday evening, 20 May 2026 which all Brethren and their partners may attend.
10. An excursion for all delegates and their partners will be arranged for Thursday, 21 May 2026. This will include lunch.
11. A separate program for the ladies and accompanying guests will be arranged over the period of the conference (Monday to Wednesday) at a charge, for those who wish to participate in some organised activities.
12. The cost to attend the above, for Brethren and their partners who are permanent South Africa residents, will be determined in due course.
13. Brethren, their partners and non-Masons will be able to rent a stall in the adjacent Hall 9 where they can exhibit / market / advertise / sell any product which may be of interest to the Brethren attending the conference. The cost of renting such a stall will be determined in due course.
14. We are further considering certain other Masonic events which could take place on the Friday and / or the Saturday and after the conference officially ends on 21 May 2026.

**MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA**

**2026 World Masonic Conference Chairman**

**The 19<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges in pictures**



**Involving Society in Freemasonry:**

**Building Bridges Beyond the Lodge (Part 2)**

As per the previous article, this month we will look at the following:

**Public / Open Houses and Community Engagement and Mentorship and Leadership Programs**

We have seen that exposure of our Craft removes perceptions about who and what we are. How can we demystify our practices without revealing the secrets of how we achieve our aims?

**Public Open Houses and Community Engagement**

Although Freemasonry has its private rituals which we practice at our regular meetings, we encourage Lodges to engage with the public by hosting “open houses” (open installations) or tours of our meeting venues and hosting public events such as “What is Freemasonry”. These occasions allow interested individuals to learn more about Freemasonry, its self-development programs and its charitable work without the pressure of becoming a member. At these events we are able to highlight the positive aspects of the Order, sharing how we as Masons work together to improve ourselves and our communities. It’s also an opportunity to dispel myths and misconceptions about Freemasonry.

In other parts of the world, Lodges participate in community festivals, fairs, and parades, providing a visible, positive presence. Many years ago in South Africa, this was a common practice, however due to political pressures which started outside the Country (mainly attributed to attacks on Freemasonry in Russia which flowed through to Germany) our Order withdrew from the public eye. By reintroducing such activities we can show the public that Freemasonry is not a secret society but an organization dedicated to serving and



engaging with society. We should be proud to be Freemasons and hopefully by the nature of our good deeds, attract similar men to want to join our Lodges.

Many years ago, Freemasons were often invited as Key Note speakers at events. Attendance at local parades such as memorial parades in honour of those men who gave their lives in fighting wars, Lodge members paraded in full regalia, even laying wreaths in memory of those Freemasons who gave the ultimate sacrifice in war. Perhaps it is time to put our hands up and at the next Armistice day parade, have a contingent of Freemasons form up and parade in full regalia, with our Lodge banners present. It will spark discussion, no doubted some may be negative, but that provides the platform to rebut such criticism and put a positive light on our Order.

### Mentorship and Leadership Programs

Freemasonry's focus is on personal development. We pay lip service to mentorship programs, where experienced members guide younger brethren inside the organization. We need to place greater emphasis on the mentorship programs within our Lodges, and participate in the programs being run (RW Bro Simon Nash hosts sessions on Zoom) as this provides a greater understanding of our Order and how it can assist us in our daily lives, which is the aim of personal development.

We should look at offering leadership programs which extend beyond just Freemasonry (our craft degrees). Extending these mentorship programs could be a way to involve society by offering valuable guidance to young professionals or students, helping them navigate challenges in their careers or personal lives. Such training can be offered at Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge or even at Grand Lodge level, by drawing on the expertise which is found within our members. This leadership training should not be limited to Masons only but we should open these opportunities to members of the public, especially those interested in community service or leadership roles.

The development of suitable training material can be fulfilling for those who want to get involved. It can be offered on "eLearning" platforms using technology which exists for the benefit of our members to meet the advancement criteria as well as develop their leadership skills to be able to skilfully lead a Lodge as its presiding Master.

Future topics will look at:

- *Promoting Unity and Tolerance,*

- *Fostering Personal Growth and Moral Leadership,*
- *Involvement in Local Governance and Civic Activities and,*
- *Engaging in Fellowship and Social Activities*

### These are our Almoners

If anything is known about a Brother in distress, please share it with your Divisional Almoner.

Southern Wor Bro Llew Lloyd-Jones	072 9653572
Northern Wor Bro Herman Roos	082 3184238
Central Wor Bro Barend Esterhuizen	072 4727236
Eastern Wor Bro Rudi Swart	072 5868135
E Cape Wor Bro Ian Hetherington	082 9545297

**Disclaimer:** Although we try to include as many photos as we can, it is often not possible to include all those supplied as the newsletter must be within 40 MB so that it can be easily transmitted to you.

### Do you have ideas or suggestions on how to improve the *Square & Compass*?

Please email us on  
[manny.defreitas111@gmail.com](mailto:manny.defreitas111@gmail.com)

