

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT IS WITH MIXED EMOTIONS THAT I STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY. ON THE ONE HAND, I AM HONORED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO ADDRESS THIS PUBLIC MEETING OF THE 36TH BIENNIAL GRAND BOULE OF SIGMA PI PHI FRATERNITY, INC. MOREOVER, I REALIZE THE HALLOWED ENVIRONMENT, ONE CREATED MAY 15, 1904 WHEN BLACK MEN CAME TOGETHER IN PHILADELPHIA, CHALLENGED BY THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS THEY FACED, AND FORMED THE FIRST BLACK GREEN LETTER ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD.

"IT'S TIME TO TAKE CHARGE"

AN ADDRESS  
PRESENTED BY

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PRESENTED TO  
36TH BIENNIAL GRAND BOULE  
SIGMA PI PHI FRATERNITY  
PUBLIC MEETING  
DETROIT WESTIN HOTEL  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

AUGUST 16, 1982



A CALL TO SOCIAL ACTION AND LEADERSHIP OF BLACK AMERICA IS THE URGENT IMPERATIVE OF THE BLACK MIDDLE-CLASSES. PERHAPS THIS ORGANIZATION WAS CLAIRVOYANT IN ITS LAST BOULE' IN 1980 IN MY HOME CITY OF CHICAGO WHEN IT DIRECTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM. IT KNEW THEN THE IMPACT OF REGANOMICS AND IT KNEW FURTHER THAT THE EMPHASIS ON SELF-HELP WOULD BE THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY.

IN DISCUSSING THE 14TH CENTURY, THE SWISS HISTORIAN DE SISMONDI, DESCRIBED THAT ERA AS "A VERY BAD TIME FOR HUMANITY." I SUPPOSE THAT IF HE WERE WRITING TODAY AS WE PLUNGE INTO THE 1980'S AND APPROACH THE THRESHOLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY, HE MIGHT BE FORCED TO MAKE THE SAME OBSERVATION. FOR INDEED THIS TOO IS, AT BEST, A VERY BAD TIME FOR HUMANITY! BUT THE MESSAGE I BRING IS THAT OURS IS NOT JUST TO LIVE WITH BAD TIMES BUT TO TRIUMPH OVER THEM.

SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE PLIGHT OF BLACK AMERICANS TODAY IS AS BAD, IF NOT WORSE, THAN IT WAS A CENTURY AGO, AND THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE RIGHT. WITHOUT BEING CYNICAL, I MUST SAY THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT THE SITUATION IS GETTING ANY BETTER. LET US LOOK BRIEFLY AT SOME OF THE INDICATORS.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS RAGING GENERALLY, 9.8 LAST WEEK, AND IT IS EPIDEMIC AMONG BLACK YOUTHS. POVERTY IS UP 7% GENERALLY AND UP 30% FOR BLACKS.

THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF BLACK MALES IN AMERICA IS DECREASING DESPITE IMPROVED MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND A GENERAL INCREASE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR THE BROADER POPULATION.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY IS RUNNING RAMPANT. IT HAS SKYROCKETED TO UNBELIEVABLE LEVELS IN THIS NATION; A RECENT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY REPORT SHOWS A ONE-THIRD INCREASE OVER FIVE YEARS; BABIES ARE HAVING BABIES -- AND YOU AND I KNOW THAT CHILDREN CANNOT BE GOOD PARENTS -- IT'S HARD ENOUGH FOR ADULTS. THE RESULT OF THIS TRAGIC CONDITION IS A MASSIVE LOSS OF HUMAN POTENTIAL. IN THE 1970'S THE INCREASE IN BLACK CHILDREN ON AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (AFDC) WAS 41%.

INFANT MORTALITY AND BIRTH DEFECTS ARE ALARMLY HIGH AMONG BLACK AND BROWN NEWBORNS;

IN THE UNITED STATES WHILE IT IS DECREASING IN OTHER SO-CALLED "LESS DEVELOPED NATIONS." AND I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT A BABY, BORN WITHOUT THE PROPER PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL EQUIPMENT INTACT, DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE OF SURVIVAL IN A HIGHLY COMPLEX AND COMPETITIVE SOCIETY.

IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY THE UNITED STATES IS 16TH IN INFANT MORTALITY; THAT IS THE NUMBER OF BABIES WHO DIE AT BIRTH. AS IF THAT WERE NOT BAD ENOUGH -- IF YOU LOOK AT ONLY STATISTICS FOR BLACKS AND BROWNS, IT WOULD CAUSE THE RATE TO FALL SOMEWHERE BETWEEN INDONESIA AND PAKISTAN.

THERE ARE FEWER BLACKS, PERCENTAGE WISE, IN MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS TODAY THAN AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. YET, THERE IS AN INCREASE IN INCIDENCE OF SERIOUS ILLNESS

AMONG BLACKS, ACCOMPANIED BY ALARMINGLY HIGH RATES OF UNNECESSARY TREATMENT AND SURGERY, ACCORDING TO RECENT STUDIES.

ACROSS THIS CONTINENT, THE SYSTEMATIC DISMANTLING OF BLACK INSTITUTIONS CAN BE SEEN NOT JUST AS A RESULT OF RACIAL INTEGRATION, BUT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE LACK OF FINANCIAL AND LEADERSHIP SUPPORT ON THE PART OF BLACK PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT RESPONDED QUICKLY TO THE 1954 SUPREME COURT MANDATE TO DESEGREGATE, HAVE DESEGREGATED AND RESEGREGATED, AND THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IS GOING DOWN -- RATHER THAN UP. THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL NATION-WIDE IS LOWER TODAY THAN IT WAS IN 1970 -- AN INDICATION NOT ONLY OF THE POOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION, BUT OF THE FACT THAT WE MAY POSSIBLY BE LOSING OR HAVE ALREADY LOST AN ENTIRE GENERATION!

THERE IS A DRAMATIC DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS. ACCORDING TO A REPORT OF THE JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL STUDIES, IN 1978 WE HAD THE SMALLEST INCREASE IN BLACKS ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE BOTH NUMERICALLY AND PERCENTAGE-WISE IN THE LAST DECADE AND IT'S GETTING WORSE. AT THE SAME TIME IT IS CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED, NATION-WIDE, THAT ONLY 50% OF THOSE BLACKS ELIGIBLE TO REGISTER, DO IN FACT REGISTER, AND OF THE 50% WHO DO REGISTER, ONLY ABOUT ONE-THIRD ACTUALLY VOTE. BY THE TIME VOTE-COUNT TIME COMES, THE NUMBERS ARE TERRIBLY DILUTED.

A YEAR AGO I WOULD HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE TRADITIONAL ALLIES OF BLACKS, PARTICULARLY THE BROWNS, WERE BEING DELIBERATELY ALIENATED BY ELEMENTS OF THE WHITE POWER STRUCTURE

WHO WANT, AT ALL COSTS, TO AVOID A COALITION BETWEEN BLACKS AND BROWNS. MORE RECENTLY I WOULD HAVE TO EMPHASIZE THE GROWING SPLIT BETWEEN THE BLACKS AND THE JEWS WHICH IS INCREASINGLY APPARENT -- BUT LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT NEITHER IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE VICIOUS, VITUPERATIVE ATTEMPT OF THE SO-CALLED WHITE MAJORITY TO CREATE A CLASS WAR IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY BY PITTING THE MIDDLE CLASS PROFESSIONALS AND THE SO-CALLED LOWER CLASS AGAINST EACH OTHER -- WE MUST NOT FALL VICTIM OF THIS STRATEGY "FOR THERE BUT <sup>F.</sup>THE GRACE OF GOD GO I!"

AND FINALLY, THERE IS A SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION OF FAMILY LIFE BY ANY MEASURE. THE LACK OF A BONAFIDE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN TROUBLE AND THE "DISPOSABLE ELDERLY" BOTH EVIDENCE THE FAILURE IN FAMILY LIFE. HERE, THE MEASURE IS NOT THE TYPICAL SOCIOLOGICAL "INTACT FAMILY" WITH A MOTHER AND FATHER AND TWO CHILDREN, BUT INSTEAD A UNIT OF PEOPLE TIED TOGETHER BIOLOGICALLY, PSYCHOLOGICALLY, AND EMOTIONALLY WHO MEET EACH OTHERS' MUTUAL NEEDS OF INTER-DEPENDENCY. THE FAMILY IS STILL THE MOST BASIC UNIT IN SOCIETY AND WE ARE GIVING IT TOO LITTLE ATTENTION.

IN THE FACE OF THESE REALITIES, BLACK ORGANIZATIONS IN GENERAL, AND SIGMA PI PHI IN PARTICULAR, HAVE A SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY. WE CANNOT OPT OUT OR "COP OUT." THE ROLE OF BLACK ORGANIZATIONS COMPRISED OF THE BLACK PROFESSIONAL CLASSES IS SPECIAL BECAUSE AS HAROLD CRUSE POINTS OUT IN HIS BOOK, "THE CRISIS OF THE NEGRO INTELLECTUAL," IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE INTELLIGENSIA -- THE TRAINED CLASSES OF EVERY ETHNIC GROUP -- THAT HAVE LED EACH GROUP TO INDEPENDENCE AND SALVATION, AND WE AS BLACKS HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT WE WILL PROGRESS BY

ANY OTHER ROUTE. IT'S TIME TO TAKE CHARGE!

IN TAKING CHARGE, WE MUST RECOGNIZE, ACCEPT, AND NOT APOLOGIZE FOR THE FACT THAT WE ARE THE "UNIQUE ELITE" -- THERE IS NO TIME FOR FALSE MODESTY. HOWEVER, TO BE ELITE FOR ELITISMS SAKE IS DESTRUCTIVE. AT THE SAME TIME THAT WE ENJOY THE PRIVILEGES WHICH ACCRUE TO THE COLLEGE EDUCATED AND THE PROFESSIONAL CLASSES WE ARE OBLIGATED TO ACCEPT THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IMPOSED UPON THOSE WHO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF GREATER TRAINING AND OTHER RESOURCES THAN THE MASSES OF THE POPULATION.

IN A REAL SENSE, THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL REALITIES OF THE 14TH CENTURY DESCRIBED BY DE SISMONDI ARE, IN FACT, DISTANTLY MIRRORED IN THE APPROACH OF THE 21ST CENTURY. TODAY, ALMOST EIGHT DECADES AFTER THE BIRTH OF SIGMA PI PHI, THERE ARE MANY CHALLENGES THAT MUST BE MET. THIS DOES NOT IGNORE THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME PROGRESS, IT SIMPLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT WITH PROGRESS COMES NEW PROBLEMS, AND THESE MUST BE ADDRESSED.

WHAT MUST WE DO -- WHAT MUST BE THE MAJOR THRUST OF OUR ACTION. (PRESCRIPTION STORY)

WITH THAT UNDERSTANDING, LET ME BEGIN BY DISCUSSING WHAT WE MUST TEACH OUR CHILDREN, FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR YOUTHS MUST BE A MAJOR PRIORITY FOR IT'S THEM WHO WILL SAVE THE SOCIETY.

LESSON #1 -- THEY MUST KNOW THAT THEY ARE BLACK, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BLACK AND ALWAYS WILL BE BLACK. THEY MUST IDENTIFY WITH THEIR HISTORY, IN MORE THAN A SUPERFICIAL WAY, WHICH MEANS NOT ONLY KNOWING FACTS BUT UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATION OF THOSE FACTS. THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY AND

BE PREPARED TO LIVE IN A WORLD THAT, DESPITE POPULATION REALITIES, WILL BE CONTROLLED BY WHITES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND THUS SUBJECT THEM TO ALL FORMS OF RACISM. WE DO THEM A DISSERVICE IF WE REAR THEM IN ISOLATION OF THE REALITY THAT PLURALISM MEANS MORE THAN MANY RACES; IT MEANS LEARNING TO LIVE EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR OWN, WHO MAY BE DIFFERENT.

LESSON #2 -- THEY MUST BE INDOCTRINATED WITH THE IDEA THAT NO MATTER HOW SUCCESSFUL THEY ARE, THEY HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SERVE THEIR PEOPLE. YOUNG BLACKS MUST BE AS COMMITTED TO SERVING AND UPLIFTING BLACKS AS JEWS ARE TO ISRAEL. IN THAT CONNECTION, I AM INCREASINGLY TROUBLED BY THE LARGE NUMBERS OF YOUNG PROFESSIONAL BLACKS BEING HIRED BY WHITE CORPORATIONS, MOVING TO PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SUBURBS, IDENTIFYING WITH THE ELITE AND LEAVING THE BLACK AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE INNER CITY WHERE 60% OF THE BLACKS <sup>LEVEL</sup> THEY MUST BE PREPARED TO COME BACK AND PAY SOME DUES AND "WALK IN JERUSALEM JUST LIKE JOHN."

LESSON #3 -- THEY MUST BE TAUGHT THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE AND HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF SACRIFICING. FREDERICK DOUGLASS PUT IT WELL WHEN HE SAID "WHERE THERE IS NO STRUGGLE, THERE IS NO PROGRESS." THEY MUST KNOW THAT WITHOUT A CROSS, THERE IS NO CROWN; THAT THEY CAN'T GAIN THE PURPLE HEART WITHOUT GOING TO THE WAR; THAT STRUGGLE AND SACRIFICE ARE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN CHARACTER BUILDING.

LESSON #4 -- VERY EARLY IN LIFE THEY MUST COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSION TO LIFE AND THAT WITHOUT IT PERSONALITY DISINTEGRATION AND



SUICIDES INCREASE AND OTHER FORMS OF DISASTER ARE ALMOST ASSURED -- TO WIT: FORMER PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON,

AND

LESSON #4 -- THEY MUST LEARN SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR LIFE. AMONG THESE ARE INTELLECTUAL SKILLS, VOCATIONAL SKILLS, SOCIAL SKILLS, LEADERSHIP SKILLS, GENERAL COPING SKILLS AND THE ABILITY TO LOVE AND CARE.

IN HIS BOOK, THE WOUNDED HEALER, NOUWIN IDENTIFIES OUR CHILDREN AS CHILDREN OF THE LONELY CROWD (MEANING US) AND CHILDREN WITHOUT FATHERS. HERE HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF BIOLOGICAL FATHERS AS PARENTS, BUT THE ABSENCE OF MENTORS WHO GUIDE, COUNSEL AND TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES ... I AGREE WITH NOUWIN THAT THIS VOID (WHICH INCIDENTALLY IS PARTICULARLY PREVALENT AMONG BLACKS) IS A SURE ROAD TO DESTRUCTION, SINCE, LEFT WITHOUT MENTORS, OUR CHILDREN CAN ONLY TURN TO EACH OTHER ... THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH SUCH A CONDITION!

NOW APART FROM WHAT WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN, WHAT MUST WE AS BLACK ADULTS DO OURSELVES.

FIRST OF ALL, WE MUST PUT OUR BEST MINDS TO WORK ON OUR MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. TODAY, WE EXIST IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM. WE "PUT DOWN" EDUCATION, YET THE PERVASIVE ABUNDANCE OF IGNORANCE IS NOT SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS. THE GREAT MINDS OF DUBOIS, THURMAN, BETHUNE, MAYS, RANDOLPH, AND OTHERS OF PRECEDING GENERATIONS, ARE NO LONGER IN THE FOREFRONT, AND NEW INTELLECTUAL GIANTS ARE NOT RISING UP TO TAKE THEIR PLACES. YEARS AGO ARCHON BENJAMIN MAYS, THEN PRESIDENT OF MOREHOUSE COLLEGE, USED TO TELL STUDENTS "TRAIN YOUR MINDS WHILE YOU ARE

YOUNG -- FOR WHEN YOU ARE OLDER, HE WHO CAN OUT-THINK YOU WILL FOREVER CONTROL YOU." ALL AROUND US WE ARE BEING "OUT-THOUGHT" AND WITHOUT A NEW FOCUS ON MIND-POWER WILL CONTINUE TO BE CONTROLLED.

WE MUST OVERCOME THE WIDESPREAD RESISTANCE TO RESEARCH AND DATA GATHERING IN OUR RANKS. THESE ARE RAPIDLY CHANGING TIMES, AND WHAT IS THIS MORNING MAY NOT BE THE CASE THIS AFTER-NOON. THUS THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND SELECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF DATA ON THE CONDITIONS OF BLACK AMERICANS MUST RECEIVE CRITICAL ATTENTION. I INTRODUCE THE TERM SELECTIVE BECAUSE THE TIME IS NOW FOR BLACKS TO STUDY BLACKS AND TELL, NOT EVERYBODY, BUT THOSE WE WANT TO KNOW, WHAT WE FIND. THE TIME IS NOW FOR US TO ENCOURAGE AND FINANCE YOUNG BLACK SCHOLARS TO RESEARCH ISSUES CRITICAL TO OUR SURVIVAL; TO PUBLISH THOSE FINDINGS, WHERE APPROPRIATE, AND FOR US TO TELL MOYNAHAN ABOUT THE BLACK FAMILY SINCE WE HAVE FORGOTTEN MORE ABOUT IT THAN HE COULD EVER KNOW.

SECOND, WE MUST CHARGE OUR BEST MINDS WITH DEVELOPING A PLAN OF ACTION THAT WILL PUT ALL OF OUR RESOURCES TO WORK TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR BLACK PEOPLE. THAT PLAN MUST BE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL; IT MUST USE ALL OF THE TALENTS WE HAVE IN OUR COMMUNITY, IT MUST CONTAIN A ROLE FOR EVERY SINGLE PERSON AND, IN ADDITION, IT MUST HAVE TWO CORNERSTONES: ONE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG BLACK INSTITUTIONS, AND THE OTHER, THE IMMEDIATE ACTIVATION OF THE BLACK PROFESSIONAL CLASS TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE DESTINY OF OUR LIVES. LET ME DEVELOP BOTH THESE IDEAS A STEP FURTHER.

WE MUST BUILD STRONG BLACK INSTITUTIONS WITH A BASIC MARKETING AND SURVIVAL CAPACITY. RACIAL INTEGRATION IS NOT AS IMPORTANT TODAY AS IT WAS A DECADE OR TWO AGO, AND WHILE WE WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT CERTAIN BENEFITS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY INTEGRATION, WHAT WE MUST RECOGNIZE IS THAT IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY EACH GROUP'S STRENGTH IS IN ITS UNIQUENESS, AND JUST AS OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS HAVE INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE UNIQUELY THEIRS, SO MUST BLACK PEOPLE WORK AT BUILDING INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE UNIQUELY OURS. THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY MUST BE COMPLETELY SEGREGATED, IT MEANS THAT THEY MUST BE BLACK DEVELOPED, BLACK LED, BLACK SUPPORTED, AND BLACK CONTROLLED.

I HAVE MENTIONED THE BLACK PROFESSIONAL CLASS AT LEAST FOUR TIMES. THAT IS BECAUSE I BELIEVE NOTHING HAPPENS WITHOUT LEADERSHIP AND WHILE ALL PROFESSIONALS ARE NOT, AND NEED NOT BE, THE LEADER -- EVERY ONE OF US MUST GIVE LEADERSHIP TO THE CAUSE OF BUILDING IN EVERY INDIVIDUAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD, THE STRENGTHS WITHOUT WHICH THERE CAN BE NO FREEDOM. I AM NOT A RACIST, I AM A REALIST! I AM NOT A SEPARATIST, I AM SIMPLY ONE WHO BELIEVES THAT THE JEWS HAVE NO MORE RIGHT TO COME INTO HARLEM AND TELL US WHAT TO DO THAN WE HAVE TO GO INTO ISRAEL AND TELL THEM WHAT TO DO. WE CAN WORK TOGETHER, AND WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER, BUT OUR PROFESSIONALS MUST TAKE THE LEAD AND OUR PEOPLE MUST SUPPORT OUR LEADERS.

THE PLIGHT OF BLACK PEOPLE, ONCE AGAIN, BECOMES ONE OF SURVIVAL AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY CANNOT RETREAT FROM ACTIVISM. BASED ON EXPERIENCE, IT SEEMS FAIR TO ASSUME THAT THE FUTURE

OF BLACKS WILL MAKE GREATER DEMANDS ON THE SOCIETY AND THAT THE CRUCIAL FACTOR FOR US THEN IS TO MOVE FORTH WITH A PLAN OF ACTION THAT WILL ENHANCE THE STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, EVER KEEPING IN MIND THE IDEALS AND CONCEPTS OF THOSE OF OUR FOREFATHERS ON WHOSE SHOULDERS WE CAN STAND AND FROM WHICH WE CAN SEE A NEW VISION, FOR IN THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH, "WHERE THERE IS NO VISION -- THE PEOPLE PERISH."

THIRD, WE MUST SELECT, BUILD, SUPPORT, AND DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM OUR LEADERS. NO OTHER ETHNIC GROUP PERMITS ITS LEADERS FREEDOM FROM ACCOUNTABILITY AS WE DO. AMONG ALL OF THE-WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS, THE FEAR OF SANCTION CONTROLS THE ACTIONS OF THEIR LEADERS. IN ADDITION, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE DESTRUCTIVE ROLE OF THE WHITE LIBERAL PRESS, PARTICULARLY THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN PROJECTING AS PRIMARY BLACK SPOKESPERSONS SOME WHO HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATELY CALLED "PROPHETS FOR PROFIT" AND OTHERS WHO HAVE NO CONSTITUENCY, BUT THE WHITE PRESS ITSELF. OUR LEADERS MUST BE OUR LEADERS BY OUR DEFINITIONS AND THEY MUST, IN ADDITION, BE CAPABLE, COMMITTED, AND ACCOUNTABLE. WE MUST STOP THE WHITE PRESS FROM ELECTING OUR LEADERS AND THEN TELLING US WHO THEY ARE.

FOURTH, WE MUST DEVELOP AN ACCEPTANCE OF PLURALISM WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY, AND FOSTER RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE. HERE, WE MUST TAKE A LESSON FROM OTHER ETHNIC COMMUNITIES AND LOOK FOR THE COMMON DENOMINATORS THAT GLUE US TOGETHER, RECOGNIZING THAT THERE WILL BE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION, APPROACH AND CAPABILITY, BUT MAINTAINING CERTAIN BASIC COMMITMENTS TO

UNITY THAT TRANSCEND, OR RISE ABOVE, IDEOLOGICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES. OUR COMMUNITIES MUST NOT SELF-DESTRUCT AS A RESULT OF INTERNAL STRIFE. WHAT IS NEEDED IS RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE, NOT REPUDIATION OF DIFFERENCE.

FIFTH, IN ALL OUR EFFORTS, WE MUST WORK TO RESTORE BASIC MORAL VALUES AND DEVELOP COVENANTS WITH EACH OTHER. THE VAST INCREASE IN BLACK ON BLACK CRIME WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY, AMONG BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS, IS NOT ONLY DESTRUCTIVE, BUT IS A FORM OF INTERNAL GENOCIDE. WHILE INNOVATION IS GOOD AND ESSENTIAL, IT IS STILL NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OLD VALUES OF RESPECT FOR LIFE, RESPECT FOR SELF, AND RESPECT FOR PROPERTY -- ALL OF WHICH BLENDED WITH INTEGRITY AND HONESTY, ARE CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY COMMUNITY. IT IS OUR JOB TO FORCE OUR COMMUNITIES TO DEAL SEVERELY AND HARSHLY WITH ANY WHO INSIST ON VIOLATING OUR BASIC VALUE STRUCTURE AND DISCIPLINE. I RECALL MY VISIT TO THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA, THEY CALL IT RE-EDUCATION.

SIXTH, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS IS THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. TIED TO POLITICAL POWER IS ECONOMIC POWER, FOR ONLY THROUGH FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE CAN REAL POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE BE ACHIEVED.

SEVENTH, I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING WHICH MAY BE UNPOPULAR WITH A NUMBER OF YOU IN THIS AUDIENCE TODAY, BUT I AM GOING TO SAY IT BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT TO BE TRUE. THE INCREASING AVAILABILITY OF DRUGS AND THEIR EXPANDED USE REPRESENTS ONE

OF THE MOST SERIOUS THREATS TO THE SURVIVAL OF BLACK PEOPLE IN RECENT HISTORY. MUCH RESEARCH HAS BEEN DONE SHOWING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE USE OF DRUGS, MENTAL RETARDATION AND OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS BUT PHYSICAL HEALTH IS NOT MY IMMEDIATE CONCERN. MY CONCERN IS THAT BLACK PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES AND AROUND THE WORLD ARE ENGAGED IN A WAR AGAINST MASSIVE FORCES OF OPRESSION -- FORCES THAT WOULD ANNIHILATE AND DESTROY US. WHEN CHILDREN IN EVERY HIGH SCHOOL AND GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN THIS NATION CAN TELL US HOW AND WHERE TO BUY DRUGS; WHEN WE SEE LARGE NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUSES OF THIS NATION WHO ONCE WERE MARCHING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE, NOW GETTING HIGH AND TRIPPING OUT, WHEN WE GO TO PARTIES WHERE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS ARE USING POT AND OTHER HARDLINE DRUGS, I SAY THAT WE HAVE FALLEN PREY TO AN INSIDIOUS PLOT DESIGNED TO ALTER OUR CONSCIOUSNESS, TO ALTER OUR MINDS AND TO DISTRACT US FROM THE BASIC BUSINESS THAT SHOULD BE HIGHEST ON OUR PRIORITY LIST. ONE CAN REVIEW THE STATISTICS ON NARCOTICS ARRESTS AND EVEN ARGUE THAT MANY OF THOSE ARRESTS ARE UNJUSTIFIED, BUT TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THAT ISSUE IS A WASTE OF TIME. THE FACT IS THAT EVEN THOUGH WE ARE THE VICTIMS OF GREAT STRESS AND EVEN THOUGH A TEMPORARY FLIGHT MAY SOMETIMES PROVIDE A RELIEF, THAT RELIEF IS ONLY TEMPORARY, AND THE SAME PROBLEMS WE LEFT TO "GET HIGH" ARE THERE WHEN WE COME DOWN. MY ARGUMENT IS NOT A MORAL ARGUMENT, NEITHER IS IT A HEALTH ARGUMENT AND THE LEGAL ISSUES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. MY ARGUMENT IS VERY SIMPLE. BLACK PEOPLE ARE BEHIND IN THE RACE TO ENJOY LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, AND IF YOU START OUT

BEHIND IN A RACE YOU MUST RUN FASTER TO CATCH UP AND YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOUR MIND IS OUT TO LUNCH AND YOUR BODY IS OUT OF SHAPE. I SAY AGAIN, THIS IS A WAR AND NO GENERAL WOULD SEND HIS SOLDIERS TO THE FRONT LINE "HIGH" OFF OF ANYTHING. So I WANT TO MAKE A SPECIAL APPEAL TO RECONSIDER WHO IS GETTING RICH OFF OF THE DRUG TRAFFIC AND ALSO TO RECONSIDER WHO IS BEING DEVASTATED AND DESTROYED AS A RESULT OF IT. IT ISN'T ENOUGH JUST TO FEEL GOOD, FOR FEELING GOOD TODAY MAKE MAKE US FEEL BAD, OR NOT FEEL AT ALL TOMORROW!

EIGHTH, AND FINALLY, WE MUST, AS BLACK PEOPLE, TAKE A FUTURISTIC LOOK. WE MUST NOT ONLY BE LOOKING AT WHERE WE WANT TO BE TOMORROW, BUT WHERE WE WANT TO BE A DECADE, A QUARTER OF A CENTURY, A HALF CENTURY, AND EVEN A CENTURY FROM NOW. WE MUST BUILD FOR TOMORROW RECOGNIZING THAT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY IS GOING TO BE AROUND FOR A LONG TIME AND WE MUST NOT JUST BE "IN" IT, BUT IN THE FOREFRONT OF IT.

IN SUMMARY, LET ME SUGGEST THAT THE STAKES ARE HIGH/ THE BATTLEGROUND IS THE MIND; MUCH OF WHAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING REPRESENTS A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN WHICH THERE IS A DELIBERATE, CONTRIVED, WELL-CONCEIVED EFFORT TO DEMORALIZE BLACK PEOPLE, YOUNG AND <sup>OLD</sup> ALIKE, AND TO BREAK THEIR SPIRIT, TO UNDERMINE A SENSE OF PERSONAL CONFIDENCE; TO SUGGEST THAT CONFIDENCE IS INDEED ARROGANCE MUST WORK TO OVERCOME THIS.

I SAY AGAIN, THE BATTLEGROUND IS THE MIND. IT IS THE MIND BECAUSE THE OPPRESSORS KNOW THAT IF YOU CAN BREAK A MAN'S SPIRIT, HE WILL FOREVER BE YOUR SLAVE. JESUS, THE CHRIST, REALIZED MORE THAN 2000 YEARS AGO THAT CENTRAL TO THE ADVANCE-

MENT OF A MAN IS A POSITIVE SPIRIT --

MUST BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO FOSTER AND DEVELOP A POSITIVE SPIRIT; TO ENCOURAGE AGGRESSIVENESS AND CREATIVITY; AND TO HELP YOUNG BLACK PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD UNDERSTAND THAT TO BE DEMORALIZED ONLY PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

MUCH OF WHAT I HAVE SAID ABOUT PREVAILING CONDITIONS SOUNDS LIKE I BELIEVE THAT THESE CONDITIONS WERE DESIGNED TO COME ABOUT -- WERE DELIBERATELY CREATED -- I DO! MY FRIENDS, NOT ONLY ARE THEY BY DESIGN -- BUT THEY WILL GET WORSE UNLESS WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM (DRUGS/POLICE EXAMPLE). FREDERICK DOUGLASS WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID "FIND OUT WHAT A PEOPLE WILL SUBMIT TO AND YOU WILL FIND OUT JUST HOW MUCH INJUSTICE CAN BE HEAPED UPON THEM." WE -- YOU AND I -- MUST ASSERT OUR WILL. WE MUST USE OUR DOLLARS, OUR MINDS, OUR SKILLS, AND YES, EVEN OUR VOTE, TO SURVIVE. WE MUST USE WHAT WE'VE GOT TO GET WHAT WE NEED.

SO, LET US MOVE FORWARD IN THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDERS OF SIGMA PI PHI. LET US MOVE FORWARD REALIZING THAT WE CANNOT PUT CONCRETE BEFORE CRIBS OR HIGHWAYS BEFORE HIGH CHAIRS; LET US MOVE FORWARD REALIZING THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL GIANTS AND AT THE SAME TIME BE MORAL AND ETHICAL MIDGETS -- LET US MOVE FORWARD KNOWING THAT THE OPPRESSOR HAS NEVER VOLUNTARILY FREED THE OPPRESSED -- LET US MOVE FORWARD COMMITTED TO BE LEADERS IN RESHAPING THE AGENDA AND PRIORITIES OF BLACK PEOPLE AND TO BECOME THE MIGHTY FORTRESS AND TO LAY CLAIM TO THAT WHICH SHOULD BELONG TO US. IT'S TIME TO TAKE CHARGE!

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