

*Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F. & A. M.  
Jurisdiction of Minnesota Incorporated*



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**From the Desk of the  
MW Grand Master**

To the Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Alex D. Horne, Officers of this Grand Body, both Elected and Appointed, to the Past Grand Masters here assembled, and Representatives of the Lodges who pay obedience to this, the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, Jurisdiction of Minnesota, Inc... and to our distinguished visitors who have graced these proceedings with your presence

**GREETINGS,**

I find myself in a state of heartfelt admiration as I stand before you this morning with the realization that we as a people are in the Gracious Hands of the Almighty and are surrounded by his Love and that of his Beloved Son. For this I am reminded of daily as I reflect upon the fact, that I am above, and not below, and have the opportunity to look into the eyes of those that continue to surround me, with Blessings and Love, I can't help but to realize and to know, that I am Truly blessed.

It is my hopes that as we reflect together upon my Stewardship that you will share with me, in the overwhelming pride, that I have in our Jurisdiction.

As always I can't continue without giving thanks to the two persons that were the most influential in my life, and who nurtured me into the Man, the Husband, Father and Brother and Friend that I am on this day, my Father Brother, Ben Johnson Jr., and my Mother Mildred C. Johnson. I thank them for their never-ending support and for their guidance and direction over the years. As always I hope that I exceeded their many expectations.

Before proceeding further, I ask the Grand Chaplain to come West of the Alter to pray for me, as I humbly stand before you to give an account of my stewardship as Your MW Grand Master.

**NECROLOGY**

During the past 12 months, the Grim Reaper of Death traveled through our craft, and called from Labor to refreshment the following Brothers. From Pioneer Lodge No. 1, PGM, Azariah Buckley on 12/1/2008, from Anchor Hilyard Lodge No. 2, PGM, Lawrence H. Henderson on 9/29/2008, from Acacia Lodge No. 12, PM, Samuel Dancy, Jr. on 1/3/2009, all of whom worked diligently to contribute to the success of the Prince Hall Masonic Family, of this the Minnesota Jurisdiction.

It is very important that we remember, that we owe it to the memory of all of our Deceased Brothers, to continue the work that they began; and that any less of an act, would be a disgrace upon their legacies and memories.

Brothers, we must also remember that it is our obligation to ensure that we leave something for those coming behind us to build upon.

As I stand before you, to remind you of those that have traveled from us, please take the time to ensure that your Loved Ones are cared for, by ensuring that you have insurance in place to provide for them upon your passing.

I implore you to do it now, as neither of us knows what tomorrow may bring. It is also ok Brothers, to think about the legacy of your Lodge and or Grand Lodge, by leaving something for either one or both of them, by way of requiring that a portion of your Last Will and Testament be identified and or allocated for them respectively.

### **STATE OF THE NATION**

The State of our Nation is in turmoil both at home and abroad, as we continue to deal with the loss of our American Service Men and Women, as well as civilians numbering well into the thousands, in both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and still face the possible tension with Iran, North Korea and even Pirates and other areas of the World.

Our Nation continues to suffer casualties as those profound words of wisdom that were laid out in the bible comes to fruition, by way of viruses, plagues, wars and rumors of wars to name a few of the struggles that our Nation has and continues to face daily in various places throughout the world.

We are continuing to face enormous hardships here at home, as we as a country continue to witness a massive amount of foreclosures, bankruptcies, job closings and the reality of a recession that even though it seems to be nearing to an end will still bring hardship well into our future. We are also witnessing floods, earth quakes, and of course as we can personally attest to tornadoes, hurricanes, and a Country that is torn over the fight of the under privileged, under insured and what a Health Care Reform should look like.

We did make history as we witnessed together the first African American elected as our 44th President of the United States. I don't know about you but in my lifetime I thought it to be impossible, but now I know that it wasn't improvable.

It is obvious as we are only eight months into the Presidency of President Obama, that the Leader of the Free World needs all of our Prayers. It doesn't matter what your political affiliation is, the reality is that the United States of America, of which we all Pledge our allegiance to, before every Lodge Meeting not only needs a successful President, but a Congress and a Government that is working for all its People, regardless of their race, economic standing and or gender or marital status, for us all to overcome the many perils that stand before you and before me.

## **FRATERNAL RELATIONS**

I am proud to say that our fraternal relationships continue to be extremely positive, both internal and external. Our Grand C.C.F. of C., Past Grand Master, Charles Milliner, continues to ensure me of this fact on, an on-going basis, and I am glad to see him up and on his feet after his accident.

We continued to build upon the relationship between our Brothers of A.F.&A.M, here in Minnesota, as they continue to play a prominent role in our success, by way of supporting us in a many an effort that has come before us during this past year. I must extend heartfelt thanks to PGM, Tom Jackson, as we received offers of assistance to help in the survival efforts of our Lodge located in Duluth, Minnesota, which I am sad to say did not come to fruition; nonetheless, the thought and efforts is what counts. That's what Brotherly Love shows us and is all about.

I am also pleased that Most Worshipful Grand Master, Thomas G. McCarthy, of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota has extended an invitation to continue to build upon our established relationship for the betterment of both of our Masonic Jurisdictions here in Minnesota. I am personally looking forward to our efforts to continue to strengthen our relationship.

I was afforded the privilege of visiting the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Wisconsin, during the past year and was also extended invitations to attend various other Grand Lodges, but was unable to accept their gracious invitations do to conflicts, previously scheduled.

## **MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

It was a privilege and an honor to attend the 37th Midwest Regional Conference of Grand Masters and Masons and the 22nd Midwest Regional Conference of Grand Chapters and Eastern Stars that was held in my hometown of Chicago, Illinois.

The prevalent outcome that came out of the Midwest Conference was that we, the Grand Masters of the Midwest Regional Conference, would address the issues with the Imperial Council of the A.E.A.O.N.M.S, not as Most Worshipful Grand Masters but as Past Potentates, of which all of the sitting Most Worshipful Grand Masters are, during the Imperial Session that was held in Atlanta, Georgia in August.

## **CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS**

The Conference was held in Los Angeles, California this year. One of the many highlights of the Conference was that, of the changing of the Guard, as the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Texas, Wilbert M. Curtis was elected as the President of the Conference. I am looking forward to the direction and the leadership that will take place under his tutelage.

## **ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST DAY**

Sunday, December 28, 2008, was the day that the Jurisdiction of Minnesota observed Saint John's the Evangelist Day. Palestine Lodge #7 was the host Lodge and the Masonic Family held its observance at New Salem Baptist Church, 2519 Lyndale Ave N, Minneapolis, MN

## **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST DAY**

Sunday, June 21, 2009, was the day that the Jurisdiction of Minnesota observed Saint John's the Baptist Day. I must thank Palestine Lodge #7 for graciously stepping in as the host, as there was a conflict that occurred with the original stated host for said event. The Masonic Family held its observance at the New Beginnings Baptist Tabernacle, 4301 First Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN.

At this time I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to Steven C. Davis, the Most Excellent Grand High Priest, MN. Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons, to John W. Hardeman III, S.G.I.G., Deputy of the Orient of MN, Northern Jurisdiction, Scottish Rite Masons, to Alex D. Horne, Deputy of the Desert of Minnesota, A.E.A.O.N.M.S., and to all of the Worshipful Masters and Brothers for all of your support to make both of the St. John's Day Observances a success and in helping to deliver a message to our communities about who we are and what we believe in.

## **STATE OF THE CRAFT**

We are continuing to address the many issues that stand before our Jurisdiction with dedication and resolve, as we continue to ensure the proper understanding of the roles of those that are in Leadership for this Grand Lodge Body. This was done with the continuance of the reestablishing of the responsibilities of our District Deputies and by addressing the responsibilities and the expectations of the Grand Lodge Officers.

This Grand Lodge made a greater effort, to work with the Worshipful Masters of our various Lodges, with the understanding that our commitment of the directions and the hardships that we face as a Jurisdiction can only be overcome through accurate communications between said entities and with our due diligence.

During this past year we extended the Wellness Plans for two of our Beloved Lodges, that began to address the issues that had placed them in jeopardy of losing their charters, due to their previous lack of participation in Masonic customs and activities, and their failure to conduct lodge meetings, and their stagnation of their membership. Brothers, I am pleased to say that there has been improvement shown with both of those Lodges, regardless of how minimal.

We are continuing to create a format for our Lodges that will allow them to grow their membership, to ensure that Lodge Officers are provided with the necessary tools and are taught the correct way and have the essentials, needed to not only to lead but to Govern their members; this is being done by the establishment of our Minimum Control Standards for our Jurisdiction.

Brothers, I will not sugar coat where we are, we have come upon a point where we can easily loose our way as an organization if we don't remember what we are here to do. We are not here to merely exist, we were founded as an organization that was meant to help our families and communities, but we can't help either if we fail to help ourselves.

**We need to remember that we have an obligation to those future members to leave them something to grasp and to cement their foundation.** If we don't do it, who will? We must come together and work more together than separate. We can't continue to function as the Brothers of St. Paul and those of Minneapolis. It is time that we remember that we say that we are members of the Jurisdiction of Minnesota and it is time for us to have a home that is for all of us not for some of us.

**It is time for us to do more for our communities and for our families. It is time for us to revive what we are all about and to identify what that is and to communicate it to our communities in a better, stronger and clearer manner.** One that will not only afford us the Pride that we deserve but that provides the enticement that brings new candidates to our doors.

We must also continue to look at different ways of showing the community what we stand for and for different avenues of raising resources and or monies.

**We have become stagnate and it is time for that to change. I take that back; it's not time, it's been time, and it's time to actually do something about it.** We must stop being afraid to say that we are members of the Prince Hall Masonic Family, because if you have to be ashamed of the Organization that you are apart of, then you shouldn't be apart of it.

I have said this before, but I can't say it enough, we must renew our relationships, with our Children and with our families. I am not only speaking about our own children, but about those Children and those of the single parent families that need a voice, that need someone to represent and to speak for them. That must be you and that must be me. **It is time that we stand for our communities and become not just a voice in the community but also a Masonic Voice throughout the state of Minnesota and our Jurisdiction.**

With all of this being said, **I am confident in my ability to be able to stand before you and state that the overall State of the Craft continues to be positive but we can easily loose what we have if we do not act. I refuse not to act, my question to you is, what are you willing to do? Where do you want to be? What does each of you have to**

**bring to ensure that the future of Prince Hall Masonry in the Jurisdiction of Minnesota withstands the test of time?**

## **PRINCE HALL MASONIC FOUNDATION**

Brothers, the Prince Hall Masonic Foundation needs you. We have lost our focus as to what our purpose is with our own 501c3 foundation. I encourage each one of you under the sound of my voice and each Master Mason of every Lodge to get involved in some form or fashion with our foundation. Please donate just a little of your time and the growth and development of our foundation will be enormous.

Allow me to use a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Take the first step in Faith, you don't have to see the entire staircase, you just have to take the first step."

## **FINANCE**

I am confident and pleased to stand before you to say that the financial situation of this Grand Lodge is in good condition. We are solvent in all financial areas. Our trustees, and this administration has ensured to keep your funds safe for this Grand Body, for the sole purpose of improving our economic position but we must not and will not stop here. If our current financial surroundings have taught us anything, it should be that it is easy to loose what you have if you fail to act toward the protection of it.

## **CONCORDANT, APPENDANT, ADOPTIVE AND AFFILIATED BODIES**

All of our bodies within this Jurisdiction are operating on one accord and in one direction. We are moving forward together, we are building together and we will continue to do so because all of your leaders have an understanding that our future and our success depends on a unified approach. They are all-respectful of Masonic protocol and share a command of the vision for our jurisdiction.

It's been a pleasure working with the Ill. Potentate, Gregory Meadows, with the Commander and Chief, Japhus Dent and with the Eminent Commander, Eugene Hyatt. Thanks to each of you for all that you have done to enhance the visibility of not just Prince Hall Masons, but for the members of all of your houses.

**It is my desire to continue to see that we continue to move this great Jurisdiction and to move our communities, together with one vision, with one hope and one goal.**

Brothers, as I prepare to close I have to remind you that we have more work to do within our communities, as the number of those incarcerated continues to rise and those coming out into our communities are in need of guidance and assistance and are failing to receive it.

Our communities are getting older; the need for more benevolence and charity can't be greater than it is at this point without they're being a major catastrophe that occurs. **It is**

**my belief that we don't need a catastrophe to act, we simply need the desire, I have it, and now I ask you do you have the desire to act?**

It is also my belief, that it is time for the Prince Hall Masons of this Jurisdiction to do more, and to be an inspiration for all of our Men, both young and old, and for those families within the portals of our communities and beyond that are in need.

**The time is now, for us to stand up and be effective role models, for us to stand up for all the men that are within our communities but more especially our young men. It is time for us to stop talking and start putting into action our words.**

Please allow me to humbly say Thank you to you all for the blessing of allowing me to be your representative during this past year; it has indeed been my privilege.

Fraternally,

Keith L. Johnson, MW Grand Master

MWPHGL of Minnesota

**Please refer to my Communication Guide Booklet 2009 for a compilation of my Official Acts for this past year**