



NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

Many critics of Masonry do so on religious grounds which is ironic because Masonry only requires of its members a belief in God. After having said that there is never any further discussion of religious matters.

A woman once told my grandmother that Masons were evil. Grandmother calmly said "the Reverend ,my grandfather, is a Mason." The woman then said "well he is just trying to make them better."

It is equally ironic that one of America's best known and beloved religious figures was the late Bro. Rev. Dr, Norman Vincent Peale who was an equally well know Mason. The following is adapted from the Nov. 2006 *SHORT TALK BULLETIN* written by Robert Morris.

Norman Vincent Peale was born in 1898 in Bowersville, OH to Charles and Anna Peale. He was delivered by his father, a former physician, who had left the practice of medicine to become a Methodist minister.

His first work involved helping to support his family by delivering newspapers. He also worked in a grocery store and sold pots and pans from door to door.

After graduating from high school, Norman went on to attend Ohio Wesleyan University an affiliate of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Between his junior and senior years, he worked as a reporter for the Morning Republican in Findlay, Ohio. After graduating from Wesleyan in 1920, he took a similar position with the Journal in Detroit.

It did not take long for Peale to realize that this was not his calling and he came to realize that his true calling lay in the ministry. He was accepted into the Boston University School of Theology. While still at BU he was ordained a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1922.

After completing his studies in Boston in 1924, he accepted the pastorate of the Kings Highway Church in Brooklyn, NY where he spent the next three years.

It was also at this time Peale became a Mason. He came from a Masonic family background; his grandfather and father, who was a fifty year Mason and a Scottish Rite Mason. Brother Peale received his Third Degree in Midwood Lodge No. 310, Brooklyn, NY in 1926, where was a lifelong member. He joined the Scottish Rite and York Rite, and became the Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of New York. He later received the 33^o and the prestigious Gourgas Medal of the Northern Jurisdiction and the equally prestigious Grand Cross of The Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite

In 1932, Peale was invited to preach at the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City. The move to Marble Collegiate necessitated changing his affiliation from the Methodist to the Reformed Church.

In his new pastorate, Dr. Peale faced many challenges and adopted many changes. He saw no conflict between theological and secular activities. He included a psychiatrist on the church staff, to assist him in ministering to those seeking counseling, and whose problems he felt required more than purely religious solutions. Peale also instituted radio broadcasts of his weekly sermons.

Dr. Peale's tenure at Marble Collegiate was to last more than fifty years, from 1932 to 1984, during a period of great changes and unrest in the world; the Great Depression, hot and cold wars, social change and civil unrest. It seemed that Dr. Peale was the right man at the right time to try and influence the country's thinking into positive directions.

No matter how bad the times, his personal philosophy was always upbeat, and he tried to spread this attitude as far as possible. Peale was convinced that everyone is capable of greater things than they realize, one of his favorite maxims being "you can if you think you can." He wrote many books emphasizing this positive attitude, culminating in the 1952 publication of *THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING*, a book of such acclaim and influence that it was exceeded in popularity only by the Bible. Peale and his wife started *GUIDEPOSTS* magazine in 1945, one of the most popular inspirational magazines.

The driving force of Dr. Peale's ministry was that people could be better than they were; that they had innate values which only needed to be nurtured and developed for the betterment of their own and others' lives. He was a champion of ecumenism, firmly believing that each religion has a right to its own beliefs, and that all people are children of one almighty God

Dr. Peale's ministry ended in 1984, when he was 86 years old. However, he did not cease preaching, traveling and involvement in the Peale Center and *GUIDEPOSTS*, which continued right up to his death on Christmas Eve of 1993 at age 95. He had been a Mason for over 67 years. He will be remembered for his success in helping people better themselves through their own efforts, thus enhancing the lives of all around them.

Dr. Peale stated, "to me Freemasonry is one form of dedication to God and service to humanity."