



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

October 30, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Have you read this Order's Membership Application form lately?

The Membership Application of our Order states: "It must be emphasized that Odd Fellowship is not a religion." I find that an interesting (and revealing) disclaimer. Why must "it be emphasized"? Could it be that some folks who are not Odd Fellows view our Order as a "religion"? Could it be that some members and some Lodges operate as if they were the Church of Odd Fellows?

Ever since I raised the topic of "religion" and Odd Fellowship in a DMC Newsletter a few days ago, I have received a considerable amount of e-mail from Odd Fellows around the country and the world on the subject. Here is a sample from a new member, in his early thirties, who had recently joined a Lodge in the Midwest. I will not identify this new member either by name or by Lodge, to protect his confidentiality. Here is, in part, what he said: "I have been reading some of your articles online and think your analysis of Odd Fellowship is on the whole quite accurate. Our Lodge meets once a month for about 10 minutes in a meeting and dinner in a basement of about 10 guys. Since I'm new I'm not looking to make any waves yet, but there is so much more Odd Fellows could be doing to reach out. It took me months to get in contact with the Lodges in my area. I sent out e-mails to the website contacts, called Lodges, and even went to meetings where no one was there because the wrong meeting time was listed on the website. The Lodge I attend doesn't even have a sign out front, so if you didn't know the actual address, you would never know it was an Odd Fellows Lodge. I am young by Odd Fellows standards in my area. One thing that bothers me is my good friend wants to join too but he [does not believe in a Supreme Being] and so it was recommended he not seek membership."

These comments by the new young member of this moribund Lodge are very troubling. This Lodge needs to grow. The new member wants to bring in other new members. And yet he is discouraged from doing so because of a religious bias.

The subject of Odd Fellowship and religion has not been lost on our hard-working Sovereign Grand Master Jimmy Humphrey. He has many issues to address as he works to (as he says) "turn this old barge around." Please see the message, below, which I have just received from Brother Jimmy.

F - L - T



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

Greetings,

As your Sovereign Grand Master, I have been given numerous issues that need attention, all of them "front burner importance" but as I was practicing the little wave of my Magic Wand I hung it in the door, the silly thing broke. So, now we will address the issues the old fashioned way, one at a time. This old barge has been floating sideways for a long while, it will take all of us working together to get it back into main stream and it will look different, feel different but still strive for the one major purpose of our order,

We strive to improve and elevate the character of Mankind

Communication is an issue, so I started a series of "video clips" placing these on you tube, face book and other spots. This is the SGM talking to the individual lodge member, (brothers/sisters) giving encouragement, instruction, ideas, tools for every kind of lodge to work with, ideas and dreams to work toward. We need feedback, your ideas, what do you need to be a successful lodge.

We will only go and grow as the local lodges go and grow. This is just the first step so remember that "communication is a two way street" I can't do it alone.

We have a revitalization committee that is talking to one another, sharing ideas, looking at some new ways to do the old things. We will have some legislation coming from this group to present by late spring time.

We are touching on these items; Ritual (change, modernize, leave alone, make relevant); Lodges, (both male/female, male only, female only, encampments, cantons,) no easy answers here; Religion, (are we a non-sectarian order or a Fraternity or a Religious Order. Do our Rituals, applications, way of doing business explain that); Attitude, (I am amazed at the bitterness, selfishness, me only attitude of some of our members. We are in this barge together, work together or sink); Organizational structure, (how well do we do business? How poorly??)

I know and hope that all those who read this realize that the "Character" of any Order cannot be changed overnight. We are trying to move forward, hopefully in a manner that will bring us all to the common ground of making this, "THE INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODDFELLOWS" an asset to the members that we have and those that we acquire. Plus become a valuable part of our communities.



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

My Brothers and Sisters, this is a slow process, we are attempting to bring an Order that is slowly disappearing back to life and into the modern world we live in. We will lose some more members, some more lodges before we turn it around but if we work together for the common good of the "Independent Order of Odd Fellows" we can do it together. We can change the world, "One person at a time"

Are you that person?? If not you?? Then WHO??

Sovereign Grand Master

Jimmy Humphrey