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Greetings to the Sir Knights of Texas:

Sir Knights as you read this page my year as your Grand Commander is nearing its end. The 157th Grand Conclave will conclude on 19 April 2010. You will then have a new Grand Commander, Sir Knight W. David Melear, and I wish for him the very best during his next year of service to this Grand Commandery.

Now Sir Knights I sincerely thank each of you for electing me to the Grand Commandery Progressive Line in April of 2000. This has been such a positive experience in each and every way and I will cherish it always. My wish is that every Sir Knight could experience this great honor. I will now be added to the honored list of Past Grand Commanders.

And now, before I pass to those ranks, I want to give you something substantive as my last offering as your Grand Commander to improve your minds. The following was presented to the Grand Commandery Officers at their Mid-year Meeting/Retreat by SK Louis Hopkins, and I wanted to share his inspirational words with each one of you as well:

NEWSFLASH

Once again those Christian warriors, the Knight Templars, prepare to further withdraw their troops. These soldiers of the Cross who once held the very land, Mount Mariah, where the first temple to the Grand Artificer, King Solomon's Temple, had been built, to the last one, Herod's Temple, where Christ had prayed, then threw out the money changers, are retreating. At this rate, it will not be long before they are compelled to withdraw completely from their asylums.

While this news flash could have been from the 13th Century, it is not! There are not many asylums in Texas that were built as such. Most are lodge rooms that we adapted to our use. Perhaps the grandest of these is in Ft. Worth. The Masonic Temple on Harwood St. in Dallas also contained a great asylum. It is now gone and once again Christian Masonry, indeed, Masonry in general, is retreating. But then, who cares? We, as Masons, have become content with retreating.

As the State Membership Chairman for the Grand Commandery in Texas, I put together a report for the Grand Officers Mid-Year Meeting which showed our mediocre response to our retreat from Christian Masonry. In that report, it was obvious that many Recorders were not sending in their monthly reports as they

said they would. Why is this important? In order for a Grand Commandery Officer to truly do his job, he must know the status of his district. Without these reports he only knows the true status of his district at the end of the year and then, at most, he only has 90 days to try to be of service.

But these are not the Templars in retreat. The retreat is by all of us who do not support our Commandery, who are ashamed to tell other Masons of our love for Christ and how being in the Commandery is one way to serve Him. We use many reasons to justify this: we don't like the military part of Commandery, the opening is too long and too hard, the Grand Officers are bullies, we don't have the time, or we don't have the money to pay dues.

Each year the Grand Commandery loses hundreds of members to non-payment of dues. There is not a Mason who hasn't sworn that he will not defraud a Lodge, Chapter, Council, or Commandery to the value of anything. However, any Mason who goes suspended for non-payment is doing just that. Every Masonic body will carry a Brother for at least one year and possibly several years before they suspend him. This means that your Brothers have paid your dues for that period of time. If you feel that you must get out of a Masonic body, get current on your dues and ask for a demit. That is the honorable thing to do.

If you do not like something about your Commandery, become active. You don't have to be an Officer, but you need to come and make your voice heard. How can anything change if you do not bring your ideas forward? Do not blame your Officers for not listening when you are not talking to them. You can be the force to make good things happen!

In 1836, General Sam Houston, a Mason and Companion, retreated until many Texans thought our cause was lost. Then he stopped retreating, put his forces in action and won freedom from Mexico for Texas.

We have retreated long enough! It is time that we, all of us, join the battle to make Christian Masonry the positive force for Christ that it can and must be. While we cannot ask a man to become a Mason, we must ask our Christian Brothers to become a Knight Templar.

Where will we make a start? When will we earn the respect of those ancient Templars, our Brothers, our Companions, and ourselves? How about today? How? Check your dues card; make sure you are current. Attend a Commandery meeting, see what is happening. Make your Commandery better, help your Officers do their job, ask your Masonic Brothers to join, not just one, but all of them.

You are the only one who can turn this Retreat into a Victory!

And now, God speed to each of you.

In His Name,

Dock F. Dixon, Jr.

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