



## **Most Worshipful Grand Master**

**Milton F. “Toby” Fitch, Jr.**

### **2006 Address to the Grand Lodge**

I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made Heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore. (Psalm 121)

#### **We are blessed!**

Grand Master Milton F. Fitch, Sr., my mother Sister Cora Whitted Fitch, Past Grand Masters Parker, Dawson, Johnson, Chambers; to my Deputy Grand Master, Robert M.L. Walker; Senior and Junior Grand Wardens Jackie Robinson and Franklin Brown; Grand Masters Redden, Vaughn, Davis, Moore, Haynes, Starghill, Bagwell, Lewis, Fitzgerald, Jernigan; Special Advisors Lee Woods and Steve Kyle; to the Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary, the late James A. Mitchell, Sr., and M. Trent Carmon; to Grand Tiler, James H. Petty; to the Grand Trustees, Howard Pearce, Bennett Taylor, and Charles R. Smith; my Grand Lecturer Ray Jones, my Grand Chaplin, James Harris, other Grand Lodge Officers, to the Heads of Masonic Houses of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge; to the Grand Worthy Matron, Valeria S. Collins and Grand Worthy Patron L. Waddell Alston; Brothers and Sisters; and to the Grand Lodge Staff, I greet you in the name of Him that looks high and low, near and far, wide and narrow, our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

Let me thank my good friend Speaker Joe Mavretic, my sister Christine Fitch and my cousin Malcolm Fitch for being here.

#### ***(Music to be played)***

Before entering any great or important undertaking, one should always invoke the aid of Deity. Deacons, escort Assistant Grand Chaplain Paul Lowe to the Altar.

## **Necrology**

Behold, I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51). During our last fiscal year 211 Brothers have gone on to that Celestial Blue Lodge in the sky to receive their rewards for their labor and a proper Lodge of Sorrow having been conducted, Assistant Grand Chaplain Lowe lead us again in prayer.

As Grand Master, I thank all Worshipful Masters and their Crafts for handling the Masonic Rites for our departed Brothers.

## **State of the Nation**

I told you last year that our nation was involved in a war that in my opinion we can't win. We are still there and losing. We didn't ask to go to Iraq but we are there so we need to support our troops and their families in every way we can. We must keep our troops and our members who are serving in our Armed Forces constantly in our prayers. This 136<sup>th</sup> Grand Lodge Session is dedicated to our Military Forces.

Those who control the Federal government seem to think more of the folk living outside this country than they do of people and problems within the borders of the United States of America. Charity, I was taught, begins at home and then spreads abroad, not abroad then spreading home.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit our Brothers and Sisters in 2005 and the Federal Government, FEMA, the Red Cross, and others did not rush to them. Nor have they one year later rushed to them. I drove to New Orleans in August for the Shrine Convention and the areas of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana looked like a war zone. One year later not much rebuilding has occurred. Compared to over seas where rebuilding in Iraq is visible. Our government should do better than that!!!

## **State of the State**

“We've got some difficult days ahead” - Martin Luther King

It's up to us to create change.

Last year I told you we were not represented at all levels of our state government. Well, nothing has changed. Look at our Supreme Court. No one there looks like us. There is an open seat again. Pat Timmons Goodson one of us is running. We must go back to the old way of depending on each other and practicing economic development first with ourselves. We must be more active in our government by making sure all people we know are registered to vote and that they do vote in every election. Jobs are still leaving our state like water running downstream. This Prince Hall Family must lead our communities in civic, education, and financial self help.

### **Knights of Pythagoras**

The future of Prince Hall Masonry is dependent on young men desiring to become Masons. We have the means to plant the seeds of Masonry in their minds. We can make a major difference in a young boy's life if we just take a few hours per month. We are missing many serious opportunities. Your time and presence are important, however, you are limited in what you can achieve if you don't have the funds. To have a positive impact in a boy's life, we must get his attention. We must, therefore, have programs that address his social, educational, and emotional needs. We must be able to provide him with experiences he may never get elsewhere; experiences such as field trips, major league sporting events, college visits, and other cultural enrichment opportunities. We need you to volunteer to help a boy become a MAN!

These same boys that we need to mentor are being mentored by gang members. They are receiving the education and cultural experiences from the street that we failed to offer them. A child like every one else wants to be loved and accepted. When he can't have that love and acceptance from traditional, normal or regular means, they find it else where. I.e. GANGS! It is too late to complain when yours find them selves in this situation when we did not offer them a choice.

### **State of the Craft**

I want to thank each of you for the trust you have placed in me, and in the team that you have chosen. All still are working in harmony. The addition of M. Trent Carmon has been a God send. We still have a great Web Page which is second to none. We had a great Founders Day at NCCU and a great Founders Day at Central Children's Home. We had a great Grand Session for

the Order of the Eastern Star. We are in a jurisdiction on the move and every year gets better and better.

In 2004 we had fourteen (14) recommendations. Well, we have done 11 of them to completion. We still need to (1) revise the code; (2) complete the Renovation Brigade and (3) develop competition on Ritual work by Districts with the best going to the Regions, then to the Grand Lodge. All the matters recommended in 2005 are still being worked on.

Our communities still need men who will help form values and shape character. These men must be Prince Hall Masons!! Shouldn't they be? Since, we are the last institution Black folks have, we must continue to teach our children by taking them by the hand and educating them about our past so that they don't become enslaved by it. They are the leaders of tomorrow.

We all, by now, have heard of the vote at the Adams Mark Hotel of our AF & AM Grand Lodge Brothers for recognition. Well, it didn't pass again, but it was close. Again I say, If Christ wouldn't deny you the Cup of Life, then how can and will one Brother deny another the Apron of Life? I use to think this vote was all about race but knowing what I now know that took place at that Grand Session, I am not so convinced that is all race. At that session, the Grand Lodge of the Bahamas was present and in attendance. Six men darker than I represented the Grand Lodge of Bahamas. Past Grand Master Albert Pike, AF & AM, once said that Prince Hall Masons are more legitimate than we are. But, I'll never sit in a Lodge with one of them. But, yet last week 6 sat in the AF & AM Grand Lodge of North Carolina. My conclusion now is that it is NOT Racism; it is ignorance and the only way to combat ignorance is to Educate! Educate! Educate!

**I need to remind you again about the Willie Lynch syndrome.**

On or about 1712, a man was brought to this country from the West Indies who had a prescription to control the Negro for years and centuries to come. His name was Willie Lynch. Why do I now give you this history again? Lynch realized there are differences in us so he pitted the old against the young, big against small, tall against short, dark against light, the house against field, and men against women. Taught us, we should only trust and fear the Master, thus fully stripping us of togetherness. We cannot allow the Blue House to be pitted against the Red House, or Purple House against Black House, or men against women. We are all a part of the

Prince Hall Family and we must come together for the survival of the Order. We must, men, respect our women and hold them up, always, and women must always support our Brothers.

**Nothing personal, just business and in Brotherly love.**

There appears to be peace and harmony in the Jurisdiction in all Houses except Shrine Dom. Let me try and set the record straight. When I became Grand Master, I went to the Imperial Session in Atlanta, Ga. in 2004, and after the parade, Imperial Potentate Slaughter asked to speak with me. He informed me that he was not pleased with the way our Deputy was treating the women. I told him I would speak to the Deputy. I informed the Deputy of the Imperial Potentate's displeasure. I was informed that no one had ever voiced displeasure with him or the way he was handling things. He said that he could change. At Gala Day 2005 in Charlotte, NC after a presentation by the Visitor's Bureau, the Deputy had a verbal disagreement with a woman presenter and the Imperial Potentate saw it and heard it and made up his own mind.

If confusion and conflict are in this House, it has been caused NOT by my hands but by the Deputy's own hands.

After attending the Grand Session for the Grand Chapter Order of the Eastern Star and hearing the Grand Worthy Matron and all of the questions posed concerning elections, who can run in succession, I have concluded that the Grand Chapter is not in compliance with the Grand Lodge and therefore, I am now instructing them that they have 9 months to come into compliance.

When a member of the Order of the Eastern Star goes to another House and is dropped from the Order of the Eastern Star, they shall be dropped from the other Houses.

Last year I promised you that a 16-year wait would be delivered to you this year. I hope that the Past Grand Masters of this jurisdiction will make themselves available to autograph any History Book purchased. What I am telling you is that your history is now published and on sale in the Secretary's office. Those of you who have paid the deposit in advance, the deposit will be honored upon revealing your receipt. The purchase price of book is forty dollars (\$40.00).

For this year's raffle, the lodges and chapters received total incentives of \$38,600 and the Grand Lodge yielded a net profit of \$138,950. Give **yourselves a round of applause**. We are still on the move! Tickets are now available for the 2007 Raffle. See Ben Chisolm or Robert M. L. Walker.

For years some of the subordinate lodges complained that their accounts were wrong, we are proud to report that we have satisfied more than 36 lodges where there were disputes.

It has come to my attention that some of the lodges are not sharing financial information of the lodge with its members. This is a voluntary organization. The members pay their monies to belong. They must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to see and to know where their monies have gone.

You as officers and members of this Grand Lodge should be proud of our past. And, thank God for the fact that we are an influential part of the future of our country. Especially this Prince Hall Family, by bringing forth good to Mankind.

But, proud as we are of the past, we come face to face today with the realization that the winds of change blow hard and are restlessly sweeping away the cobwebs of the past.

We often hear those among us say, that we cannot live in the past. While this could be true, we do realize that there is a temptation on the part of some of us to linger and look back on this Fraternal Organization and recount our trials and satisfaction, our agonies, our failures, our success, our blunders and triumphs. We shall, of course, continue to draw on the past, but only to extract the wisdom to acquire the strength gained to meet the demands of the twenty-first century. We also, hear them say, you can lead a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink. This too could be true, (But it should not be our mandate) for our mandate should be, that we are able to create the kind of thirst to make one want to drink. Somehow we must change. But, in the midst of turmoil and change, we see dimly the brightness of the future. For it is now that we have the opportunity to contribute to bringing the good life to all in the future.

Although we can always use more members, what we really need are more Masons. We need more Masons:

- Who have often been tried, never denied, and willing to be tried again.
- Who are willing to learn to subdue their passion and improve themselves in masonry.
- Who will use the plumb to admonish them to walk upright, in our several stations, before God and man; squaring our actions by the square of virtue; remembering that they are traveling upon the level of time, to “the undiscovered country from whose borne no traveler return”.
- Who will never lose sight of those truly Masonic virtues, which are friendship, morality and Brotherly love.
- Who will put their trust in God and study the seven liberal arts and sciences, which are Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy.
- Who will use their Holy Bible as the rule and guide to our faith and practice the square, to square our actions and the compasses, to circumscribe and keep us with bounds with all mankind, but more especially with a Brother Mason.
- Who are willing to go about their work with the Songs of determination in their hearts. Songs like “I ain’t going to let nobody turn me around”, “Guide me Thou Great Jehovah”, Songs like “I’m on the Battlefield for my Lord” and “I’m Going to Hold on to God’s Unchanging Hands”. So as we continue to look to the hills from which cometh our help, we can sing “Have Thine Own Way Lord, O Have Thine Own Way”.

Because soon and very soon, we all will be done with the troubles of this world. And we will have to stand before a just God, to answer a just question. What have we done? For humanity and mankind everywhere. Well, I don’t know about you, but I want to be able to say on that day, That, I tried to help someone, as I passed along. That, I tried to cheer someone with a word or a song, That, I tried to show a Brother or Sister that they were traveling wrong, then we will know that our living on this side of the vineyard will not be in vain. We will then be able to hear the sweet, sweet voice of Jesus saying, Well Done My Good and Faithful Servant, you have been faithful over a few things, now come on up a little higher and be ruler over many. We will then be able to meet on Holy Ghost Square, Hallelujah Boulevard, join hands together and sing that old familiar hymn. That hymn that says, All to Jesus I Surrender, All to Him I freely give, I will

ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, all to thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender ALL.

**We have a house but we don't have a home.**

What is this? Yes, it is half of a brick. Well, it will never be anything by itself. It is not even whole, but, what is this? Yes, it is a whole brick but it is lonely and it wants to be a part of something good and special. It wants to make that half of brick something by uniting with it and others as a part of the new Prince Hall Family complex (Headquarters and Hotel) 10 million dollars (\$10,000,000), we can do it. Let's get busy so that by 2009, by working together and putting our monies together that will be the cement that will unite us. Then, we can be in our own building. Now, let's dispel the myths. Why allow somebody else to do this fundraiser for us? Because you had problems in the past and you complained about where your money went. This way you have a better accounting system. Is this fundraiser mandatory? NO!

I need some help building this building.

I need some Entered Apprentices; I need some Fellow Crafts; I need some Master Masons.

**We Must Work Together.** The Preacher told us this morning that I can't do it by myself. Help me today for I stretch my hands to thee.

We are a jurisdiction on the move. Do you want to quit now, do you want to quit now? If we do quit now, then you will quit every day for the rest of your life. We are on the move. Just remember a quitter never wins and a winner never quits. I believe in you and I hope you still believe in me.

When there is faith; there is love,  
When there is love; there is peace,  
Where there is peace; there is God, and  
Where there is God; there is no need.

May we plan and build for the future without hope of personal gains. May we bury all that is selfish within us so that our Order may achieve and attain.

## **Recommendations:**

1. Finish all unfinished business on the Trestle Board
2. Do a jurisdictional cook out
3. Establish a Mason's Care Program (example: man a phone line to help others. If a person needs a bill paid, you don't have to pay it out of your pocket, just go and pay it for them. If a person needs a ride to the doctor or if they are less fortunate, then give them a ride without charge. We are our Brother's Keeper.
4. Celebrate the history in February of King Solomon #1 of New Bern, NC by doing a pilgrimage to King Solomon.
5. Cruise for Scholarships - Take a Cruise to raise funds for scholarships so that each District can receive \$1,000.00.

## **DO YOU FEEL ME!**

It is my pleasure to bestow Honorary Membership upon the following:

Alonzo Haynes - Most Worshipful Grand Master, South Carolina  
Curtis S. Vaughn, Jr. - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Virginia  
Robert E. Wheeler - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Virginia  
Sheldon D. Redden - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Maryland  
Douglas Starghill - Most Worshipful Grand Master, West Virginia  
Ramsey Davis, Jr. - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Georgia  
Michael R. Moore - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Florida  
Floyd E. Bagwell - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Connecticut  
Leslie Lewis - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Massachusetts  
James R. Fitzgerald, Jr. - Most Worshipful Grand Master, Delaware  
Kenneth Hill - Past Grand Master, Virginia  
Solomon Wallace – Past Grand Master, New York and Sovereign Grand Commander Northern Jurisdiction  
Calvin Martin – Past Grand Master, New York  
Leonard Safrit – Past Grand Master, AF & AM North Carolina  
Thomas W. Gregory – Past Grand Master, AF & AM North Carolina  
William G. Mathis – Past Grand Master, AF & AM North Carolina  
Gene T. Jernigan – Past Grand Master, AF & AM North Carolina  
Ric Carter – Assistant to Grand Secretary, AF & AM North Carolina  
T. Walton Clapp III – Grand Secretary, AF & AM North Carolina  
Warren Whitley – Past Grand Master, District of Columbia  
Aaron Jordan – Past Grand Master, District of Columbia  
Willie Williams – Past Grand Master, Georgia  
Michael Delgado – Grand CCFC, Georgia  
C. E. Alexander – Grand Junior Warden, Georgia  
Neal A. McQueen - Past Grand Master, Georgia  
Benjamin Barksdale - Past Grand Master, Georgia  
J. Raymond - Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, District of Columbia  
Ramon Nelson - Past Grand Master, New Jersey

LeRoy A. Lassiter – Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Maryland  
Melvin M. Thorpe - Right Worshipful Grand Secretary, Maryland  
Wilbert Cooper - Right Worshipful Grand Treasurer, Maryland  
Thomas H. Wise, Jr. – Right Worshipful Junior Grand Warden, Maryland  
Paul A. Smith – Right Worshipful Senior Grand Warden, Maryland  
George Malcolm Fitch, Past Grand Lecturer, Connecticut

**Thank You and God Bless You!**  
**God Bless this United States of America!**