

VOICES OF FREEMASONRY

Welcome to the second edition of **Voices of Freemasonry**.

This edition of **Voices of Freemasonry**, while ostensibly designed to measure attitudes about the use of technology in Freemasonry, reveals certain other results as well, some of which are quite troubling.

The ten questions that comprise this questionnaire were sent to 714 Masons, primarily in Kentucky (Masters and Secretaries), but including Masons in other jurisdictions as well. Responses were received from 26 men – 16 from Kentucky and 10 from outside the Commonwealth. That amounts to a response rate of 3.4%.

In 2018 and 2019, William O. Ware Lodge of Research conducted a survey called “Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge.” The results of that survey were published in the fall of 2019 (and are available for viewing on this website). The published results indicated that the “Characteristics” survey had a response rate of roughly 40%, a rate that, at the time, seemed astonishingly low.

Independent reviewer James T. Morrison (a non-Mason) noted in his analysis that the low rate of participation with respect to the “Characteristics” survey, “...ought to be the banner exclamation of this study...”

If the 40% response rate for the “Characteristics” survey was disturbingly low, there simply seem to be no words to describe the return rate of 3.4% for this **Voices of Freemasonry** inquiry.

Perhaps a more instructive survey might be, “Why Masons Do Not Participate in Surveys.” Possible reasons might include:

- **A fear that their opinions might “get them in trouble;”**
- **The inability to understand the subject matter of the survey;**
- **They are “too busy” to participate in the survey;**
- **They are hostile to the survey or the research entity;**
- **They do not understand how taking the time to respond may help other members and lodge leaders with respect to looking at the collective state and condition of the Fraternity, or the issues facing the Craft; or**
- **They simply do not care enough about Freemasonry to respond.**

In any event, William O. Ware Lodge of Research is grateful to the 26 men who responded to this set of questions. The participants are from eight U. S. states (including

Kentucky) and one Canadian province. In terms of Masonic experience, the range of their years of membership falls between 4 years and 54 years.

Substantively, the results show that Masonic research is, in the words of the philosopher Forrest Gump, “like a box of chocolates – you never know what you’re gonna get.” Some of the responses in this collection are insightful and reflect a deep understanding of the nature of Freemasonry. Many of the responses indicate a general lack of understanding of the aim and purpose of the Craft. For those who may need to be reminded, the aim and purpose of Freemasonry is to equip men with the necessary tools to practice the self-discipline needed to lead a successful and fulfilling life, drawing them closer to their Creator.

Many of the respondents indicate a desire to “give back,” but seem to define “giving back” as only giving back to their communities, rather than the advancement of the Fraternity in other ways. The notion that Masons need to be visible in their respective communities has plagued Freemasonry for at least the last five decades. There is simply no credible evidence that visibility in the community advances the cause of Freemasonry in any measurable fashion, at least not in the way lodges have attempted to be visible in their communities over the past multiple decades. Yet, we continue to expend time and energy on activities that yield little, if any, return.

The responses relating to the use of technology indicate a generally favorable disposition toward its use in Freemasonry. In many ways, that disposition may be characterized as wanting something to be done to incorporate technology into Freemasonry, but wanting someone else to do it. Several of the responses reveal the valuable understanding that technology, while useful in many ways, has its limitations. Most are in agreement that technology has its greatest potential as a means of disseminating Masonic education. This comes with a caveat: It is just as easy to disseminate disinformation, or Masonic education programs of low or dubious quality, as it is to present a high-quality program. Technology, like any other tool, is no better or worse than the person or group utilizing it. Given the excessive enthusiasm for the use of technology from at least one respondent, one wonders when some desperate jurisdiction will decide to offer virtual one-day classes in an effort to bolster shrinking membership rosters.

It is important to note that the responses to the questions about the use of technology are colored by the recent experiences stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of in-person activities and meetings drove many Masons and Masonic groups to utilize electronic communications in ways not previously attempted. The results of those attempts indicate a wide range of outcomes.

Honest research requires the examination of facts, even when such facts are not flattering or attractive. Britain’s Oliver Cromwell is said to have told painter Peter Lely to portray him, “warts and all,” revealing him as he was and not concealing his blemishes. William O. Ware Lodge of Research presents this second edition of **Voices of Freemasonry** in the same spirit.

Here is a final thought: All Freemasons have a voice. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the 26 men whose voices are heard here. Is your voice heard?

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Melvin Mason**
Years in Masonry: **21**
Lodge Name and Number: **Wheaton Lodge No. 228 (MD)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I was working to restore a cemetery and saw all of the symbols and researched them and decided that the people whose tombstones had them were pillars of the community and that Freemasonry was something in which I became very interested. No, my name had nothing to do with it.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To make good men better through education and actions.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Although the availability and resources are there, the push for membership has diluted the aim and purpose of the Craft.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended several local lodge meetings, Lexington Lodge No. 1 Webinars, Rubicon Masonic Society presentations, California presentations.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

1. A sense of connectedness with other Masons.

2. Education presentations.

3. To learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

It provides the ability to have members who cannot attend Lodge attend informal gatherings, or at least non-secret portions of regular meetings. Educational and informational presentations.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Recorded presentations for later viewing. Record of Lodge activities. Public relations.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Sure.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

More Masonic education, less emphasis on membership growth will little Masonic bearing.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

That it is an incredible opportunity to improve one's self, to grow internally, in the family, in the community and in the world.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **David Scrogam**
Years in Masonry: **35**
Lodge Name and Number: **Emulation Lodge No. 688 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

By the influence of my father, who is also a Mason.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To make good men better and accountable to each.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Good, for the most part. It depends on the quality of Masons in a Lodge.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

No.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

It will be a good thing, especially for those where traveling is a problem or an impossibility.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Through online training sessions and videos.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Electronic training videos.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I currently explain what Masonry means to me and advise them to talk to Masons and avoid the internet, as it is full of lies.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **George Turner**
Years in Masonry: **6**
Lodge Name and Number: **Breathitt Lodge No. 649 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I was in DeMolay when I was a teenager.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Fraternal organization of men who have similar interests, ideas and seek to work for a common good.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

That is subjective and depends on which aim or purpose one looks at based on an individual's opinion. My humble opinion is that it changes depending on the Lodge Master, or even the Grand Master, in addition to the climate of the Lodge.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

No. I attended the two meetings the M. W. Grand Master had and the two meetings for Lodge delegates.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

To learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period. Meeting for delegates.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

It is useful for situations we have experienced this year (in limited use). However, I feel strongly they should not be a mainstay in Masonry. Not all members have easy access to the internet or even computers, tablets, iPad, etc., and we should never consistently put them in a situation where they could be excluded.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

No suggestions at this time.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Monthly or quarterly newsletter, either in print or electronic. A Masonic library.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

It is a truly wonderful experience and I'm glad that I asked for a petition to join.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **William Mitchell**
Years in Masonry: **13**
Lodge Name and Number: **Burlington Lodge No. 264 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Family members and friend, as well as the ability to take a One Day Class to become a Master Mason.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

It is too stodgy and unable to bring in new talent. Having been a member of Lodges in three states, here are some that are more exciting and willing to travel with new members. Other Lodges seem stuck on following routine and failing to make it interesting by reaching out to the community. Doing that attracts new members.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

On a scale of 1 being poor and 10 being successful, I would have to rate our Lodge as 4. We struggle just to get officers and learn each chair.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I attended one at the Grand Lodge level, but none at the Blue Lodge level.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

N/A

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I see a benefit, but I do not see any advertising of such meetings in our area.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Provide opportunities to learn the chairs and lectures by practicing with other Lodges.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Definitely. Secretaries struggle with the technology and processes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

We are in the learning mode and struggle to get members to attend.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

You get out of it what you put into it. In my case, it has been an honor to help change manual processes to make it easier for me to use the data in the system.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Philippe Hiolle**
Years in Masonry: **40**
Lodge Name and Number: **Heritage Lodge No. 371 (NY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I was interested with symbolism and esotericism.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Personal improvement to impact the world by our example (to reflect our tenets).

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Sharing research works and thoughts.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. Lodges: in my District (4th Manhattan) and outside; Masonic Appendant Bodies (Scottish Rite), SRICF Annual, Abroad Masonic Groups.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons. Education presentations. Opportunity to meet and exchange with Brethren from all around the world (UK, Georgia, India, Sweden, Germany, Taiwan, Singapore, etc.)

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

Lodge: Great for committees and Masonic education.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

News Letter, Websites, WhatsApp groups, etc.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

N/A

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Why do you want to become a Mason? If it is curiosity or business networking, there is no point.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Joe Tracy**
Years in Masonry: **52**
Lodge Name and Number: **Plain City Lodge No. 449 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

A good friend was joining, and we worked together, and my uncle was a member. I had thought about it and I joined at the same time as my friend. The rest is history.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

The Masonic Homes and now Masons Helping Masons [Committee], as well as our fellow man is our purpose.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

I think we have done a good job; we just need to find a way to get our message to more prospective members to carry on our mission.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended several that my Lodge has conducted, as well as several the Grand Lodge has conducted. All the Education meetings, as well as a couple during the pandemic.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

Education presentations. To learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

With Brothers' time and work restrictions during these trying time, 3-4 times per year would be good. Subject matter and presentation are very important. They don't need to be just a "feel good" time with everybody at the site having a few minutes of saying the same thing.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Maybe present annual communication virtually to designated, tiled Lodges around the entire state.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

More meaningful meetings, Leadership, Education, Finances.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

It's been a way of life for me and you will enjoy your membership, but don't get discouraged. If you decide to join, give it time as it is the norm for many new members.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Steven Henderson**
Years in Masonry: **8**
Lodge Name and Number: **Folsomdale Lodge No. 283 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I have great friends that are Masons. Also, my father and grandfather were Masons.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To affect men to make themselves and their communities, through esoteric philosophy and a sense of camaraderie, better.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

It is successful in affecting those members interested in bettering themselves. But its outreach is lacking.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

No. I attended the Grand Lodge practice session and the Grand Lodge session.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

To learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

No, it does not provide the same sense of camaraderie that members enjoy.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To keep in constant contact with the Craft.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

No.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

More educational experiences.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

If you wish to be a part of a Fraternity that seeks to make the world a better place, one person at a time, then follow me into the light.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Alan Stolzer**
Years in Masonry: **26**
Lodge Name and Number: **Publicity Lodge No. 1000 (NY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Charity. Members of my Lions Club who were also Masons invited me to meet their Brothers at a Lodge dinner.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Spot on.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

I cannot speak for the success of our entire Fraternity, world-wide, but only for my Lodge, which is very successful at making new Masons, conducting ritual, administering relief to distressed worthy Masons and fairly good at other charitable undertakings.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. All of my own Lodge's virtual, untiled meetings, and several Lexington, Kentucky, Lodge meetings, which were fantastic.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons. Education presentations, To learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period. I was introduced to virtual meetings and podcasts by the chairman on my Lodge's newly created Education Committee.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

Although as both a Dedicated Service Award recipient and a Trustee of my Lodge, having come to greatly appreciate the new knowledge I have gained by attending Zoom meetings, I am not in favor of conducting degree work virtually.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Greatly increases the opportunities for information sharing.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Perhaps, if I first could see a meeting agenda.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Developing a robust ongoing Masonic education program, which is an initiative we have recently undertaken.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

My first question to them would be, “What sparked your interest in becoming a Freemason?” From there I would go on to probing their existing perception of the Craft, and what their expectations of membership might be; and from there, only if I deemed them suitable for membership, would I go further into some detail about the history and tenets of our beloved Fraternity.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Richard Barela**
Years in Masonry: **26**
Lodge Name and Number: **Lexington Lodge No. 1 (KY),
KPL 4171 Province of Yorkshire
West Riding (UGLE)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I wanted to become a better person and understand what Masonry was about, instead of stories of what it is and what it isn't.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

My aim is to improve myself and pass along good traits and develop the three main principles in Masonry: Fellowship (sometimes called Brotherly Love), Charity and Relief, the true concept of the Golden Rule, which is a founding tenant of Freemasonry. Self-improvement – to better myself and help fellow Brethren to become better like-minded persons.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Freemasonry has helped me in ways that most people will never understand. As I was diagnosed with mild PTSD and the Brothers of the Lodge in the UK assisted me in coping and overcoming the anxieties that develop with soldiers after combat. They worked with me to become a better person, and I have used the teachings from those who have gone before me to achieve my goals and aim in Freemasonry.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended meetings held at Lexington Lodge No. 1 and some meetings from the Province of Yorkshire Ridings West and listened on podcasts. There have also been bi-weekly meetings to assist in coping with the pandemic from my Lodge in the United Kingdom.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I see them as we have now, I don't feel that stated communications can be held via Zoom because of the way people can enter and cause havoc with stated communications. Open communications such as learning and information updates are viable.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

More products from across the Masonic scope and to learn what Masonry is from all over the world. Each country has different methods, and we can learn and see the similarities and the differences and maybe determine how things have changed in Masonry over the last 300-plus years.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

I feel that Lexington Lodge No. 1 is leading the way in the use of technology. Other Lodges in the Commonwealth have a harder time, which is due to lack of knowledge of use of technology and the lack of internet connection.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Ask One to Be One. If a person approaches me about Masonry, I don't deny I am a Mason (sadly, I have seen this in Kentucky more than anywhere else). I also state that we are not a secret society, but a society with secrets. Granted, they are out there on the world-wide-web, but understanding the meaning of these symbols is what starts you down the path of becoming a better person.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **George Thomas**
Years in Masonry: **40**
Lodge Name and Number: **Hindman Lodge No. 689 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Watching the change it made in relatives and friends.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Masonry to me has had the same goal and purpose since my early days in learning exactly what a Mason was and what a Mason's purpose was. A Mason is a good man who wants to be a better man, and to make his community a better place for everyone.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

I feel that Freemasonry has gotten away from its roots and is leaning to more of a social organization. We need to get back to taking care of our Brethren and their families.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. I have attended the virtual meeting held by the Grand Lodge and I attended the Grand Lodge virtual session on October 19.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Educational presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I don't like the virtual meetings. Masonry is much more personal than online meetings.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

I feel Freemasonry needs to use technology to keep the Craft better informed as to what is happening in the Lodge and Grand Lodge. But it is the responsibility of each Mason to let his light shine in his community to build membership and strengthen their Lodge. Trying to get new members through social media is not the way to go.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

No.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Our average age in Lodge is 57 years old. We need younger members that are willing to learn and carry on the tradition. We need more community events to show these young men what a true Mason is, and who they are in the area.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

We are the best organization in the world. We will show you how to be a better man in many ways.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Tim Israel**
Years in Masonry: **34**
Lodge Name and Number: **Elk City Lodge No. 182 (OK)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Although I had no family members that were Masons, we had some special friends who were involved in the Fraternity. I was active in Jaycees. The Supreme Court ruled that the Jaycee organization could no longer be a men-only group, as we denied women a valuable leadership opportunity. I had a friend in Jaycees who started talking about the Lodge. I expressed interest and here I am.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To provide me an opportunity to learn and to teach, to lead and to follow, to model and to mentor and to become a better man (in the broadest sense of that word). I used to chuckle at the phrase, "to make good men better," but having sought to apply that "test" as a leader, I see great value in that as a mantra. My wife and I have three sons. I applied those rules to taking boys and helping them grow into "real men."

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

In a small percentage of cases. However, I think in those cases that are "successful" is has provided all of the opportunities in a safe environment.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended a number of meetings with the Grand Lodge of California, Lexington Lodge No. 1, with a local Traditional Observance Lodge, with Oklahoma DeMolay, a six-state Regional York Rite Conference, Grand Lodge Education Forum and with several planning sessions for upcoming events with another national organization, educational meetings put on by various local bodies, such as AMD Councils, and York Rite Bodies, and have attended a few national meetings such as the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons Triennial, York Rite Sovereign College of North America, United Grand Imperial Council of the Red Cross of Constantine, Convent General KYCH. I was elected and installed at the Oklahoma Grand Council of Cryptic Masons. Our Oklahoma York Rite Bodies had our elections virtually.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period; to see and share with other Brothers that I know.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I believe that are a great tool for education with the ability to provide a quality speaker from afar to attend and present at a small Lodge / York Rite in Elk City. But the opportunities are much broader. It would allow for those members who live a great distance away to be part of some, at least, of our local / regional meetings. I think it will serve us well in PLANNING, whether with the local officers for a meeting or event, as well as many of our statewide events. It provides a powerful tool to get Grand Officers of any body together without travel. That is important when you live a couple of hours from the nearest

groupings of other leaders. It was amazing to a part of the GG Council triennial encompassing, I believe, 19 time zones.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Replay of certain education programs with a local discussion following. We can learn to use video, etc. more effectively in our local bodies. There are so many ways.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes, I would.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Effective tools for mentorship (with local attendance), general training for officers (and wannabe officers), a video for meditations, etc., rather than just from our sound system.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I say, "Do it." But spend some time getting to know members, to discuss your expectations with a seasoned Mason, to not rush the process, to open your mind and to expect great things (but great things also take significant effort sometimes).

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Ricky Lucas**
Years in Masonry: **4**
Lodge Name and Number: **Jenkins Lodge No. 856 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

My dad and I knew a lot of other Masons and decided to petition at the same time.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To make good men better. More specifically for me, my dad, younger brother and uncle are members, so it's something we all take part in to help our community and others in the Fraternity. My mother and wife participate in Lodge events as well when we have them, so it's a family-centric thing for me. It's also important for me to help out my community and it gives me an outlet of like-minded people to rely on.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

At my Lodge, I feel like we do a good job of making a presence in the community. In years past, I don't think the community knew a lot about Masonry, but we have worked hard over the last few years to get out in the community and do what we can to help.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I'm the secretary of my Lodge, so I've been in charge of running any virtual events we have participated in. I did the educational meeting webinar, two of the town-hall meetings, two of the Grand Lodge practice meetings and I ran the District 29 Grand Lodge session at my Lodge in Jenkins for DDGM Greg Phipps.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I think it would be a huge improvement. It was nice getting to be a part of decisions being made through the pandemic, as well as the potential for Masonic education in a virtual environment.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

I see a lot of potential. Many of the Brothers that came to our virtual events were interested in the process and the only negative experiences we had was the lack of in-person fellowship due to concerns about the virus.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes, I have had discussions with Brothers at my Lodge about having more virtual events and there seemed to be interest among them.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

One thing, specifically, that came up was the interest in the educational meeting. We did a constitution quiz session after the educational meeting and had around 20 in attendance. We had a lot of interest in doing more Masonic education in that format. Another thing I would like to see is the incorporation of virtual attendance for Grand Lodge. When the announcement was made about Grand Lodge being conducted remotely, I had a huge interest from Brothers who would be otherwise unable to attend, wanting to know if they could sign on and at least watch the proceedings. This would be something I would like to see happen. I live in the far eastern part of the state, and many of our members would attend a remote session to watch the Grand Lodge proceedings if we had one in the future.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I would tell them it would be the best decision they could ever make. Through this pandemic we have proven that we can adapt and overcome any adversity as we have done all throughout time. Freemasonry has the ability to not only survive time, but to thrive.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **George Cowan**
Years in Masonry: **30**
Lodge Name and Number: **Kalispell Lodge No. 42 (MT)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

My father and uncle were both Master Masons and Shriners. Often when we traveled, we stopped to visit with a Mason for a few hours.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Its philosophical aims are much higher than many purposes for joining these days. It is a personal journey to discover the where and what in the universe.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

The Fraternity cannot make men; they must find a pat to follow. But Masonry does provide a map and guideposts for he who searches.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended none, but watched the replays. Dinner hour in the west is meeting hour in the east. Merely because one doesn't attend does not mean he is not thinking the same thoughts or viewing the world in the same way.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

If the variety of subject matter can be attained, it can grow and flourish. Often, such ventures tend to plateau and lose members who hear the same views in their own Lodges.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

A general question sent to e-addresses, and a compilation of answers from wherever might instill discussions on the local level, as well.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Our members deny the prospect of turning on the microphones and utilizing the sound system proposed, passed and paid for by past Masons. I doubt we would go beyond what we have now: music played during circums when live music is not available, and researched photos and pictures used in third sections. However, it should be noted each presenter makes his own power-point for his presentation.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

I'm a researcher, so I would enjoy conversations of what others have found as well as arguments towards our general topics, i. e. more membership, memorization, the Lodge vs. community activities, etc.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Today's men are much more read than I was and so each comes with a different agenda. Too often, that agenda is not what the Lodge can offer, and attendance fails.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Jeriel Smith**
Years in Masonry: **54**
Lodge Name and Number: **South Pasadena Lodge No. 290
(CA); Southern California
Research Lodge No. 1005**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I was active in DeMolay from age 14 to 21 (1959-66), and my father was active at that time in Indian Wells Valley Lodge, where I was raised in October 1966. From age 12, I started reading books on Freemasonry and related topics, starting with my father's copy of Manly P. Hall's *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

The aim and purpose of Freemasonry should be to provide good men with a path to spiritual transformation in the traditions of the Ageless Wisdom, as taught and practiced in the Western Esoteric Tradition. This has been largely abandoned by many Grand Lodges, in search of greater membership numbers; as a result of which, many Blue Lodges have developed into social/charitable clubs. This is a fine thing, but falls far short of Freemasonry's greater potentials.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

On this particular subject, I am in agreement with the Masonic Restoration Foundation and the several writings of Worshipful John Bizzack on the subject of observant Freemasonry being a path of return for a smaller but more intensely spiritual and academic understanding of Masonic philosophy and symbolism, and more comprehensive application of those teachings in Masons' daily lives.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended several local Zooms sponsored by Saddleback Laguna Lodge and Santa Monica Palisades Lodge. I have also attended these other electronic education series, all of which are listed in SCRL 1005's Fraternal Review month calendar: "On Line Masonic Speakers Series" (presented by California Grand Lodge and Quatuor Coronati 2076 Research Lodge; see www.freemason.org)' Open Lectures on Freemasonry (see OpenLFM@gmail.com); and the Virtual Masonic Education Series presented by Lexington Lodge No. 1 and The Rubicon Masonic Society.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period; to encourage participation in Masonic education; and to be able to knowledgably list these virtual series on the Calendar section of SCRL's month Fraternal Review magazine, of which I am an editor.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I think the potentials are many and varied; especially for Stated Meetings that don't necessarily have to include ritual ceremonies (though I would favor in-person meetings with ritual opening and closing), and Hall Associations that are already devoid of ritual. Masonic education is the greatest opportunity to expand participation to those unable to attend such meetings as those of the Masonic Restoration Foundation, which I regularly attend; and educational programs such as those described above that I've attended during COVID.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

A good example would be the meditation trainings that are currently being conducted by the Masonic Legacy Society, in which members of William O. Ware Lodge of Research are already participating. Introducing meditation into Masonic Blue Lodges would be a great step forward in restoring practices that more fully reflect the esoteric philosophy of Freemasonry. Lecture programs could be more easily accessed by a greater number of Masons using the new digital technologies.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

I would enthusiastically participate in such meeting(s).

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

My Lodges, especially South Pasadena 290, already have considerable Masonic education programs; but only SPL 290 and SCRL 1005 have active meditation programs. All three Blue Lodges are registered with MRF as "observant" and all have education programs as part of the advancement of

candidates through the three Craft degrees; but, again, SPL 290's is considerably more rigorous and comprehensive.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Find the right Lodge for yourself! If you want the most out of your Masonic experience, seek out a Lodge with observant practices and Masonic education programs.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Barry Eastham**
Years in Masonry: **26**
Lodge Name and Number: **Greenup Lodge No. 89 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Interest in the Ancient Mystery Tradition.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To be the modern custodian of the western mystery tradition.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

It is only as successful as the initiate's ability to absorb the tradition.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. Mostly all of Lexington Lodge No. 1's meetings.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

Unfortunately, if a vaccine is not developed, the pandemic may grow larger. Virtual meetings are only good (in my opinion) in keeping us connected during this odd time. Otherwise, they should not be used or made a substitute for being together in person.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Mass communication via e-mail is the only other thing I would be interested in. As stated, I feel technology should not be a substitute for being together.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

No.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

I would like to see my (and other district Lodges) make the District Meetings a Table Lodge format including a degree conferral and festive board.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Why? What do you seek? What are you willing to sacrifice to achieve this?

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Stephen Wessel**
Years in Masonry: **26**
Lodge Name and Number: **Fred M. Gross Lodge No. 953 (KY)**
Ted Adams Lodge of Research (KY)

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I was a DeMolay for a number of years. I spent a lot of time with some of the best leaders in Masonry. It was an easy decision for me to want to become a Mason. On my 21st birthday, there was a petition in my mailbox. I signed it and returned it the very next day, all the way from Germany!

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

The goal of Freemasonry is not just to make good men better. It is to teach and encourage men to look outside themselves for more; to enrich their lives, as well as the lives of their fellow man.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Masonry has been successful in doing so. It depends on the Lodge and how they adhere to the goals of Masonry and its teachings.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have attended Lexington Lodge No. 1's education meetings, and those of The Rubicon Masonic Society.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I believe its time has come. I believe that a large audience will use this technology in the future.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

I hope that in the future, meetings and education will be tailored to the needs of each and every Lodge. I believe that in the fast-paced society in which we live, the use of technology will be an asset to our Lodges.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Absolutely!

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Mainly for the use of education. It's that important!

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Masonry is indeed a progressive science. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it, and there are a ton of Brothers that are willing to assist you in your journey. We are making Masons, and not just members.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Donald Sims**
Years in Masonry: **9**
Lodge Name and Number: **Woodbury Lodge No. 280 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

My grandfather was a Mason.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

It has no clear, concise message anymore. As you often hear, even from some PGM, the purpose of a Mason is to make more Masons. If that is our purpose, it is sad, as in my view it should be to help, guide and teach one another to live clean, honest lives and to be a pillar of the community, for all members of the community and not just other Masons.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Right now, I'd say fifty-fifty; as for some, they truly live their obligations, while others treat it more as a way to gain social standing.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

No.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

N/A

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I believe it is a useful tool that will become more necessary as technology progresses, as it helps us keep in touch and learn, even as life becomes more hectic and there is less time for in-person learning.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

No response.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

More true education on not only the history, but on the ideologies of Masonry, and how better to implement those teachings into all aspects of our lives.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I would inquire as to why they are interested; if they truly had time to devote to Freemasonry. I'd let them know that as a true Freemason you should learn to apply the allegories into your everyday life, and live as a Freemason even when you are not somewhere where you are recognized as a Mason.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Richard Hanson**
Years in Masonry: **17**
Lodge Name and Number: **Thomas Devenny Lodge No. 928
(KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I heard a couple of gentlemen speaking about it at work. The mystique attracted me. The more I looked into it, it sounded like it would be super interesting. From the stories I read, I found secret, ancient mysteries, allegories, symbolism, ritual, bettering one's self and finding like-minded men.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

I feel that Masonry was designed to take like-minded men within every community across the world and introduce them to practical skills, ancient mysteries and symbolism that could help me become more like their Creator. I would also state that I feel Masonry was designed to take care of each individual Mason and his family when in time of need.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

I don't feel it has been very successful at all. Most men within the organization have very little knowledge of any ancient teachings; education is nearly non-existent, and few have any desire to learn what Masonry is. It has become a social club that prioritizes collecting money for multiple charities outside the organization.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Absolutely! I have attended multiple platforms. I attended the Grand Lodge of Kentucky Town Hall Forum. Refracted Light on Facebook has about any teaching you desire. I have attended William O. Ware Lodge of Research and Lexington Lodge No. 1 Educational Series, and The Rubicon Masonic Society's Education Series.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I think it's a fantastic way to perform and be a part of Masonic Education. I personally don't think Masonic Ritual should be performed on this platform, but so many things like minutes and bills could easily be done in this manner. That would free up stated meetings to have dinners, education, fellowship, etc.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

It would allow for national or international speakers to be one click away from any Lodge presentation, free of charge in most cases. It can also allow members to pay dues (via PayPal, etc.). You can stream just about anything you want into the Lodge to enhance the experience for Masons. Technology also allows members from around the world to stay in touch, see nightly meetings, perform practice, lower travel and time away from home, and decrease money spent of travel and utilities within a Lodge.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Absolutely!

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Festive Boards, good quality speakers for Masonic Education, utilization of technology to bring the Lodge a more updated approach.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I would say that the underlying framework for Masonry is one of the best journeys I have been on. There really is a lot to learn from the past teachers, authors and representatives from our Craft. All of which can be applied and used, if so desired, for the betterment of man. But the antiquated views, lack of progression and yearly change of command does the Fraternity a great disservice.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **John Cameron**
Years in Masonry: **22**
Lodge Name and Number: **John Albro Lodge No. 122**
(Nova Scotia)

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

It was a calling for me that I resisted for a number of years. My family, maternal and fraternal grandparents, uncles, and cousins were members of our family Lodge.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To provide environment and opportunity to undertake a very personal spiritual journey while in the company of others.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

I don't feel qualified to respond to this question. Purely from a personal perspective, I would say, "not well."

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Most certainly. Lexington Lodge No. 1 of Kentucky, The Rubicon Masonic Society study group meetings, Sapere Aude Virtual Masonic Study Group, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Nova Scotia Sunday evening chats.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I see no reason why certain aspects of our degree ritual could not benefit from the application of technology. There was resistance when Lodge secretaries went from using ink and paper to record Lodge minutes to using typewriters, and then word processing applications. That same attitude will certainly make it difficult to integrate technology into the Lodge culture.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

No response.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Absolutely.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

I belong and am active in two Lodges here in Nova Scotia. One would be a more typical Lodge where things are very relaxed with little or no education provided and primarily interested in the fraternal aspect. The other is what I would call a more “traditional” Lodge. I derive my greatest enjoyment here.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Clearly be able to articulate why you are considering joining. Highlight the cost both in terms of financial and time commitment.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Brad Drew**
Years in Masonry: **9**
Lodge Name and Number: **Lexington Lodge No. 1 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

I found Freemasonry while in college. I had two extremely close, some would say “best friends,” however both lived over an hour and half away from me so I rarely got to see them. I befriended a Freemason in college (unknown to me initially) and we often went to the gym on campus together. After a few times I notices a square and compass tattoo on his arm, and asked what that was. After that, you could say I was led down the rabbit hole to becoming a Freemason. Ultimately, I wanted to become a member to make close friends, who would share common interests with me and challenge me to become a better person and friend.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Over the years my view of the aim and purpose of Freemasonry has drastically changed. Initially, I thought the aim and purpose of Freemasonry was to make me a better man by being involved with charity and my community. I learned ritual at an early Masonic age, and believed that by being proficient and teaching others, I was passing the “torch” of Freemasonry. Eventually, after being introduced to Masonic education and the true art of Freemasonry, I learned and now believe that the true aim and purpose of Freemasonry is to challenge me to become a better person by educating me, guiding me and having me focus my energy on those things in my life that add true value. I

have learned to spend my time as a Freemason working on my internal person, not always my external.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

After I was first introduced to the true art of Freemasonry, sometime in the fall of 2015, I would say that Freemasonry has been successful in achieving its aim and purpose for me, personally. I have met men, many of whom I now call my Lodge Brothers, who continually challenge me and push me to learn, grow and develop. I've grown as a man, friend, Brother, husband, son, colleague and student. In the larger scheme of things, Freemasonry continues to struggle in achieving its aim and purpose as many Brothers, or simply "members" focus on growing their membership, raising the most money, donating to the most "Masonic" groups and being present in the community. While these are all admirable and incredible things, they are simply "warm and fuzzy" actions – not items that will grow and develop a Freemason, at least not in my personal opinion.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. I have had the privilege of attending, hosting and presenting at over 50 virtual Masonic meeting since early March 2020. To name a few, these would include events hosted by the "Refracted Light" Facebook group, Grand Lodge of Alaska, Castle Island Virtual Lodge, Endeavor Virtual Lodge, North Carolina Masonic Research Society, Grand Lodge of Texas, Grand Lodge of New York, Grand Lodge of New Jersey, William O. Ware Lodge of Research, Lexington Lodge No. 1, The Rubicon Masonic Society and many others. I've also been able to attend the 2020 Mid-Atlantic Esotericon and 2020 Chicagocon, virtually.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations; opportunities to connect with Brothers around the globe, which was an opportunity I most likely would never have been able to achieve prior to the pandemic.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

As a fan and believer in technology, I believe that virtual Lodges, meetings and events are no longer a thing of the past, or a small piece of what we do. I have witnessed and participated in events hosted by virtual Lodges that blow away 99% of physical Lodges I have attended. I have even been told by Brothers that there is no reason for them to attend an in-person Lodge anymore, as they receive everything they want and need virtually. While I don't believe that brick and mortar Lodges need to disappear or go away, I do believe that by integrating technology such as Zoom will allow their membership to prosper (not grow, but re-ignite). I feel that allowing members from all around the world to attend educational presentations during an in-person motivate and inspire members who have "fallen off" to attend more regularly, thereby becoming more involved. I believe that ritual can and should be allowed virtually, with the exception of the three degrees of Freemasonry.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

The use of technology can be used in so many ways, outside of virtual meetings. From study groups to book clubs, to instructor/candidate time and even for business meetings with the Officers, for example. We have seen virtual meetings spike, and then flatten out some, and now they are back on the rise as we see COVID starting to rise. "Bourbon and Cigar hour" with your Brothers is not a bad way to spend an hour or two every other week. A virtual

“happy hour” every Friday has led to an increase in fellowship, friendship and knowledge. The use of technology will not only continue to connect Brothers from around the world, it will continue to allow open discussion, ultimately leading to the growth and development of Freemasons – the ultimate aim and purpose.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

I would be willing and have been fortunate to assist with Zoom meetings for my Blue Lodge, Lodge of Research, Scottish Rite Valley, and numerous other societies and organizations I am affiliated with Masonically. I believe we see more “online” or “virtual” committees at both the local and Grand Lodge levels in the coming years.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

I am fortunate that my Lodge presents some form of Masonic education at every single meeting, whether that is a formal presentation, an open Q & A, a reading or just ritual work. Outside of ritual work, we always put our Lodge at ease and allow Brothers of all Degrees to attend. I would love to see our Lodge utilize Zoom at every meeting and broadcast our educational time to members who cannot attend physically, for whatever reason. Set up a camera and stream during the educational presentation, only. I would also love to see more fellowship from the Brothers. As mentioned in the previous question, a “virtual happy hour” every week or every other week, would be incredible. An hour or two, open to any Brother, casual dress and simply for the reason to come together and have a good conversation, while enjoying a beverage or two. Our Lodge has members from all over the state, and it may allow for those members to become closer with one another.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I am given this opportunity often, as I have the responsibility of making first contact with many interested for my Blue Lodge. I always tell them the same thing. Freemasonry is not about charity, donating time or money, or adding a line to your resume. Those can be considered “icing on the cake” at times, but not why we practice Freemasonry. If someone is interested in Freemasonry, I tell them this is a group of individuals, from around the world, whose primary focus is to grow, develop, and teach one another. Freemasonry is a commitment and takes time, energy and focus. You can become a member anywhere, but becoming a Freemason takes a lifetime.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Shon Gray**
Years in Masonry: **9**
Lodge Name and Number: **New Hope Lodge No. 564 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

The positive influences from well respected mentors whom I knew to be Masons.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To make good men better. To share fellowship with like-minded fellows who seek improvement in life and community.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Freemasonry gives those men a networking system.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. Educational Conference, Grand Junior Warden forums, Town Hall meetings, subordinate Lodge business meetings, annual Grand Lodge communication.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

Education presentations; to learn what was going on during the suspension/restriction period.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I believe they could be an integral part of the institution, if implemented appropriately.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Technology is now a natural part of our everyday life. There is no reason technology and Freemasonry can't go hand in hand. We use technology on a daily basis to stay in contact and better navigate our lives. It can do the same for technology.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes!

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

I would like to see my Lodge become a staple in our community and county. A threshold known for warm handshakes, open invitations to multiple events and activities, the social gathering place often frequented by all walks of life for different purposes, yet uninhabitable on the second Saturday of every month unless you are a member.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

It may not be for everyone, but I know many who not only enjoy it, but live it. It will deliver everything you put into it tenfold. If your heart is urging you to ask about Freemasonry, your soul will urge you get involved, then you can decide if you're among Brethren or strangers.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Ralph Martin**
Years in Masonry: **42**
Lodge Name and Number: **Mayo Lodge No. 198 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

By the influence of my father and good things I saw.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To make good men better.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

The whole process worked on me.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

No.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

N/A

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I guess they work but they aren't very inclusive, at present.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

That's a question for someone smarter than me. We all definitely need more practice on our ritual work.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

I don't know what we could do. Only six to seven members are active. Total members are less than 14!

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Have more educational events to attend, virtual or whatever. Learn degree lectures this way.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

It will make you a better person in every aspect of your life.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Wayne Sirmon**
Years in Masonry: **47**
Lodge Name and Number: **Mobile Lodge No. 40 (AL)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Father was an active Mason (PM, 33rd Degree, etc.). I knew that he considered Freemasonry important. As an active DeMolay, I had firsthand knowledge of many good-hearted Masons.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

To “make good men better.” I view it as an association of good men who encourage their Brothers to strive to improve themselves through friendship and study. A significant outcome is that Freemasonry provides a “training ground” for leadership and a setting for socialization that can make life more than just a “spectator sport.”

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

The push for men to join all of the many Masonic organizations has the result of diluting the energy and time that many men can devote to Masonic activities. Many are turned off by the countless series of ordinary meetings.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

I have only viewed three: Missouri Lodge of Research, The Rubicon Masonic Society and the Civil War Lodge of Research (VA).

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

It has a place for national / regional presentations where travel cost and time requirements become a burden. Zoom is a weak replacement for Brotherhood. As a stopgap measure it is useful, but, hopefully, presentations (webinars) will move from being "live" to archived where the problems of time conflicts will not be such a problem.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Expand usual media outreach to include internet-based material. I would settle for just being able to e-mail minutes for approval!

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Increase use of lighting and music during degrees. Stress aspects of Fraternity beyond perfection of words and movements in our ritual. Have high quality dinners (maybe 3 – 4 times a year).

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Discuss what they hope Freemasonry will add to their lives. Seek out a Lodge. Take advantage of “niche” groups – The Masonic Society, state Research Lodges.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Tim Redick**
Years in Masonry: **42**
Lodge Name and Number: **Russellville Lodge No. 166 (OH)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Because of the influence of my father, friends and co-workers, my recollection is that I was primarily motivated to seek admittance in order to socialize and fellowship with these men I respected and enjoyed being around.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Freemasonry provides teaching and allegorical standards of morality that, when properly interpreted and strived for, provide an individual with the opportunity to achieve a better understanding and awareness of the general order of things and the means to improve his personal standing within them.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

Within my personal scope of observation, I would say that Freemasonry in general has lost its way and to a large extent is not achieving its basic purpose.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. Lexington Lodge No. 1, The Rubicon Masonic Society, Ohio Lodge of Research, AASR Valley of Dayton Study Group, AASR Degree Nights, AASR Valley of Dayton Speaker Series, various local educational presentations.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

It has a tremendous potential value as a forum for Masonic educational discussions. By removing the physical restrictions of geography it provides the opportunity to hear (and see) real time, the practices and perspectives of Freemasons around the globe, including distinguished speakers and authors who would, for many, have otherwise not been accessible. In addition, these online discussions serve not only to broaden participants' understanding of the Craft, but identify problems and solutions experienced by others in the practice of it. Going forward, I could also see the more mundane business of a Lodge being conducted virtually on a regular basis, thereby opening up time for the more meaningful in-person activities of a Lodge. However, with that said, it can never be a total substitute for the physical Lodge experience.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

The single biggest opportunity for Freemasonry to use "technology" is to improve communications to its members. Simply put, a Lodge member cannot choose to participate in meetings or activities of which he is unaware. I will not digress here on all the ways that technology can be applied to improve

communications to Lodge members as those are already well documented. For the blessing of brevity, I will say only that each Lodge should establish effective digital communications processes using e-mail, texting, social media and the internet. These processes should also include a plan to assist those members who may need some instruction in accessing these information sources. Beyond the above priority, other opportunities to apply technology in the Lodge exist within the Lodge. A few examples are: Administrative areas, such as the accounting and secretarial activities; enhancing ritual through digital music, lighting, etc.; use of digital resources for education. We should identify members that are knowledgeable in the use of technology and consider forming a Lodge "Technology Committee" to develop and plan ways to utilize technology to improve or enhance Lodge activities and the member's experience.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Not at this time.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Music in the ritual.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

Freemasonry is an organized society of men symbolically applying the principles of operative Masonry and architecture to the science and art of character building. Its purpose is to make men better, to build character, and to bind men together in bonds of brotherly love and friendship. The symbolism of Freemasonry deals only with the intellectual, moral, and spiritual values of life. It offers great personal rewards and a lifetime of Brotherhood with like-minded men. However, if you are not prepared to give to it your undivided attention and loyalty, then it may be better that you remain outside its ranks.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Brendan Mills**
Years in Masonry: **6**
Lodge Name and Number: **Jeffersontown Lodge No. 774 (KY)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

Family history and being part of a group that's bigger than myself.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Self-improvement through the lessons of Freemasonry. And having a network of Brothers throughout the club that one can count on in times of need.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

We are successful in the lessons taught during the degree work, and the willingness of most Brothers to extend their friendship and assistance when we recognize each other as Brothers.

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

No.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

N/A.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

I see it being used in times of exigent circumstances to preserve the connectedness members feel toward their Brothers and the Fraternity.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

I think it is a way to keep members engaged in their Lodge to keep them apprised of what's going on and what they may be missing out on if they aren't attending.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

Masonic education needs to be the number one priority in Lodges. But it needs to be deeper knowledge than what the degree work teaches us on face value. The rich lessons of the Fraternity are hidden in allegory, and rightfully so, but those allegories are not really explored well to help members extract their benefit.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I would tell them to immerse themselves in the Fraternity. Find out what part of the Fraternity interests them and pursue that. If they are passionate about public service, step up and do that. If the allegories of the Fraternity interest you, ask questions of more experienced members and study as much as you can. Only you can make the Fraternity what you want it to be. You have to take the initiative.

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Covington, Kentucky

Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. II

Name: **Leigh MacConnell**
Years in Masonry: **40**
Lodge Name and Number: **Ionic Lodge No. 73, Sophia
Perennis Lodge No. 139
(Nova Scotia)**

1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

To meet other men in my community. Not many men required my professional service.

2. How would you describe the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

It offers a path to any man desiring to improve himself physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually as the best that he himself can.

3. To what extent is Freemasonry successful in achieving its aim and purpose?

It is successful to those who choose to become a Mason instead of a member. (To the extent to which they apply themselves.) When a man is honest, he knows no man can become the perfect or ideal Freemason. The work is very difficult and being the human creatures we are we can only keep trying to be the best we can. There is always room for improvement. (But even members can benefit from its moral and ethical teachings.)

4. Have you attended more than five virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period of March through October 2000? What virtual meetings have you attended?

Yes. The Rubicon Masonic Society, William O. Ware Lodge of Research, QCCC, Grand Lodge of Georgia (YouTube) and the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia Zoom meetings.

5. If you attended any virtual Masonic meetings during the pandemic period from March through October, what drew you to attend those meetings?

A sense of connectedness with other Masons; Education presentations.

6. How do you see virtual technology (i. e. Zoom meetings) being further integrated into the future of Freemasonry?

To a much greater extent by increasing the availability and spread of research, communication and discussions of Masonic interest.

7. Aside from virtual meetings, in what other ways can the use of technology advance the aim and purpose of Freemasonry?

Lectures and discussions in open Lodge can use pictorial, statistical and graphical representation to create more interest. Technology is also very useful because the majority of people (65%) are visual learners. Look at the number of Brethren now that have cell phones by which they have the accessibility of information at their fingertips. Not to mention computers, laptops, i-pads, tablets, etc.

8. Would you be willing to participate in a Zoom meeting to discuss and explore ways in which your Lodge can expand its use of technology?

Yes.

9. What would you like to see your Lodge offer (whether or not related to technology), that it currently does not, that would enhance your Masonic experience?

My Mother Lodge – An interest in discussion of Freemasonry’s philosophy, symbology, allegories, history, its application in daily life, etc., etc., etc.

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

I would ask why they are interested and what they know about the Fraternity. There is a difference in joining to become a member and joining to become a Freemason. The latter is not easy work, and it is a life-long commitment if you are interested in wanting to improve yourself physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. You will have mentors (and Brothers) to assist you along the way, but you will have to do the majority of work yourself because it is each individual’s personal journey. (“...be warned of the solemnity and importance of the step you are about to take.”)