

HEARTWOOD, SAPWOOD AND ROOTS **by R. W. Brother Edward L. Draper, DDGM**

There are three parts of a tree, which are very important to its survival. At the center of the trunk is the heartwood. It is the oldest, strongest portion of the tree. In a walnut tree, for example, it shows up as much darker than the surrounding sapwood.

The sapwood, on the other hand, is the newest growth. Nutrients pass through it to the heartwood, which cannot survive without the sapwood. If the tree is properly cared for, the sapwood will eventually become part of the heartwood, adding to the strength and viability of the tree, helping to ensure its future.

The sapwood, in turn, cannot survive if its life were not fed and supported by the tree's roots, which spread out widely into the surrounding earth, bringing the best of the available nutrients to the sapwood and keeping it alive.

These three basic and necessary parts of a tree can be easily compared to three basic and necessary parts of a Masonic lodge:

The heartwood, at the center of a Masonic lodge, could be said to consist of the Past Masters, the long-time members and perhaps the senior officers. They have been there the longest, have the most experience and are the strength and backbone of a Masonic lodge.

The sapwood would be the candidates, newer members and perhaps junior officers. They help those in the center to do their jobs and make it possible for them to survive, Masonically. If properly cared for and encouraged, these Brothers will eventually become part of the heartwood, adding to the strength and viability of the lodge, helping to ensure its future.

The roots - neither of these two parts of the lodge would survive for long if not fed and supported by our roots in the community, which we must spread out widely, making the world aware of our good works and bringing the best available good men and true to the doors of our lodges, so the tree of Freemasonry may continue to thrive.

Let us recognize the importance of our veterans as well as newer members. Let us give equal attention to our candidates as to our Past Masters. Let us constantly remember that our reputation, image and service in the community are vitally important for the nourishing of our future growth and strength.

The heartwood, sapwood and roots -- just as important to the success of every lodge and they are to every tree.