

Discaleation (removal of shoes)

Article by W.Bro. Rob Lund

In the degree ceremonies, part of the candidate's preparation is to have at least one heel slipshod, i.e. bared. Some of you may not know that there are two reasons for this in the first degree. I will deal with the second reason in the next issue. In First Degree Lodges in the Ontario working, the V.S.L. is open at Ruth IV, 7. This verse provides a clue, and states:

“Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel.”

Now this does not make sense in itself and, even if you read the whole chapter, it may not be clear, so I will summarize. Ruth had been married to Mahlon, who died. There were no children and, therefore, no one to care for Ruth. It was tradition in those times for a kinsman to take responsibility for a widow and her property. This *obligation* was signified in public by the responsible person removing his shoe. The person who took responsibility in this case was Boaz, who was not a kinsman. Ruth and Boaz were the great-grandparents of David, who was the father of Solomon.

So, it is entirely appropriate for the V.S.L., on which the candidate takes his obligation, to be opened at this position.