



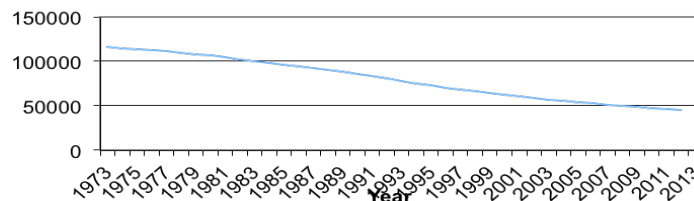
Luxor Light

October 2015

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.*

John Donne

Since 1973 the population of active Masons in Ontario has shown a steady decline. The graph of this decline is alarming and almost every District shows the same downward curve:



It looks as if nothing we have tried has made any difference. It also looks as if we will cease to exist altogether in about 2028! In his book "Bowling Alone", Robert Putnam documents in great detail the same downward trend in many social and community organizations. I can't begin to condense his 500+ pages into a short newsletter other than to say that almost all community based voluntary organizations have shown exactly the same downward trend. It is not just Masonry that has experienced this. It is churches and many others who have seen a serious drop in participation.

So it is not that there is anything about Masonry in particular which has led to this drop. There has been a profound change in societal activities in what has been termed "social capital", defined as "*those tangible substances that count for most in our daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among the individuals and families that make up a social unit..... The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all of its parts while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy and the fellowship of his neighbours*"¹

¹ Lyda Judson Hanifan, "The Rural School Community Centre" *Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 67 (1916) : 130.

Nowadays we see the evidence of this most often in times of social stress or disaster. Mayor Nenshi of Calgary in recent IDEAS broadcast titled “*Doing the Right Thing*”, eloquently described the massive increase in neighbourliness after the great floods that inundated his city last year. People will still do “the right thing” instinctively in times of need but it seems that at other times they feel they don’t have to. Such was not the case sixty or more years ago!

As Masons we must recognize that there are forces that have created change in our society but we must resist the tendency to think that this means that Masonry should change its essential message. Those messages of brotherly love, relief and truth have stood the test of time and will endure. What we should look at is how we can adapt to meet those challenges posed by the causes of the recent loss of social capital. There are many but a few of them are:--

- The design of our urban and suburban communities – remote from the workplace and where we shop
- Television
- The Internet
- The Smartphone – enabling the workday to extend to 24 hours!
- Both marriage partners working outside the home
- Public (government) provision of almost all essential services.
- Change in the traditional marital structure (more single people living alone)
- Generational change—no longer the cultural norm to engage in community activities.

The young men seeking admission to our lodges do so for similar reasons to past generations. However the cultural pressures and norms that they deal with are vastly different. It is the task and the challenge of Masonry to adapt to these changes without changing the timeless essence that is Masonry itself.

John Forster. W.M.

NEXT MEETING OF LUXOR DAYLIGHT LODGE

October 21st, 2015. 10:30 am.

Official visit of the District Deputy Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Richard Loomes

Lunch: \$15. Please order your ticket by e-mail or telephone to R.W.Bro. Don Healey, our JW prior to SUNDAY, October 18th if you wish to attend the lunch. Donald.Healey@sympatico.ca (613) 838-5789

Our lunches are provided by Success Chapter O.E.S. who use this as a means of supporting their chosen charity