



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

February 18, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I'm pleased to forward an article written by Deputy Grand Master Rick Boyles. Once again, Rick shows his keen insight into the future of our Order.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg

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Now that we're Global, Time to Go Local, and Stop Being Loco!

It's hard to believe, but some of our members still feel that if we say the ritual perfectly, and deny any other religious groups to join our order, that we will magically rejuvenate. Anyone outside our order would know that this is ludicrous. While our rituals, our unwritten work, our passwords, our degrees are fun to us, they are not the secret to growth. While I admire those who can read the rituals perfectly and certainly feel that our history is one of our most redeeming characteristics, we can't rely upon our history to save us. We must show a natural progression. One of the inherent problems with a group such as ours is that we can be slow to adapt to new things. All of us have a tendency to become complacent, whether it is within our own lives, lodges or duties that we accept within the order. New people may represent a frightening new vantage point from which we are forced to adjust our own thinking. Certainly, not all new ideas are good, but neither are they inherently bad. We need to judge every person and idea upon their merits not upon some preconceived notion of a bland continuum.

It should be noted that our own state is in danger of falling behind the eight ball. The Sovereign Grand Lodge has announced sweeping changes to our order are coming and we must be able to react to them. I have had the honor to speak to our Sovereign Grand Master, Charles Renninger, and he talks about a five year plan where our order becomes more streamlined and more cohesive. We have to act as if we are on a crusade, and I believe that is how we need to look for members. No longer should we assume that we are separated from each other. We are all together in this crusade. If you really resist change, if you think in only traditional terms, then you are bound to be disappointed. Many of us fear change, but if we don't change, it should be clear by now that we will die. Look at some of our groups, beyond the Odd Fellows, and you will see that several of them are definitely very near their demise. If you think that somehow we must adhere to the old ways, and these groups will rejuvenate, then there truly is no possibility of a future. I have read diatribes from members who say that it is our failure to adhere to old tenets that keeps us from experiencing growth but this is absurd. I often attend lodges which have



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practiced the rituals and meetings for decades without gaining a new member. Just chanting platitudes about how glorious our order is will not catapult us into the future. I believe that our order is glorious, but if we really believe that it is glorious, we have to be willing to show that to those outside our own environs. It is time to find relevance for the I.O.O.F. within today's world. Otherwise, we have no chance whatsoever.

The DMC committee which I am happily a member of is doing its best to show methods by which to experience growth within our individual lodges. To be clear, what we have seen in successful lodges is their ability to go beyond their walls to attract members. They look for interests that the public may share. Of course, the Davis Lodge is a shining example, with its myriad of committees and interests, but other lodges are also growing by following these methods. Conversely, there are still lodges that resist anything external, that pretend that continuity is based upon doing or accepting nothing new. I, personally, can't fathom how anyone can see the logic in this. What is that old saying? "Insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting different results" (I believe that's how it goes). We must do something new if we want to see growth within our lodges. If we want to just go down with the ship, we need do nothing, since a lodge with 5 in attendance this year, will soon number 4 and it will be forced to close. We have all seen this happen repeatedly. It's time to react before it's really too late.

In F., L., & T., Rick Boyles