



Martin O. Weddington Papers.

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

THERE IS STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

William A. McClain, Esquire

The Two-Hundredth Anniversary
of African Lodge No. 459

Faneuil Hall
Boston, Massachusetts
September 29, 1984

Virgil said to Dante half way up the hill to purgatory:

"Turn your eyes downward,
it will be good for you to
tranquilize your way, to
see the imprint of your footsteps."

As we assemble here today to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of African Lodge No. 459 on September 29, 1784, it will be good for us to turn our eyes downward in historical retrospect so that we can not only appreciate whence we came but also where we are and where we must go. The celebration of an anniversary is both a festive and a somber occasion for it is a time to make an inventory of the past, take stock of the present and draft an estimate of the future. In doing this there comes to my mind a theme which is expressed by the Holy Writ. In Hebrews Chapter 11, verse 34, the scripture says "Out of your weakness shall come strength." This same expression is made more profound in II Corinthians, Chapter 12, verses 9 and 10 which read "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me ... for when I am weak, then I am strong." This theme

inspires on this occasion the subject which sounds like a paradox or a contradiction, "There is Strength in Weakness."

After repeated efforts to join a lodge of White Masons in Boston, Prince Hall and fourteen other freemen were made masons on Castle Island in Boston Harbor by Worshipful Master John Batt in an Army Lodge of White Masons No. 441 of the Irish Registry on March 6, 1775. On July 3, 1776, African Lodge No. 1 was formally organized with Prince Hall as Master. In order that African Lodge No. 1 might be clothed with the fullest Masonic powers, Prince Hall formally petitioned the Grand Lodge of England, the Mother Grand Lodge of the World, for a charter or warrant empowering the Black brethren to work with full masonic authority in accordance with the usages and customs of Freemasonry.

The warrant to African Lodge was issued on September 29, 1784 two hundred years ago, and delivered three years later on April 29, 1787 by Captain James Scott, the brother-in-law of John Hancock, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. On May 6, 1787, Prince Hall and his Associates formally began to work with full masonic authority under charter no. 459 as granted by the Grand Lodge of England.

Out of the weakness of Prince Hall and his Black brethren in being Black free men deprived of all the rights and privileges of citizenship and out of their weakness of being refused on several occasions admission to the membership in the Lodge of White Masons in Boston, came the strength to establish Prince Hall Masonry in the United States and other parts of the world for

Black men. Today Prince Hall Masonry has 43 Masonic Jurisdictions, nearly 5000 Lodges, a total membership of approximately 300,000 Brothers and assets of approximately one billion dollars. Prince Hall Lodges have been chartered in the United States, Canada, Liberia, West Africa, West Indies and Military establishments around the world. If Prince Hall and his brothers had not gained strength out of their weakness two hundred years ago, we would not be assembled here as Prince Hall Masons today. There is strength in weakness!

Prince Hall made his weakness into strength in many other areas of his life. The genius of Prince Hall was not confined to the ritual and regalia of the lodge hall. He was more than a masonic leader. He was one of the first great civil rights leaders in the United States. He was a strong opponent of slavery, an abolitionist and an advocate for freedom, equality and citizenship for Blacks. He insisted that they should be free of racial discrimination and bigotry. The records show that there were four petitions sponsored by him which were addressed to the Massachusetts legislature between 1773 and 1778, protesting against slavery, the abuses and discrimination practiced against Blacks. Prince Hall advocated that a school for Black children be opened in Boston by its Selectmen because there was no school for them and they were excluded from private schools. Out of his weakness Prince Hall approached the Grand East in due Masonic form and gained strength within the context of his times. Out of his weakness he played a significant and

stellar role in the early struggle of Blacks for freedom, equality, justice and basic human rights. There is strength in weakness!

History reveals that all great institutions have been established and major contributions have been made to life by men and women who found strength in their weakness. Their handicaps became their strengths; their obstacles, their opportunities. Louis Pasteur was so near-sighted that he could not find his way around his laboratory without spectacles yet his scientific discoveries became medical history. Beethoven, although deaf, became one of the greatest musicians of all time. Hearing divine music in his heart, he composed Missa Solemnis, and the Ninth Symphony. Edison, who was deaf, attained self-fulfillment by becoming an internationally famous inventor, producing 1,100 patents in such fields as telegraphy, phonography, and photography. Abraham Lincoln, born in a log cabin, overcame poverty by becoming one of our greatest presidents. John Bunyan, while in a dismal prison, wrote his masterpiece "Pilgrim Progress." Helen Keller, without hearing, sight or speech, graduated with honors at Radcliffe. In writing about her handicap, she said, "As I walk about in my chamber with unsteady feet my unconquering spirit sweeps skyward on eagle's wings. I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found my work, myself and God." Absalom Jones, a contemporary of Prince Hall, was born in slavery, became self-educated and purchased the freedom of his wife and himself. Being humiliated and segregated

while taking communion in St. George's Methodist Church, he walked out of the Church and became the first Black Episcopal priest and Bishop. Not only did he establish St. Thomas African Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but also became the first Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Richard Allen, another contemporary of Prince Hall, was a slave who also worked and purchased his freedom. He was a fellow worker of Absalom Jones and walked out of St. George's Methodist Church with Jones. The two, Allen and Jones, organized the Free African Society in 1787 for economic and social cooperation of Black people in Colonial America "for the benefit of each other." Not only did Richard Allen establish the great African Methodist Episcopal Church with its world-wide jurisdiction, but also he served as the first Grand Treasurer of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. George Washington Carver, born in slavery, not only earned a doctorate degree in science but also pursued excellence and his selfhood by becoming a famous agricultural chemist and educator. He took a peanut, pecan and sweet potato and with a genius which came out of his weakness developed miracle products for mankind. Booker T. Washington was born in slavery and abject poverty, but he pursued with faith and courage his dreams and established Tuskegee Institute for the education of Blacks. Mary McLeod Bethune, a poor, ordinary and humble Black woman overcame race and sex discrimination to establish the Bethune-Cookman College for the education of Black women. Benjamin E. Mays, out of the

weakness of poverty and destitution, overcame almost overwhelming circumstances to become one of our greatest theologians, scholars, educators and humanitarians. Martin Luther King, out of the weakness of an under-privileged Black in the deepest part of the South and out of the weakness of being denied his basic human rights to life, liberty and happiness became one of the greatest martyrs of history in the struggle for basic human rights. Out of his weakness he earned the Nobel Peace Prize for humanitarianism; out of his weakness he became one of few Americans and the only Black American for whom a national holiday will be observed. Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, was born in a manger, reared in humble circumstances and walked the shores of Galilee preaching a gospel of love. He was denied and betrayed by his disciples, rejected by a hostile world, made the ultimate sacrifice on the cross, but arose from the dead to give the world the only hope for life and eternal salvation. Out of his weakness he has left more than any other person in world history an everlasting impact upon humanity. There is strength in weakness!

Just as Prince Hall overcame his weakness and gained strength by approaching the Grand East in due masonic form within the context of his time we, as Prince Hall Masons, on this occasion must resolve that we shall overcome our weaknesses, our handicaps, our obstacles by approaching the Grand East in due Masonic form within the context of our times. Out of our weaknesses we must find strengths because there is a strength in every weakness.

STRENGTH IN BLACKNESS

Out of the weakness attached to the color of our Blackness by the White power structure, we must find strength. One of the Bible verses which your humble servant repeats every morning while jogging is found in St. Luke 17, verse 21, which reads "The Kingdom of God is within you." Because of the cruel, crushing and unequal burdens of more than 350 years of slavery and White racism, the average Black American has considerable difficulty in attaining his self-identification, self-affirmation, self fulfillment, self-acceptance or self-integration as a Black man. In order to overcome the weaknesses forced upon us because of our Blackness by a hostile White power structure, we as individuals must affirm, beautify, deify, dignify and exalt our Blackness. We must discover our unique Black selfhood by finding the "Kingdoms of God within ourselves." Psychologically, this is sometimes difficult because White Americans have portrayed the color "Whiteness" as a symbol for all the virtues of life and "Blackness" as the symbol of all the sinister, ugly and undesirable things of life. In Roget's Thesaurus there are approximately 120 synonyms for "Black" and all but 10 of them are obnoxious and derogatory. At the same time there are 30 synonyms for "White" and almost all are praiseworthy or laudatory and none derogatory. We have certain ^{familiar conversations} colloquialisms even in our English language with negative ^{primary meanings} connotations such as black ball, black crime, black guard, black heart, blacklist and blackmail.

But we in our minds must accept, affirm, beautify, deify, ^{make a God of} dignify and exalt our Blackness. This kind of self-identification, self-affirmation, self-acceptance, self-fulfillment or self-integration cannot come to us as the result of Supreme Court decisions, legislative acts of Congress or by merely giving a Black American better opportunities for education, housing, and employment. The appreciation for his Black selfhood must come from an emotionally, mentally, and psychologically redemptive and regenerative process which must take place within the ego, heart, mind, spirit and emotions of the Black American himself. To identify himself, the Black man must not deny himself because he is Black and not White, but must affirm himself as an individual because of his Blackness. When the Black man learns to affirm himself because of his Blackness then he not only loves himself but also strives to develop his own individuality, his own uniqueness and his own vast "God-given Kingdoms" or potentialities within himself. The Black man will unlock tremendous emotional, mental, physical and spiritual powers within himself by believing that God knew what he was doing when he created him in Blackness the way he is. Being Black must not be self-defeating nor self-nullifying; it must be self-affirming, self-fulfilling and self-enhancing. The greatest struggle of Black Americans today is in their minds. Once we accept the proposition that we must attain our freedom and liberation by becoming truly Black, then the value system in American and throughout the world based on Whiteness will no

longer control us. The divinity which shapes a Black man's life is within himself; it is his very Black self -- his own "I amness." Out of the weakness in Blackness must come beauty, character, dignity, nobility and pride. There is strength in Weakness!

STRENGTH IN THE BLACK FAMILY

Out of the weakness of the Black family life, we must find strength. The greatest tragedy in the Black Community is the deterioration and breakdown of the Black family. The White power structure has consistently attempted to destroy the character, identity, integrity, morality and nobility of the Black family. The disruption of the Black family by White racism commenced with slavery and is continuing today. But the foundation of Black America as in any society, must be the strength of its family life. This has been the strength and the genius of the Catholic and Jewish Communities. If Black America continues to allow the quality and solidarity of Black family life to deteriorate, then it is doomed for disaster and extinction.

Recent statistics show that 55% of Black children are born out of wedlock. 51% of Black families are headed by a single parent, usually a Black woman below the poverty level. Welfare checks do more than convert a government voucher into food and rent. They tend to affect the spirit and particularly tend to dissolve the natural bonds of loyalty a Black father feels

towards the Black woman he has impregnated. The Black child of such union is born in a relationship that is increasingly fleeting, rather than lasting. Today undoubtedly, there is a matriarchal society in the Black Community and Black children are being reared without a wholesome patriarchal influence or a strong paternal image of a Black father in their lives. This should cause us great alarm and we should search for the causes for this social phenomenon.

Recently, there was a Black Family Summit in Nashville, Tennessee sponsored by 100 Black organizations for the purpose of addressing this most important issue in the Black Community. At this three-day conference, Mr. John E. Jacob, Executive Secretary of the National Urban League after reiterating the historical impact of White racism and discrimination on Black people, made the following statement:

"But at the same time we have to recognize that some of our problems may be self-inflicted; that we may have allowed our anger at what American has done to obscure our own need for self-discipline and strengthened community values. In concentrating on the wrongs of discrimination and poverty, we may have neglected the fact that there is a lot we can do about our own problem ourselves."

It is beyond contradiction that the public welfare system has been the greatest force in the dissolution of the Black family life. Rather than provide a society which would give Black Americans an opportunity to acquire the technical, educational, cultural, social, economic and political skills to survive and help themselves, the White power structure has

established the public welfare system "To keep Blacks in their place," to foster a slave mentality and maintain the status quo for Blacks on the federal plantation.

The public welfare system, poverty programs and social agencies have been used to keep the masses of poor and Black underclass, docile, subservient, passive and non-threatening. Public welfare is self-defeating, self-destructive and self-perpetuating for Black recipients. It attempts to teach the poor Black underclass to adjust and discipline itself to oppressive economic, political and social conditions which impoverish them rather than attempt to change the conditions which cause impoverishment. This social adjustment and social discipline to an unjust social system destroy in Black recipients the desire for self-dignity, self-fulfillment, self-enhancement and self-realization -- their full humanhood.

Recently a pamphlet consisting of 22 pages was published by the Washington based Joint Center for Political Studies, entitled a "Policy Framework for Racial Justice," reflecting the deliberations of 30 Black leaders and scholars during conference in 1981 and 1982 in Tarreytown, New York. It includes the endorsement by the Black Leadership forum, comprising heads of the major national civil rights groups. The thrust of the report is that after the passage of 20 years, the expenditure of billions of dollars by the federal government has not had a measurable impact on the income of Black families as compared to White families. What has had an impact - an adverse impact - has

been the growth in teenage pregnancy and the number of Black families headed by a single-parent - a Black female. The report says that single-parent Black families have grown because of, not in spite of, federally engineered social programs such as AFDC. Two things emerged from this report. First, the acknowledgment that it is time to rethink Federal policies and programs designed primarily to help Black people and second, the realization that the Black community itself must assume the major responsibility in halting the dissolution of Black families, in preventing the increase of teenage pregnancy and in finding solutions to eliminate the problems that remain.

Prince Hall Masons throughout the nation must become a liberating force for the Black family. We must mobilize the educational, cultural, religious, political and economic resources of the Black Community to keep Black Americans off of public welfare. We must teach the underclass Black Americans to have the social discipline and the motivation to develop the "Kingdoms of God within themselves," their talents and human resources so that they may have self-dignity and self-fulfillment. When properly motivated Blacks have been able to overcome weaknesses and excel in any field of endeavor which they pursue. They have the mind power and the physical power to do this.

More than this, Black America has the power and the resources in its own hands to rescue any segment of Black Americans from oppressive social and economic problems. Recent

statistics show that the Black Community has a consuming power of 180 billion dollars, which is exceeded by only five or six countries in the world, including the United States. We need only to transform this consuming power into productive power. Black America has enough political, economic and human resources in its own hands right now not only to save their Black families but also to defend any segment of Black America from all the injustices of racism imposed by the White power structure. We must give the underclass Black Americans the cultural, economic, educational, political, social and technical skills to climb out of poverty, to leave the federal plantation, to attain a work-ethic and pride in self-help. To survive we must use all of our resources to strengthen the roots and branches of our Black family life. Black children will climb out of slums and shed their welfare mentality en masse when they see their parents and adult generations doing it. Out of the weakness in the Black family life must come stability, solidarity, unity, moral strength and mutual love. There is strength in weakness!

STRENGTH IN THE BLACK SCHOOL

Out of the weakness in the predominantly Black public schools, we must find strength. A general crisis exists in the public school systems as it relates to Black children in all our large major cities. White Americans have demonstrated conclusively that they do not want to live near Black Americans

and have their children attend the same schools. More than 25 years have passed since Brown v. Board of Education I and II were decided on May 17, 1954 and May 31, 1955, respectively, outlawing the "separate but equal" doctrine. Yet today the public schools in our large major cities are more segregated now than ever before and the quality of education is at its lowest ebb.

While integration of public schools is a moral imperative which we must eventually achieve in race relations, we must not become so entangled in the web of integration as an ideological concept that it is the only means of giving Black children quality education. Association with White children in an educational setting is not as important as making the education of Black children a liberating force. We must give Black children the kind of education which will help them to overcome the cultural, economic, political, psychological and social disadvantages of 365 years of White racism.

Furthermore, there is no conclusive proof that an all Black school per se produces educational deficiencies. Pure Blackness alone is not the problem of the Black school but other attendant factors such as poverty and a starved cultural environment which deprive Black children of sensory, verbal and visual stimuli necessary for learning, constitute the real problem. Today it is estimated that forty-two percent of our Black youth are functionally illiterate. We can not blame all of this on White racism or poverty. This is a day where there are free museums, free public libraries, free public schools from elementary level

through the high school level. We ourselves must take the blame for some of our plight. This means that we must motivate Black children to have the same hunger for educational excellence in the development of their minds as they do for physical excellence of their bodies in the pursuit of sports. We must prepare them to cope with Black reality and give them a Black ideology of competition necessary for their survival and liberation. The present system of public education dominated by the White power structure teaches Black children a White culture and White value system which is predestined to never allow Black Americans to attain their predestined Black selfhood. Black children need the kind of education which gives them Black self-identification and Black self-enhancement.

If White America is going to abandon the public schools supported by public taxation and leave them to Black Americans, then we ought to seize the opportunity to make them laboratories of excellence, capable of forging from the anvils of our own Blacksmith shops in our own image, our own Black skilled teachers, our own Black professional administrators and our own Black trained children who are prepared for achievement and survival in a highly competitive social system dominated by White Americans. In short, Black children need an education which gives them educational excellence as well as the tools for surviving and liberating themselves in our American society.

Presently, there is no public school system in America which is doing enough to meet the basic needs of Black children. The real issue is not integration but the fact that 80% of our Black

children are not being educated to develop their selfhood and take their place and survive in society. In order to compete and survive, Black children must not only have massive doses of pre-school work and tutorial programs but also remedial work. Their parents need concentrated adult educational programs so that they can appreciate the learning process and a need for education. There should be intensive guidance and counselling of Black children throughout their entire school career. Because of the tremendous cultural, social and economic gap between Black Americans and White Americans, formal education of Black children should commence as soon as they are out of the cradle and progress with intensity throughout their high school and college careers.

To prepare and educate Black children for their liberation and survival, there must be a positive, affirmative and cooperative partnership between Black parents, Black school administrators and teachers as well as the Black Community itself. All segments of the Black Community must become involved in Black education so that it reflects in all respects the needs, aspirations and responsibilities of the Black Community in its struggle for equal status and liberation. This means that the Black Community itself must pour massive doses of its economic, human, political and social resources in support of Black education. If the Black community survives, it will be because of the kind of education our Black children receive in support of their Black self-identification and Black selfhood. If the Black

Community fails in its struggle to overcome White racism, it will be because the Black Community failed to provide the necessary resources for the educational excellence of our Black children in the proper psychological warfare and preparation for Black liberation. Out of the weakness in the predominant Black school must come educational excellence, Black survival and liberation. There is strength in weakness!

STRENGTH IN THE BLACK CHURCH

Out of the weakness in the Black Church, we must find strength. No other movement or organization in the Black Community assembles as many Black Americans regularly as the Black Church. Every Sunday morning the Black minister has a captive audience which listens to his preachments of theology, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, sociology and his expression of opinions on a variety of subjects affecting the lives of Black people. At this point in history the Black Church is the only institution which the Black Community has successfully supported because the collective group assets and wealth of the Black Community are invested in the Black Church.

In the 19th century the Black Church was the leading advocate in the movement for survival and liberation of the Black masses. Not only was it a spiritual force for Black Americans but also it was the center of Black life. Indeed, it was a powerful socializing influence for social reform in the Black

experience. It shaped a Black theology which supported Black survival and a liberation movement for Black masses. In the discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Salutation and Statement of the Mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Church are expressions of the liberation and holistic religion for Black Americans.

But today too many of our Black Churches have retreated from social reform and liberation movement for the Black masses. They escape from the struggle of the Black masses for survival and liberation by indulging in a death-mentality theology rather than a life-mentality theology. They choose not to fight in the trenches of the Black Community for social reforms but rather to remain in the comfort and seclusion of the pulpit and preach death-mentality sermons as a form of escapism from the real life in this world. They encourage the Black masses towards social acceptance, social adjustment and social discipline to the unjust treatment and oppressive social and economic conditions in this world on the promise of rewards by God after death in heaven - the unknown world hereafter. In other words, their death-mentality theology is "give White Americans all the beauty, glory, comforts and rewards of this world but give me Jesus and Heaven hereafter."

However, the formation of the Congress of National Black Churches, Inc., composed of the seven largest Black denominations, is a strong signal that there is a growing conviction among Black ministers that the Black Church must

become the center for improving social and economic conditions of Black Americans. Bishop John B. Adams of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, founder and Chairman of the Congress said: "I ask myself a few questions. Where is Black folks' power? Where is their biggest investment? Where is their greatest independence? Answers all pointed towards the Black Church. Yet in my lifetime, there has been no forum in which the Black Church leadership could come together to deal with the common pain of Black folk." The consensus is growing among Black Church leaders that Black Americans must rely less on governmental benevolences and more on their own resources for their purposes.

Out of its weakness the Black Church in America has amassed enough resources under its control to contribute to Black survival and liberation. There are 65,000 Black Church edifices in this country having an estimated total value of 10.2 billion dollars. The total annual plate offerings are approximately 1.7 billion dollars. This does not include church-owned businesses and publishing companies. These Black Churches have enough resources to establish within the Church administration social welfare programs, credit unions, employment agencies, tutorial programs, head start programs, adult education programs, health programs, child care programs and other kinds of programs necessary to help rescue the Black masses from economic, social and political exploitation and extinction by the White power structure. The sobering fact is that teenage pregnancy, illegitimacy, dope addiction, crime, family disruption, divorce

and morality are problems which primarily rest for solution upon those institutions such as the Black Church which are charged with the responsibility for spiritual and moral leadership of the Black Community. This is the primary mission of the Black Churches and on this premise they have amassed all their influence, power and wealth in the Black Community. This means that the challenge before the Black Churches today is to strip themselves of their institutional impediments, to modernize its functions and prepare a relevant agenda in order to keep abreast and cope with the ever-changing social, political, economic and cultural problems facing Black Americans today in the real world. Black Churches must give Black Americans a Black theology and a Black life-mentality religion, which give Blacks a spirituality of survival and liberation in this life. Black Americans must not only seek victory in the grave but also victory in this life. It takes more raw courage to live than it does to die. In short, Black Americans need a positive, affirmative and an aggressive religion which teaches them to develop their talents and utilize their resources for a better quality of life in this world. If the Black Community is going to survive it must not only ask for Jesus but for all the good things of this world also. The Black Churches in America have the resources to serve as a strong liberating force for the Black masses in the trenches of America. Out of the weakness of the Black Church must come a Black liberation theology, a holistic mission and a life-mentality religion. There is strength in weakness!

CONCLUSION

Dr. Dan Dodson, an eminent social scientist of Columbia University sociologist aptly said:

"People need to become involved in more than the labor of survival. There is a need of goals that take people out into real world."

As we gather here today as Prince Hall Masons we have two responsibilities. The first is a maintenance responsibility. This means that we must perform the housekeeping and maintenance tasks to preserve and protect Prince Hall Masonry. But we have a second responsibility which is just as important. We have a missional responsibility - a mission to draw on the trestle board new dynamic programs, new creative blueprints to take Prince Hall Masonry from weakness to strength out into the real world.

First, out of our weakness must come strength to form a National Prince Hall Masonic Planning Council. This Council should be composed of representatives from all major branches of Prince hall Masonry and its concordant and appendant bodies. We need to draft a National Prince Hall Masonic Master Plan to prepare ourselves for the social and economic changes which affect the Black Community from which we obtain our membership. We should not wait and try to solve these problems by reacting to the impulse of the moment. By master planning we prepare for the inevitability of social change. Let us ask ourselves a few questions. What are we going to do about non-Prince Hall Masonry which is competing with us for membership? What are we going to

do if the doors of White Masonry are open for Black membership? Where will Prince Hall Masonry be in five years, ten years, twenty-five, one hundred years or two hundred years from now? In short, we need a National Prince Hall Masonic Planning Council.

Second, out of our weakness must come strength to organize a National Prince Hall Masonic Network Support System. The Catholic and the Jewish Communities have such a system to insure their survival. Such a network system is necessary in good times and in bad times; in times of fortune, in times of misfortune which occur in our respective Black communities. For example, the financial crisis of Fiske University should have been of great concern to all Black Americans and most particularly, to Prince Hall Masons, but there was no network of communication to inform us before the tragedy occurred. Moreover, a network system is necessary in times of good fortune. For example when the large corporations are conducting a talent search for competent Black corporate executives or technicians in a special area, we ought to be able to respond to the call through our network system.

Third, out of our weakness must come strength to build in Boston an impressive National Prince Hall Masonic Shrine with such scenic beauty and architectural splendor that it will attract worldwide attention to our expression of gratitude and honor for the Black man who founded Prince Hall Masonry. We sometimes are notoriously guilty of not paying the proper respect to our benefactors - to those great men and women of the past who

sacrificed their fortunes and lives so that we could enjoy the rich benefits of their labors. We have enough resources, enough technicians and enough architects in Prince Hall Masonry to design such a Shrine. The major branches of Prince Hall Masonry are financially able to donate the seed money. If all of our 300,000 masonic brothers would contribute not less than five dollars a year, in one year the chest for such shrine would be 1.5 million dollars and in ten years 15 million dollars. If such a facility was adequately designed to house the annual meetings of the Northern and Southern Jurisdictions of Scottish Rite Freemasonry as well as the Imperial Shrine for the next five or ten years, the income derived therefrom would more than adequately pay the cost of erecting such a Shrine. Considering all the many thousands of dollars the major branches of Prince Hall Masons spend each year for annual meetings, there is no doubt that we have the resources to erect, support and subsidize an adequate memorial, an impressive shrine for our founder, Prince Hall.

As we assemble here today to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of African Lodge No. 459, we give reverence to God and gratitude to Prince Hall and his fourteen brother masons for this historical legacy. As we stand on the five points of fellowship we accept with deep humility and renewed commitment this masonic heritage for all Prince Hall Masons, living and dead as well as of unborn generations. We pledge and vow to carry the banner of Prince Hall Masonry, unscathed and untarnished, until it has achieved its ultimate destiny in history.

Prince Hall out of all his weaknesses, found strength and approached the Grand East in due masonic form within the context of his times. Like Prince Hall, on this two hundredth anniversary of African Lodge No. 459 we, Prince Hall Masons, too shall resolve to find strength to overcome our weaknesses and approach the Grand East in due masonic form within the context of our times. "Out of your weakness shall come strength." "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me -- for when I am weak, I am strong." There is strength in weakness!