



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

December 6, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Ask the proverbial "man or woman on the street" about the Odd Fellows and you are likely to get one of two reactions: (1) A blank look, or (2) "Aren't those the guys that wear those funny collars and the women that walk around in those long dresses?"

Ask that same "man or woman on the street" about the Shriners and you are likely to get one of the following responses: (1) "Aren't those the folks that run those burn hospitals for children?" (2) "Don't they wear fezzes and drive around in those mini cars during parades?"

Contemplate, for a moment, why you are likely to get these disparate responses about two different fraternal organizations.

Here's my theory.

Both are fraternal organizations and both have an "image" in the public eye (See Response #2). But, substantively, the image of what they do and who they are is quite different (See Response #1).

Why?

I believe it's because the Shriners have FOCUSED all their energies and attention on one, and only one, major project. The operation of burn hospitals for children is the signature project of the Shriners. They are identified with the hospitals for children and that is the image - a very good one - in the public eye.

Now let's look at the Odd Fellows. Nationally, we are NOT FOCUSED on a signature project. We have, over the years, jumped into whatever project happened to appeal to a particular Sovereign Grand Master or a particular gathering of the Sovereign Grand Lodge. So, Odd Fellows are all over the park in terms of projects and ventures. To mention just a few - the Educational Foundation, Visual Research, S.O.S. Village, U.N.E.P. (United Nations Educational Pilgrimage), Pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, etc., etc. Now, don't get me wrong. ALL of these are worthy and important projects. But the fact that we have so many and so disparate projects working at the same time diffuses the attention of the public on Odd Fellowship.

It's all about "image" of our Order in the public eye. Because, ultimately, it is the "public" that is



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our source of new applicants and new members.

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Grand Warden