



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

October 3, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

A few months ago, I asked Louie Sarmiento (a young, active, and energetic Brother who I call the spark plug leading the resurgence and growth of Odd Fellowship in the Philippines) to undertake a "small" project. I asked him to identify the largest Odd Fellows Lodges in North America, particularly those with over 100 members. I had a motive, of course. It was my belief that while this Order has been shrinking in membership for the past three generations, there were some Lodges that have bucked the trend and have grown and prospered. And, based on that belief, it was my theory that these large Lodges can provide examples of ways that other Odd Fellows Lodges can grow and be successful. In other words, these large Lodges may very well be "laboratories" showing successful treatments for the malaise of shrinking rosters that have hectorated this Order for over 60 years.

Well, Louie dug into the project, as I knew he would. It was not easy. And the numbers that he checked out in the Sovereign Grand Lodge data base are only as accurate as the numbers provided to that data base by the various Grand Lodges on this continent. Ultimately, Louie focused on the annual reports that were compiled as of December 31, 2013, as his base line. These reports, viewed from the 30,000 foot elevation of SGL are revealing, troubling, and inspiring all at the same time. I offer, below, Louie Sarmiento's statistics (and a big "thank you" to Louie, as he has done a great service for our Order).

And here are some other thoughts from Brother Sarmiento on his project: "Sadly, only 27 lodges all over the United States and Canada are in the '100 membership mark'. Approximately 70% of the 'active' lodges in the U.S.A. and Canada are within or below 20 active members. Quite a number are actually in the '5 members' or even '4 members' mark. If combined (without re-counting people because they are members of other branches like Encampment, Canton, Rebekahs, etc.) there are more or less 20,000 members in the U.S.A. and Canada. A majority of the Grand Lodges have a total membership of less than 500 in their State or Province. This is a reality check . . . that IOOF in the U.S.A. and Canada needs to do something . . . IOOF in Europe is the strong-hold with more than 90,000 members . . . the other approximately 15,000 are in Latin America, Asia, Australasia, Africa."

Indeed, this is a reality check. Knowing that some 70% of the Lodges throughout North America have 20 or fewer members should prompt us all to sit up and take notice. And if we realize that in most Lodges, only about half the "active" members are really active, engaged, and attend meetings with any regularity - then the numbers are even more dire. Clearly, leadership at the Sovereign Grand Lodge level has a great challenge before them. And the challenge must be



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addressed today. The fact that the structure of our Order compels us to turn over our leadership every single year makes the challenge even more difficult. But we can't wait till next year, or the year after that. We must address the issues now, and continue to address them. We have to accept the fact that our greatest challenge is (and has been for years) our continued loss of members. To essentially continue business as usual like we have been doing for the past 60 years and expect different results is, truly, insanity. We must change the structure of our Order, and we must change the way we do business. Anything less than this will result in the continued diminution of our great and ancient fraternity. I have every confidence that our new Sovereign Grand Master Jimmy Humphrey understands the challenge and is up to the task. But are the representatives who attend Sovereign Grand Lodge sessions up to the challenge of change?

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Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

Top 30 Largest Odd Fellow Lodges in United States and Canada

Rank	Lodge Name	Location	No. of Members
1	California Lodge no.1	San Francisco, California	352
2	Apollo Lodge no.123	Millbrae, California	300
3	Salem Lodge no.36	Winston-Salem, North Carolina	294
4	Yerba Buena Lodge No.15	San Francisco, California	268
5	DeKalb Lodge No.12	Maysville, Kentucky	222
6	Davis Lodge No.169	Davis, California	209
7	Excelsior Lodge No.1	Honolulu, Hawaii	200
8	Borough Park Lodge No.409	Brooklyn, New York	190



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9	Boone Lodge No.170	Madison, West Virginia	182
10	Huntington Lodge No.64	Huntington, West Virginia	173
11	Golden West Lodge No.322	San Francisco, California	157
12	Eastwood Lodge No.496	Eastwood, Michigan	156
13	St. John Lodge no.539	St. John, Kansas	139
14	Walker Lodge No.306	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	139
15	Alma Lodge No.523	Johnstown, Pennsylvania	137
16	Buena Vista Lodge no.21	Oak Ridge, North Carolina	131
17	Leon Lodge No.5	Tallahassee, Florida	130
18	Olympia Lodge no.1	Tumwater, Washington	126
19	Monongalia Lodge No.10	Morgantown, West Virginia	122
20	Lodi Lodge No.259	Lodi, California	120
21	Chemeka Lodge No.1	Salem, Oregon	116
22	Charity Lodge no.27	Laurel, Delaware	110
23	Waxahachie Lodge No.80	Waxahachie, Texas	106
24	Good Shepherd Lodge No.65	New Milford, Connecticut	105
25	Washington Lodge No.1	Baltimore, Maryland	104
26	Pryor Creek Lodge No.70	Pryor, Oklahoma	104
27	Ft. Dallas Lodge No.44	Hialeah, Florida	103
28	Spencer Butte No.9	Eugene, Oregon	99
29	Waterloo Lodge No.27	Waterloo, Illinois	98
30	Franco American Lodge No.207	San Francisco, California	96
	Century Lodge No.492	Carpentersville, Illinois	96



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Source: Grand Lodge Annual Reports (As of December 31, 2013)

In Friendship, Love, and Truth

Brother Louie Sarmiento