

WILLIAM O. WARE LODGE OF RESEARCH

Book Review

From Man to Mason

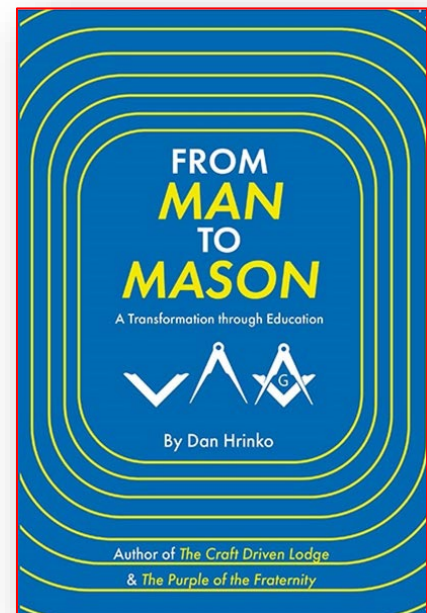
By: Dan Hrinko, Ph.D.

Reviewed by: Dan M. Kemble, Past Master and Fellow, William O. Ware
Lodge of Research

From Man to Mason is Ohio Freemason Dan Hrinko's latest contribution to the literature of Freemasonry. *From Man to Mason* continues the conversation about the necessity of building a Masonic culture that provides meaningful education to candidates for the Degrees of Freemasonry at each step of the process. It further emphasizes the importance of the understanding that a man has not received all the information about Freemasonry that he needs just because he has received the Master Mason Degree. In short, R. W. B. Hrinko urges Masons, and Masonic Lodges, to treat the idea of becoming a Mason as a process, rather than an event.

R. W. B. Hrinko begins his analysis of such a journey in the book's first chapter, "The Beginning of A Masonic Journey." The author identifies the man first asking about Masonry as an "Enquirer." R. W. B. Hrinko suggests a combination of interviews and reading materials that would serve to address the Enquirer's initial questions concerning Freemasonry. If his interest continues, and, if the course of the informal interviews reveals him to be suitable, the Enquirer may move to "Petitioner," at which point he has formally requested membership in Freemasonry.

For the petitioner, the process becomes more structured, with required orientation meetings, a more thorough investigation, and, ultimately, a ballot requiring the unanimous consent of the Lodge. The petitioner is paired with an experienced, engaged Mason, identified as a "Master Craftsman." The Master Craftsman serves as the Petitioner's mentor and guide throughout the



process of becoming a member. R. W. B. Hrinko suggests reading material for the Petitioner, along with other instruction as he awaits balloting, and, hopefully, initiation.

The chapter concludes with a section concerning the Petitioner's initiation into Freemasonry. Keeping with the theme of a process, the author demonstrates that the first Degree of Freemasonry is not the first step in becoming a Mason. It is, rather, one of the several steps necessary to leave the profane world and move into the realm of Freemasonry.

Chapter 2, "The Mason's Progress," is a step-by-step illustration of a "best practices" approach for moving men through the Degrees of Freemasonry. R. W. Brother Hrinko takes care to discuss proficiencies, pointing out that more than memorization is required for a man to truly become proficient in Masonry. The author discusses the uses of "Lodges of Instruction" to explain and teach the lessons of the Degrees, both to newer and older Brethren. The overarching theme of this chapter (if not the entire book) is the need for continuing education in Freemasonry beyond the conferral of the Degrees.

Chapter 3, "Education in the Lodge and Education By the Lodge" opens by posing the question, "What's Missing?" The author answers this question by pointing out that, although Freemasonry is "all about education," in too many Lodges the concept of ongoing Masonic Education is nonexistent. He calls for Lodges (and Masonic leadership) to provide both formal and informal settings for continuing education in Masonry.

In a discussion of Masonic leadership, R. W. Brother Hrinko refers to an essay written by Brother Richard Frederick of Arts & Sciences Lodge. Brother Frederick's essay becomes the basis for an analysis of leadership and management techniques in Masonic Lodges that provide lasting and positive outcomes. The Frederick essay identifies five general traits of positive leadership. R. W. Brother Hrinko includes a discussion of each of those traits and reveals how they are beneficial to Lodge management.

Chapter 4, "Grand Lodge Programs and Educational Opportunities" is an exploration of the responsibilities of Grand Lodges with respect to providing forums for Masonic education. The author briefly touches on programs established by the Grand Lodges of Ohio, Oregon and Iowa that facilitate ongoing Masonic education.

In the book's final chapter, "Education Outside the Lodge," the author discusses the educational opportunities available to Mason in the appendant bodies (generally available only to Master Masons). R. W. B. Hrinko is careful to note that the lessons found in the appendant bodies are (or should be) just as accessible in the Symbolic Lodge. While not necessarily a deterrent to membership in the appendant bodies, it does make clear that the search for meaning within Freemasonry needs no more than a full exploration of the three Craft Degrees.

In the portion of the chapter devoted to Independent Study, R. W. B. Hrinko graciously cites Kentucky's William O. Ware Lodge of Research and The Rubicon Masonic Society as being among the available resources for those who seek more light in Masonry.

In a very touching gesture, R. W. B. Hrinko dedicated *From Man to Mason* to the late Brother Chad Simpson, a distinguished Ohio Freemason who died prematurely in 2022. A charter member of Arts & Sciences Lodge No. 792, his essay, "From Profane to Master: New Member Education in Arts and Sciences Lodge" is included as Appendix A of *From Man to Mason*.

From Man to Mason is an honest assessment of the need for continuing education in Freemasonry and offers a path for Lodges to achieve realistic goals in offering and conducting quality education programs. Realizing that Masonic education does occur in a vacuum, the author demonstrates various methods in which quality education programs may be integrated into the life of the Lodge.

From Man to Mason is a significant addition to the library of any Lodge or individual Mason. It would be an exceptionally good resource for a Lodge book club or discussion group.

R. W. Brother Daniel D. Hrinko served as Charter Master for Arts & Sciences Lodge No. 792 in Hilliard, Ohio. He has served the Grand Lodge of Ohio as a Grand Lodge Committeeman, and as District Deputy Grand Master for Ohio's Masonic District No. 9.

R. W. Brother Hrinko is a practicing psychologist. In addition to his passion for Freemasonry, he is an accomplished woodworker.

From Man to Mason was published in 2024 by Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply and may be ordered directly at www.macoy.com.