



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

January 1, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Happy New Year to one and all.

There is an interesting poll circulating around the nation right now about evolution. It appears that 2 out of 3 Americans believes in evolution of the human species and other living things.

Frankly, all things evolve over time, whether they are living organisms or not. Even rocks change over time. Certainly, institutions and organizations change as well. Change is everywhere. Television has changed. Cars have changed. Clothing and fashion has changed. Our eating habits have changed. The US Government today is quite different than it was in a prior decade or prior century. Religious institutions today are not the same as they were in past years. Your electronic gadgets are changing almost weekly.

Why should it be any different for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows?

Indeed, Odd Fellowship has changed over the years. We used to operate retirement homes only open to members of the Order who would work for their keep. Today, Odd Fellowship runs only a handful of retirement communities and they are open to all. We used to operate orphanages in every state. Today, Odd Fellowship operates only one home - and it's not an orphanage, but rather a home for foster children. We used to bar women and minorities from membership in Odd Fellows Lodges. Today, those Lodges are open to all.

Yet, today, there are still Lodges that do not accept evolution and change, and cling to a way of thinking that is mired in a prior century. For example, we still have Lodges that do not have female members. When women comprise 50 per cent of our population, this attitude is inappropriate, at best, and certainly unsustainable.

To survive in the 21st Century, our Order and our Lodges need to embrace evolution, not ignore it or shun it. We need to open our Lodges and our meetings. We need to reach out into our communities with projects that will enhance those communities, and give our members pride in being Odd Fellows. We need to provide an active social life within the Lodge, because without a little fun we lose the fellowship and friendship that Odd Fellows purports to espouse - plus we become boring. Evolving to fit our times, while retaining the important principles that make us uniquely Odd Fellows, is the secret of success for our Order going forward.

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Dave Rosenberg  
Grand Warden