

FIRST GIVING ALL HONOR TO THE GRAND ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE, WHO HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY, THIS DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE. TO THE HON. FELTON N. FERGUSON, PAST NATIONAL GRAND MASTER, TO HON NORMAN WOODARD, PAST NATIONAL GRAND MASTER AND TO HON OSCAR MACK, PAST NATIONAL GRAND MASTER.

TO MY ESTEEM NATIONAL CABINET, TO ALL NATIONAL DEPARTMENT HEADS, TO ALL PAST NATIONAL DEPARTMENT HEADS, ALL GRAND WORTHY MATRONS, TO ALL GRAND MASTERS AND GRAND OFFICERS, TO ALL MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, TO MY COMRADES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. GOOD MORNING. I BRING YOU GREETINGS FROM THE MOST WORSHIPFUL NATIONAL GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED ANCIENT YORK RITE MASONS, PRINCE HALL ORIGIN, NATIONAL COMPACT, U.S.A.

TO MY WIFE THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE FOR ME DURING MY SURGERY. I KNOW A NUMBER OF TIMES I MUST HAVE SCARED YOU PRETTY GOOD AFTER THE SURGERY WITH THE SUDDEN COUGHS THAT SEEM TO TAKE MY BREATH AWAY. TO YOU SITTING HERE AND AT HOME MY WIFE AND I THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS, THOUGHTS, CARDS EMAILS, VISITS, MONETARY GESTURE, FLOWERS, AND FRUIT BASKET AND FOOD SENT DURING MY SURGERY. WHATEVER ACT OF KINDNESS YOU GAVE TOUCHED OUR HEARTS IN A SPECIAL WAY WITH YOUR EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE AND SUPPORT. IT WAS YOUR LOVE, PRAYERS, AND SUPPORT THAT KEPT US GOING EACH DAY. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, AND THANK YOU.

THANK YOU GRAND MASTER CHRIS GRAHAM, SIS. DEANGELA GRAHAM, GRAND WORTHY MATROM AND THE MEMBERS OF COMPACT GRAND LODGE OF ARKANSAS. YOU AND YOUR MEMBERS HAVE DONE AN

EXCELLENT JOB IN THE PREPARATION AND PLANNING OF OUR 150TH MASTERS COUNCIL AND NATIONAL DEPARTMENT HEADS WORKSHOP. PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING THE COMPACT GRAND LODGE OF ARKANSAS A HARDY ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

THANK YOU MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS FOR ATTENDING THIS 150TH MASTERS COUNCIL AND NATIONAL DEPARTMENT HEADS WORKSHOP. MANY OF YOU MADE THE DECISION TO ATTEND THIS SESSION DESPITE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, MANY OF YOU MAYBE FACING. THIS NATIONAL GRAND LODGE IS APPRECIATIVE OF THE SACRIFICE YOU MADE TO BE HERE, THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATED PARTICIPATION AND YOUR LOYAL SUPPORT.

THANK YOU PNGM NORMAN WOODARD AND PNGM FERGUSON FOR ALLOWING ME TO SERVE WITHIN YOUR CABINET AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THIS GREAT ORGANIZATION. TRULY YOU'LL HAVE LEFT A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR US TO BUILD UPON.

THIS MORNING I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK BRIEFLY ON THE SUBJECT OF **“ENHANCING OUR MASONIC STRUCTURE FOR A SOLID FOUNDATION IN THE FUTURE”**. YOU MAY NOTICE THAT THIS IS THE THEME THAT WAS ADOPTED IN MY ACCEPTANCE SPEECH IN JULY 2008. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FITTING TO SPEAK ON THIS SUBJECT MAINLY BECAUSE WHEN A THEME IS ADOPTED SOME USUALLY DON'T GET THE FULL MEANING BEHIND IT.

WEBSTER DEFINE ENHANCING AS TO MAKE GREATER, ADD TO; HEIGHTEN. IF WE CARE TO DEFINE IT MORE WE CAN SAY MAKE BETTER, IMPROVE UPON, INCREASE, OR TAKE TO ANOTHER LEVEL. ALL OF THESE TERMS DESCRIBE HOW THE WORD ENHANCING CAN BE BROKEN DOWN TO THE

LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR TO IMPROVE OUR NATIONAL GRAND LODGE.

NOT THAT IT'S BROKEN AND MUST BE TORN DOWN AND REBUILT...BUT IMPROVED UPON AND MADE BETTER THAN BEFORE. THIS IS WHERE THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE STANDS TODAY. WE, AS LEADERS OF THIS ORGANIZATION, ARE DUTY-BOUND AND OBLIGATED TO PLACE PLANS ON THE TRESTLEBOARD TO INSURE PRINCE HALL ORIGINS MASONS WILL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE IN MASONIC HISTORY.

SINCE THE NGL CAME INTO EXISTENCE IN 1847, WE, AS WELL AS MANY MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS, ARE FACED WITH MANY PROBLEMS THAT HIT AT THE CORE OF OUR STRUCTURE. WE ARE SEEING A DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP, LODGES AND CHAPTERS ARE CLOSING THEIR DOORS BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MEMBERS TO CONDUCT BUSINESS; FINANCIAL DECLINE BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMY; NO PLANS PLACED ON THE TRESTLEBOARD WHEN NEW OFFICERS ARE ELECTED. MEMBERS ARE NOT STAYING BECAUSE OF POOR LEADERSHIP, POOR RITUALISTIC AND MANagements SKILLS; AND MEMBERS BEING PLACED IN POSITIONS WE KNOW THEY WILL NOT SUCCEED IN. THESE ARE ALL DEADLY SIGNS THAT'S PLACING OURS, AS WELL AS OTHER MASONIC STRUCTURE, IN GREAT DANGER.

LET ME ASK YOU THIS QUESTION? IF WE ARE TO ENHANCE OUR MASONIC STRUCTURE, ARE WE PUTTING QUALIFIED LEADERS IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY IN OUR LODGES, CHAPTERS, AND GRAND LODGES?

I HAVE SEEN THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS WHO HAVE SAT IN THE SOUTH AND WEST FOR YEARS. WHEN THEY ARE ELEVATED TO THE EAST, THEY DID'T KNOW WHAT IT TAKE TO GET THEIR MEMBERS UP OR SIT THEM

DOWN. ARE WE BEING FAIR TO THE PERSONS BY ELECTING THEM, KNOWING HE OR SHE OR THEY WILL ONLY FAIL?

ARE WE AFRAID TO CONFRONT THEM ABOUT THEIR INABILITY TO GOVERN? I SAY YES, WE WOULD RATHER KEEP OUR FINGERS CROSSED, HOPING THEY WILL DO WELL. WE SUFFER THROUGH ONE, TWO, THREE AND YES FOUR YEARS WHILE OUR LODGE, CHAPTER, OR GRAND LODGE SLOWLY DIES.

IN THE MEANTIME WE ARE SITTING AROUND SHAKING OUR HEADS AND POINTING FINGERS AT EACH OTHER. I SAY TO YOU THE EAST ISN'T THE PLACE FOR OJT (ON THE JOB TRAINING)

WE TEND TO MAKE OUR ELECTIONS MORE PERSONAL RATHER THAN WHAT'S BEST FOR THE ORGANIZATION. IN THE WORDS OF PNGM HON. NORMAN WOODARD "FRIENDSHIP FOR LEADERSHIP IS A SINKING SHIP". LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A FEW THINGS WE WOULD RATHER DO TO PRESERVE FRIENDSHIP AND KEEP IT A SINKING SHIP:

- WE DON'T WANT TO HURT THE PERSON FEELINGS BY NOT ELECTING THEM TO A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP BECAUSE HE/SHE IS A FRIEND
- WE SHOULD GIVE THE PERSON A CHANCE EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW HE/SHE CAN'T CARRY A MOTION OR PERFORM THE REQUIRED DUTIES BECAUSE HE/SHE IS A FRIEND
- HE OR SHE HAS SERVED IN THE SECOND POSITION FOR YEARS BUT ONLY NEED A LITTLE WORK BUT WE CAN CARRY THEM ALONG BECAUSE HE/SHE IS A FRIEND
- HE OR SHE IS A GOOD PERSON AND HE/SHE IS A FRIEND.

JUST BEING A GOOD PERSON ALONE CAN NO LONGER BE A PREREQUISITE FOR ELECTING OUR LEADERS. WE SHOULD KNOW THE LEADER WE ARE ELECTING TO LED US. DO THEY HAVE A GOOD TRACK RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS? DO THEY HAVE A PLAN OF ACTION ONCE ELECTED? DO THEY HAVE THE RITUALISTIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS TO LED A LODGE, CHAPTER OR GRAND LODGE, CAN THE PERSON WORK WELL WITH MEMBERS, HAVE GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS, AND MOST OF ALL CAN THEY LEAD OTHERS?

THESE ARE ONLY SOME OF THE TOOLS WE SHOULD DEMAND FROM THOSE WE PLACE IN A POSITION OF LEADERSH, IF WE ARE TO ENHANCE OUR MASONIC STRUCTURE FOR A SOLID FOUNDATION IN THE FUTURE.

IN THE WORDS OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA WHO SAID AND I QUOTE. "CHANGE WILL NOT COME IF WE WAIT FOR SOME OTHER PERSON OR SOME OTHER TIME. WE ARE THE ONES'S WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR. WE ARE THE CHANGE THAT WE SEEK".

THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE STRATEGIC PLAN WAS DEVELOPED TO OUTLINE WHERE THE ORGANIZATION IS GOING OVER THE NEXT SIX YEARS OR MORE, HOW IT'S GOING TO GET THERE, AND HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE GET THERE OR NOT. THIS IS CHANGE, THIS IS MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE CHARTING ITS OWN COURSE, THIS IS THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE MAKING THE CHANGES THAT WE SEEK.

GOALS WERE PLACED IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS, GRAND MASTERS, GRAND LODGES, AND GRAND MASTERS COUNCIL PROVIDING DIRECTIONS FOR CHANGE. CHANGE WILL NOT COME

IF WE CONTINUE TO SIT ON OUR HANDS AND WAIT FOR OTHERS TO WRITE OUR HISTORY.

WE, AS LEADERS, MUST BEGIN TO MAKE THOSE CHANGES TO INSURE THIS NATIONAL GRAND LODGE IS TO REMAIN ON A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THE NEXT 162 YEARS. IN OUR MEETING ON MONDAY, PGM KENNETH CAMPFIELD OF SMOOTH ASHLAR GRAND LODGE WILL LAYOUT PLANS FOR THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY IS TO ENHANCE AND DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION. THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF ISSUES AFFECTING THE ORGANIZATION, TEACH THEM SKILLS THEY NEED TO HANDLE VARIOUS ISSUES, AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITES TO EXPLORE AND DISCOVER ONE'S OWN LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL.

THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WILL BE A VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OPEN TO ANY MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE. ELECTED OFFICERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ENROLL IN THE PROGRAM.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN WILL BE THE DOCUMENT THE NATIONAL GRAND LODGE WILL USE AS ITS GUIDELINES TO ENHANCE OUR MASONIC STRUCTURE. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO REVIEW THE PLAN ONLINE AT. WWW.MWNATIONALGRANDLODGE.ORG GRAND MASTERS MAKE COPIES AND SHARE WITH YOUR LODGES AND CHAPTERS. LET IT BE THE INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE, BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE FOR SOUND FINANICAL ACCOUNTABILITY, BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE FOR SOUND MANAGEMENT THAT WILL ENABLE THIS NATIONAL

GRAND LODGE AND YOUR GRAND LODGE TO PRESERVE ITS FUTURE FOR
THE NEXT GENERATION OF MASONS.

THANK YOU AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS THIS MOST WORSHIPFUL
NATIONAL GRAND LODGE.

July 11, 2009