

[Presented at a symposium at Ankara, Turkey, in October 2009, at the invitation of the Grand Lodge of Turkey, and subsequently published in Turkish and English in *Freemasonry and Brotherhood*.]

Brothers under the skin

by Tony Pope (South Australia)

Introduction

The brotherhood of Freemasons is not identical with the brotherhood of humankind. Humanity includes everyone, but Freemasonry excludes all persons who are not of mature age, sound intellect and good character.

Most Grand Lodges have additional exclusionary requirements regarding . . .

- (a) gender: Grand Lodges for men only; for women only; but some for men and women (*liberal* Grand Lodges)
- (b) religious belief: Grand Lodges for monotheists; for Christians only; but some for any religion or none (*adogmatic* Grand Lodges)

And some Grand Lodges exclude persons because of their . . .

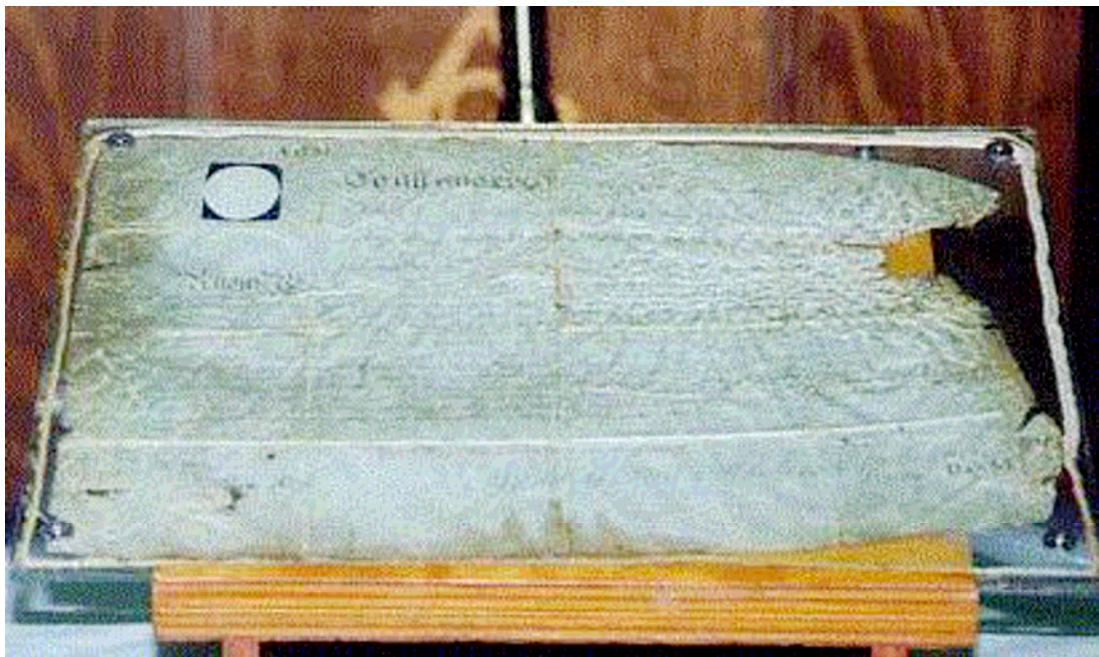
- (c) race or colour of skin.

The large group of Grand Lodges which are only for men who believe in the Great Architect of the Universe, and which are generally in amity with each other, does not have an official name, but is sometimes called 'mainstream'. Sadly, *some* mainstream Grand Lodges believe race, or colour of skin, to be a valid criterion for admission or rejection.

Historical background of Black Freemasonry in the USA

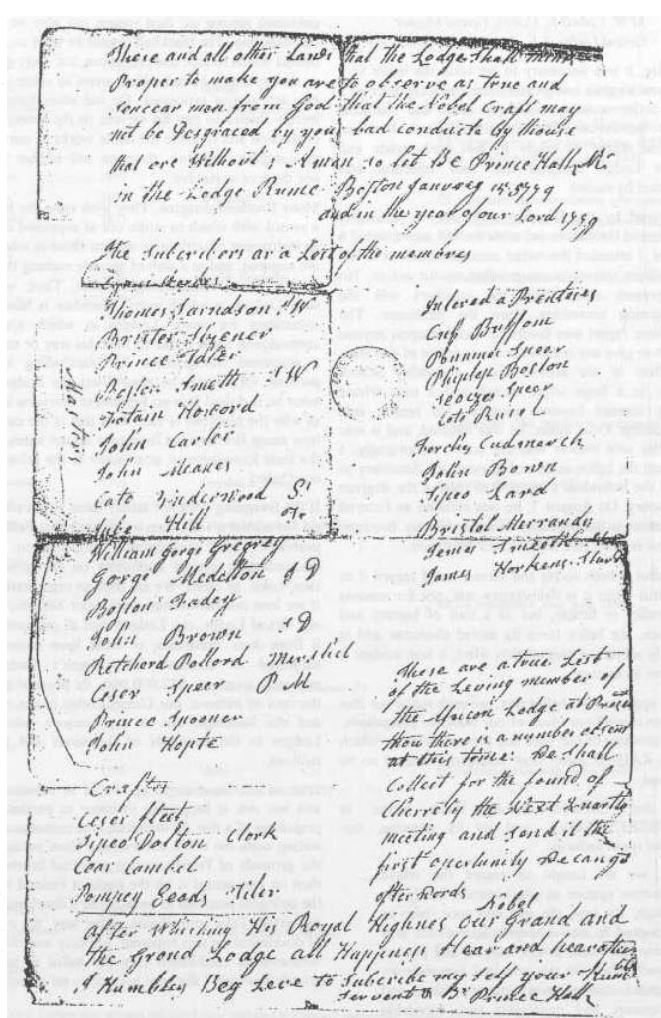
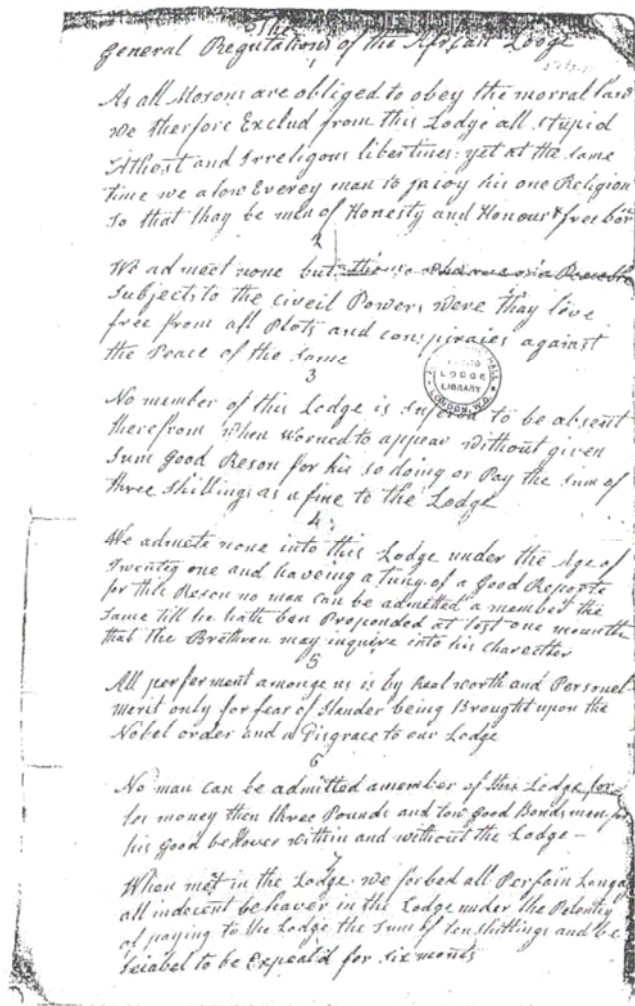
North American Freemasonry today has a serious problem in coming to terms with a legacy from the eighteenth-century importation of sub-Saharan Africans as slaves. Some 'free' Africans became Freemasons and obtained a warrant from England for African Lodge of Boston, under the Mastership of Prince Hall.

African Lodge was granted a charter by the Grand Lodge of England (*Moderns*) in 1784, which arrived in Boston in 1787. Prince Hall immediately sent to England a report¹ containing the lodge by-laws, a list of officers and members of the lodge, including Fellow Crafts and Entered Apprentices, and a promise to send a donation to the Grand Charity at the earliest opportunity. The lodge was not admitted to the fellowship of the other lodges in and around Boston, and it developed in isolation. This was the beginning of racial segregation among Masons in North America.



The English charter for African Lodge No 459 of Boston, 1784

¹ Historical Correspondence File 28/A/1, archives of the United Grand Lodge of England.



Prince Hall's first 'Annual Returns' to the Grand Lodge of England, 1787.

Prince Hall continued as Master of the lodge until his death in 1807. From 1797 to 1826, he and his successors chartered a number of lodges in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and New York, while remaining—as far as they knew—subordinate to the Grand Lodge of England.² In fact, the two rival Grand Lodges in England (the *Antients* and the *Moderns*) had united in 1813, and omitted *all* US lodges from their combined roll of lodges. In 1827 African Lodge of Boston declared its independence and became African Grand Lodge.³

Over the next 20 years the segregated Freemasonry which had sprung from African Lodge continued to grow, but was beset by disputes between lodges and Grand Lodges, of which there were several by this time. In their isolation, they attempted to resolve early quarrels and schisms by forming a National Grand Lodge, superior to their State Grand Lodges, but this has resulted in two rival groups of Masons, each claiming descent from the original lodge chartered from England: the State Grand Lodges of 'Prince Hall Affiliation' (PHA) and the National Grand Lodge and its subordinate Grand Lodges of 'Prince Hall Origin' (PHO).

Today, the Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Affiliation (PHA) are numerically much stronger than the National Grand Lodge and its subordinate state Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Origin (PHO), and PHA has spread far beyond the bounds of North America.

	Grand Lodges	Members (estimate)	? where
PHA	47	180,000	worldwide
PHO	24	20,000	USA

fig 1

² HCF 28/A/10, dated 5 January 1824.

³ *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 26 June 1827.

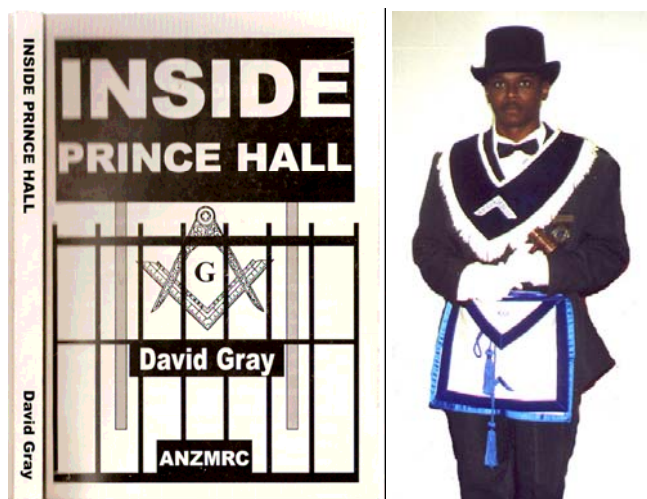
Of the 47 PHA Grand Lodges, two are in Canada, two in the Caribbean, and one in Africa. Many of the PHA Grand Lodges also have lodges in the US military, stationed all over the world.

Among the mainstream Grand Lodges in the United States, generally those in the north found technical arguments why Freemasonry in the Black population was 'unlawful', whereas those in the south simply wrote into their constitutions, regulations or other documents that no 'Negro' was fit to be made a Mason, and re-enforced it with a prohibition in the Obligation of their own candidates. On several occasions between 1860 and 1960, individual Grand Lodges made statements favourable to the descendants of African Lodge of Boston, with regard to their 'regularity', but on each occasion were forced to recant by the withdrawal of 'recognition' by other US mainstream Grand Lodges. Several overseas Grand Lodges extended recognition to individual Black Grand Lodges, but with no permanent beneficial results. *It proved a slip!*

After 1960, several northern US Grand Lodges approached the questions of regularity and recognition more cautiously and with more determination. From 1989 onwards, recognition has proceeded piecemeal between Black and White Grand Lodges in the US, followed by recognition by some Grand Lodges outside the US. However, 20 years later, all PHO Masons and nearly half of all PHA Masons remain unrecognised by any Grand Lodge, for reasons which will be examined shortly. *It has proved a slip, also!*

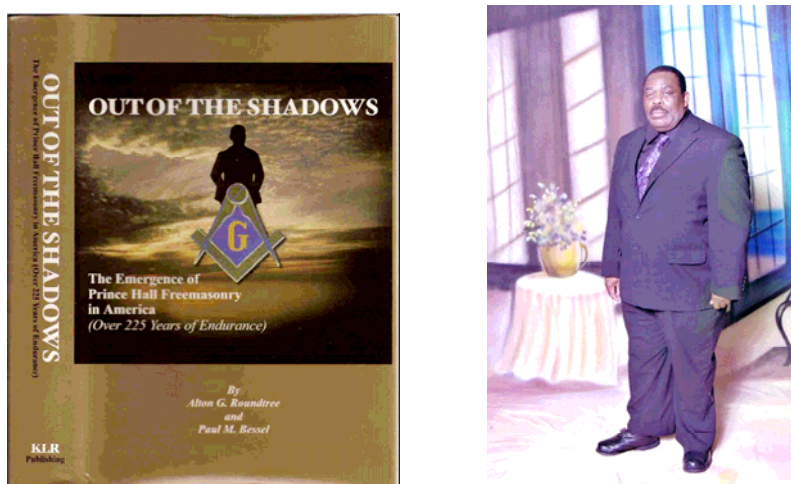
Recommended reading

Inside Prince Hall (2003), by David L Gray, gives an accurate account of the history of Prince Hall Freemasonry from the PHA point of view.



Inside Prince Hall, by David Gray

Out of the shadows (2006), by Alton G Roundtree (PHA) and Paul M Bessel (mainstream), meticulously documents the recognition process between mainstream and PHA Grand Lodges, and contains an accurate account of the history of the National Grand Lodge. Many of the authors' findings favourable to PHO regularity of descent from African Lodge have been contested by PHA researchers, but none has been disproved. Alton Roundtree has another book at the printers, which documents PHO history in greater detail.

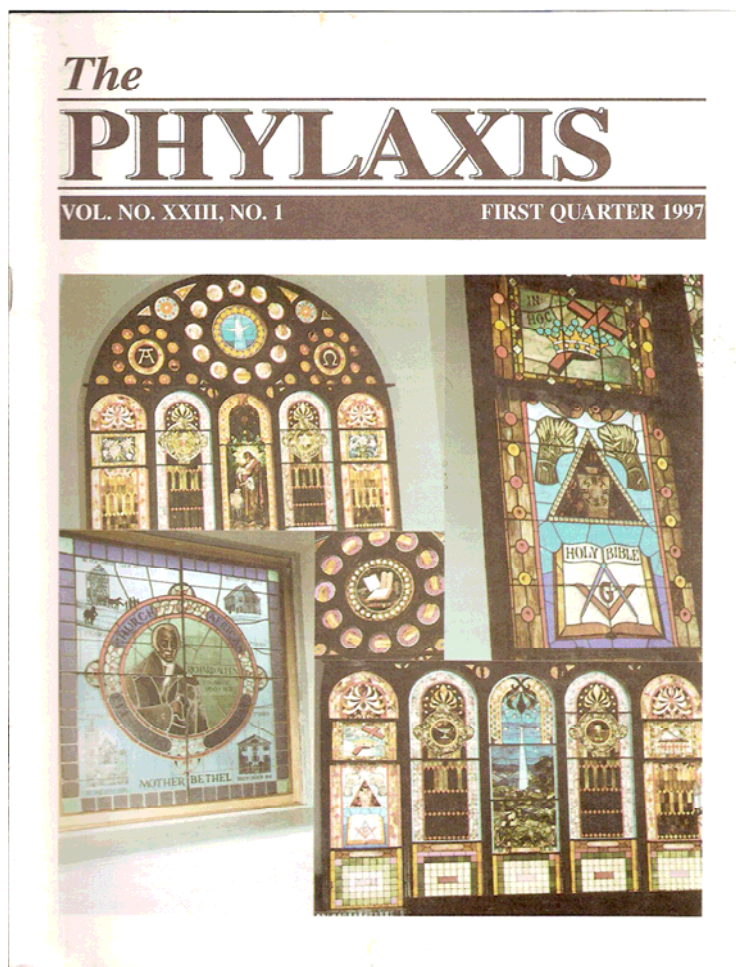


Out of the Shadows, by Alton Roundtree (above) and Paul Bessel

The many books by the late Joseph A Walkes Jr (PHA) provide more detail about the Prince Hall Fraternity. For an outsider's point of view, see my own research papers on Bruno Gazzo's excellent 'Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry' website at <<http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com>>: 'Our segregated brethren, Prince Hall Freemasons' (1994), and 'Prince Hall revisited' (2004).

'Bogus' Black Grand Lodges

In addition to the mainstream, PHA and PHO Grand Lodges in the United States, there are close on 200 other groups claiming to be Masonic. Most of them have been located by members of the Phylaxis Society, an organisation which began as a PHA equivalent of the Philalethes Society, but which has added other functions, including investigation and 'outing' of these other groups.



The *Phylaxis* magazine

Coordination of this task is the responsibility of the Society's 'Commission on Bogus Masonic Practices', which:

- compiles information on 'bogus' Grand Lodges
- publishes the information in the *Phylaxis* magazine and on the Phylaxis website⁴
- joins internet discussion groups and educates members of 'bogus' organisations regarding the difference between them and PHA Masonry.

I am indebted to the Commission for much of the information about these 'bogus' groups, but note with regret that it also targets PHO Masons for 're-education'.

Clues to the origins of Black Masonic Grand Lodges can often be gained from what they call themselves. With one exception (Liberia), PHA Grand Lodges are 'Free & Accepted Masons', F&AM. Grand Lodges under the National Grand Lodge (PHO) are 'Free & Accepted Ancient York Masons', FAAYM. Other Black Grand Lodges, the ones deemed 'bogus', are usually 'Ancient Free and Accepted Masons', AF&AM. These differences are sometimes referred to as 3-letter, 4-letter and 5-letter Masons. Another indication of 'outsider' status is its affiliation with a 'Grand Congress of Grand Lodges' or a 'Supreme Council', or styling itself a 'Scottish Rite Grand Lodge'.

⁴ <http://www.thephylaxis.org/>.



A National Grand Congress of 'bogus' Grand Lodges



A 'bogus' Supreme Council



Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Maryland and a near neighbour, a 'bogus' Grand Lodge

Many Grand Lodges in the 'bogus' category trace their history to a renegade PHA or PHO individual or lodge, either directly, or via a further breakaway. Some are (or claim to have been) chartered by a body outside the United States, while some are openly self-starters, and some are rogues and charlatans.



The 'bogus' Regular Grand Lodge of England has sponsored the Regular Grand Lodge of Texas

Among degree-peddling self-started groups are: the International Free & Accepted Modern Masons and Eastern Stars, which pays a bonus to recruiters, runs an insurance scheme and offers reduced rates to ministers of religion; the International Masonic Association and Eastern Star, which touts a Masonic endowment scheme for men, women and children, and has 'paid leaders'; and a Knights Templar Organization which sells 'awards' by mail.



The International Free and Accepted Modern Masons and Eastern Stars with recruiting bonuses, insurance, and cut-rates for clergy

WHAT DOES INTERNATIONAL MASONIC ASSOCIATION AND EASTERN STAR OFFER?

It provides a broad range of community and personal service.

1. Up to \$1,000.00 endowment for dues of only \$4.50 per mo. Paid up in 20 years (so you pay no more endowment dues). \$1,000.00 additional endowment in each exalted degree if desired.
2. You can borrow on it after 3 years.
3. Advance to leadership and be a PAID leader as soon as you understand our system and principles.
4. Besides the borrowing provision, your local chapter comes to your rescue in case of illness or other emergency.
5. Natural family progress is promoted through joint meetings of women and men.
6. No exclusion for age or physical handicap so long as there is mental and physical soundness.
7. Worldwide, not a separate branch in each state like most orders.
8. Honest leadership so that each gets what he or she merits, regardless of age, seniority or other conditions.
9. There are many other benefits, too numerous to be mentioned here.

WHO MAY JOIN?

Our organization is open to all men and women who believe in God, and is in good physical and mental condition.

Children the age of 5 and above are also welcome to join our youth department.

INTERNATIONAL MASONIC ASSOCIATION OFFERS THE BEST.

Benefits offered through our association are world-wide. We are there when you need us.

A similar organisation, International Masonic Association and Eastern Star

The Knights Templar Organization

is welcomed into membership in the Knights
Templar Organization with our Award.

Declaration of Acceptance:

Yes, I am proud to accept membership in The Knights Templar Organization, and to receive all the benefits and hospitalities that membership entitles me to receive. I pledge that I shall not reveal in any public fashion the ancient traditions of The Knights Templar that membership provides me exclusive access to.

Please forward to me by private courier the registered contents and material of my Award, and all papers and information pertaining to thereof. There is a nominal \$25 registration fee to cover Administrative costs of notification and preparing your Award Program.

Date:

Countersigned by:
Count Christian d'Espery Grand Scion

Signature:

Christian d'Espery
The Knights Templar Organization

Date of birth:

Month: Day: Year:

PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS

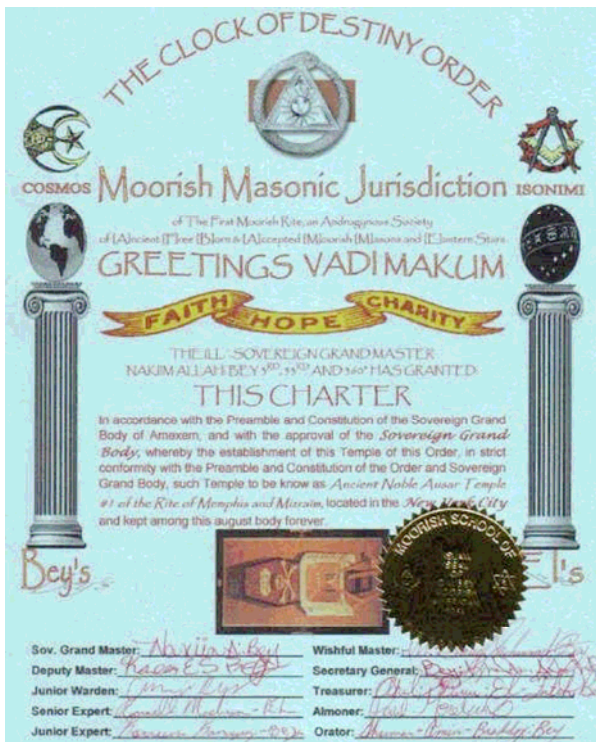
Please mail back to: The Knights Templar Organization, P.O. Box 579007, Las Vegas, NV 89157

Please find enclosed payment of \$25 by: ☐ Check ☐ Cash ☐ Money order

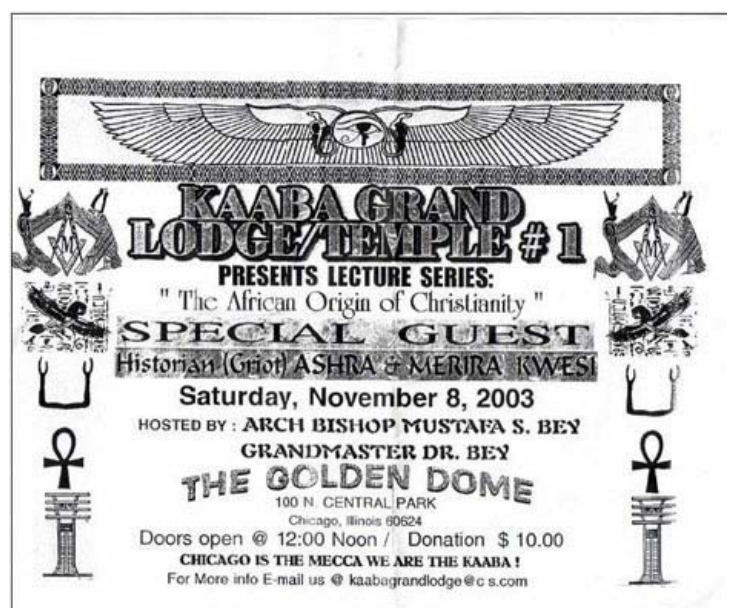
Made payable to: The Knights Templar Organization

Knights Templars who sell 'awards'.

Timothy Drew, the self-proclaimed Prophet Drew Ali, founded a religion based on the belief that African Americans were descended from Moors and were of Muslim heritage, and in 1913 he established the Moorish Science Temple. His teachings included financial advice and social security measures, and he compiled a book entitled *The Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple of America*, sometimes called the 'Circle 7 Koran'. Its message was a mixture of Christianity and Islam, with a dash of Freemasonry. From this came the Clock of Destiny Order Moorish Masonic Jurisdiction, known as 'Clock Moors' and other pseudo-Masonic bodies such as Kaaba Grand Lodge.



'Clock Moors', New York



Kaaba Grand Lodge, Chicago

In 2002, under the heading 'Masonry gone mad' a special edition of the *Phylaxis* magazine featured the rise and fall of a poseur with many names and faces, who claimed to be from another planet, and established

himself as Grand Master of the Supreme Grand Lodge of Nuwaubian World Wide Masonic Lodges. This was part of a larger scam that included the establishment of a 'Nation' in rural Georgia, where thousands of followers lived and waited to be transported from earth by a passing comet. The end came with the arrest of their leader and his subsequent trial and sentence of imprisonment for 135 years for kidnapping, child sexual abuse and other crimes.



The Teacher
Dr. York

Masonry gone mad!
Grand Master Malachi York of the Supreme Grand Lodge of Nuwaubian World Wide Masonic Grand Lodges Inc.



Yaanuwn
Teacher Of The Universe



Melchizedek (Murdoq)
Teacher Of The Ancient Sumeria



Al Hajj Al Imaam Isa
Teacher Of Islaamic Hebrew



Rabboni: Y'shua
Teacher Of Judaism

Some of the many faces of Dr Malachi Z York



Arial view of the location of his 'Nuwaubian Nation' in Georgia, USA



Robert Seay / AP
United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors founder Dwight York is escorted from federal court in Macon Monday.



Ben Gray / AJC
Law enforcement officers guard the entrance to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound in rural Putnam County while some 300 local and federal officers served a warrant following the arrest of the group's leader.

Special Edition 2002—THE PHYLAXIS

Farewell to Dr York

Problems and solutions

Today, approximately half the Freemasons and half the Grand Lodges in the world are in North America—in Canada, USA and Mexico. The problems under consideration relate to USA and to a lesser extent to Canada, where there are about 250,000 men of African origin in Grand Lodges which are NOT within the mainstream group of Grand Lodges. Most members of Canadian and US mainstream Grand Lodges are of European origin, although membership of some of these Grand Lodges is multi-racial, with a few members of Latin-American, Asian, Pacific, and even African origin. The main problem is how to bring these other Masons of African origin into the fellowship of mainstream Freemasonry. In theory, the choice lies between:

- (a) amalgamation of Grand Lodges in the same geographic area; and
- (b) recognition as equal, independent bodies.

In practice, amalgamation is not an option because the smaller group would perceive itself as losing its identity and proud history.

Recognition has its own problems. To understand these, it is first necessary to remind ourselves that the terms 'regularity' and 'recognition' are not interchangeable.

Recognition is a question of fact: either Grand Lodge A and Grand Lodge B recognise each other, or they do not. If they recognise each other, then their members may visit each others' lodges and Grand Lodges, and possibly even become members of each others' lodges. But recognition must be consensual. A unilateral recognition, where Grand Lodge A 'recognises' Grand Lodge B, but B does not 'recognise' A, brings no benefits or privileges.

Within the confines of a particular Grand Lodge, *regularity* is also a question of fact; a member of the Grand Lodge is regular because he was made a Mason under circumstances prescribed by that Grand Lodge in a lodge chartered by that Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge considers its members, its lodges, and itself to be regular. But outside the confines of that Grand Lodge, the question of regularity is only an opinion. For example, Grand Lodges A, B, and C all consider themselves to be regular. Grand Lodges A and B agree that each other is regular, but may differ over whether Grand Lodge C is regular. *Regularity*, then, is in the eye of the beholder.

Regularity is a prerequisite for recognition. Each Grand Lodge has its own criteria for recognition. Most mainstream Grand Lodges have very similar, but not necessarily identical, criteria. Many adopt the list originating from the United Grand Lodge of England, sometimes with local variations. In general terms that list may be summarised as:

- regularity of origin,
- regularity of conduct,
- autonomy, and
- territoriality.

Interpretation of those terms would seem to vary somewhat.

As we have seen, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts began with a single lodge chartered by England in 1784, which declared its independence in 1827 and thus became a one-lodge Grand Lodge, voluntarily placed itself under the authority of a National Grand Lodge in 1847, dividing its one lodge into three, then declared its independence from the National Grand Lodge in 1873. Nevertheless, in 1994, England was prepared to accept that as being ‘regularity of origin’ at the time it occurred.⁵ It can be argued from that finding that the National Grand Lodge was also regular in origin.

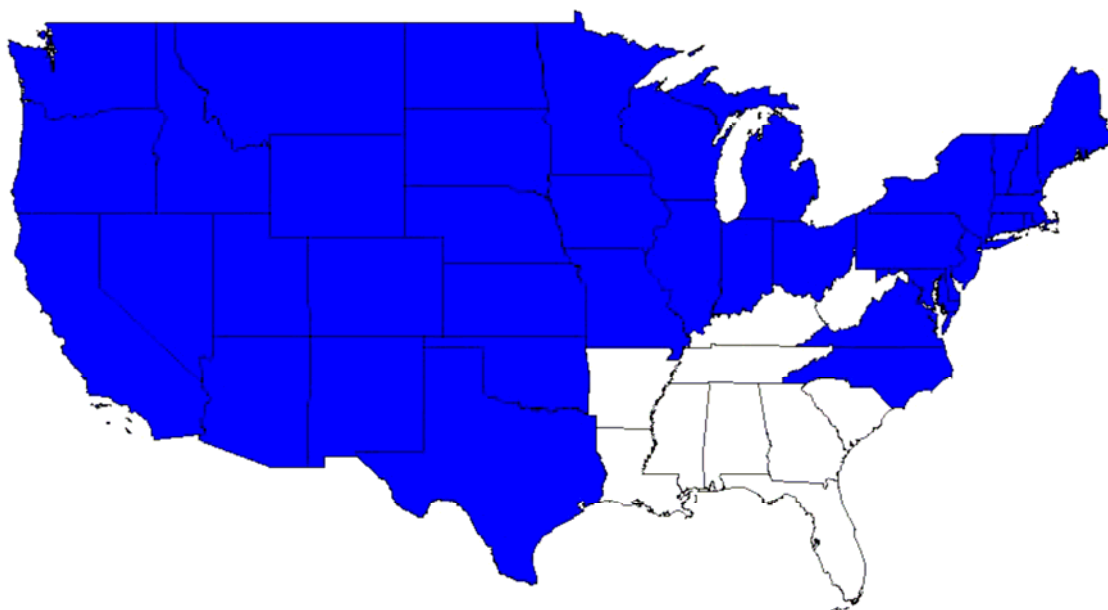
It has long been accepted that a Grand Lodge must be autonomous and not be under, or share authority with, another body such as a Supreme Council, but it would appear that an exception is made for St John (Craft) Grand Lodges under the Scandinavian 10-degree system.

There are many exceptions to the US ‘exclusive territorial jurisdiction’ principle and, as we have seen in Greece in recent years, the English version of consensual shared territory may be backed up by what could be interpreted as coercion.

The other side of the coin

Prince Hall Masons have been segregated from their mainstream counterparts for over two hundred years, on the basis of their African origin and the colour of their skin. All that time they have maintained their regularity of conduct, and hoped for acknowledgment that they are true Masons. It has become clear to them that, while recognition has slowly been accorded in the north and the west over the past 20 years, there is virtually no hope of recognition in the ‘deep south’. Not surprisingly, some of them look towards the other Black Grand Lodges which do not have a clear claim of origin back to African Lodge of Boston, and feel that they should be working towards unity with their ‘brothers OF the skin’ rather than recognition by US mainstream Masons as ‘brothers UNDER the skin’. But those with a clearer understanding of Freemasonry see that this is not just a North American issue, but one which concerns—or should concern—worldwide Freemasonry.

The majority of those seeking recognition look no further than the mainstream Grand Lodge in their own state, and perhaps to the ‘home’ Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland. Most do not permit dual or plural membership, and few understand the concept of having an official representative at another Grand Lodge. Perhaps more importantly, they have no history of visiting lodges outside their own jurisdiction, and it does not seem to occur to them that, for true equality in Freemasonry, they should be able to visit lodges throughout the world. Consequently, many do not seek further recognition in North America or overseas, and seem reluctant to respond to overtures from other mainstream Grand Lodges. There are a few exceptions, of which the prime example is the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut, which has exchanged recognition with more than 30 mainstream Grand Lodges.



The ten US Grand Lodges which will not recognise Prince Hall Freemasonry (*shown in white*): the former slave-owning states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia.

Map courtesy of Paul M Bessel

⁵ UGLE Quarterly Communication, 14 December 1994.

Of the ten PHA Grand Lodges which have not obtained recognition within their own state, only one has had the vision and courage to seek recognition widely overseas. In 2002, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Georgia wrote to 50 Grand Lodges worldwide, seeking recognition. It had few replies, but three of the six Grand Lodges in Australia responded favourably. The Grand Lodge of Tasmania, the Grand Lodge of South Australia and the Northern Territory, and the United Grand Lodge of Victoria have all exchanged recognition with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Georgia, despite the fact that it does not have recognition from the mainstream Grand Lodge of Georgia or the United Grand Lodge of England—with no adverse effects. The result is that in the American state of Georgia these Australian Grand Lodges recognise two Grand Lodges in the same geographic location that do not recognise each other.

The Grand Lodge of New Zealand and all six Grand Lodges in Australia have also taken ‘affirmative action’. All PHA Masons may visit Australian and New Zealand lodges, if they produce proof of current membership of a PHA lodge and pass the usual tests for visitors, even if their Grand Lodge has not formally exchanged recognition. This has been widely publicised, and no mainstream Grand Lodge has complained.

South Australia has gone two steps further. It has indicated that it is prepared to extend the practice of recognising more than one Grand Lodge in the same area, beyond the confines of North America, by exchanging recognition with both the Grand Orient of Italy and the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy. And South Australia no longer follows English practice in visiting lodges in other recognised jurisdictions; if a South Australian Mason visits a lodge in a jurisdiction recognised by South Australia, and finds another visitor lawfully present, whose Grand Lodge is not recognised by South Australia, the South Australian is NOT obliged to leave the lodge or to avoid association with that other visitor. This acceptance of the judgment of the host lodge is sometimes called the ‘when in Rome’ rule.⁶

The point is that these variations on usual practice have not caused an uproar in mainstream Masonry, and they are worth consideration by other jurisdictions in seeking to assist in solving the problem in North America. Let us examine the problem and possible solutions in some detail.

PHA and mainstream

PHA Grand Lodges fall into one of two categories:

- (a) those with in-State or in-Province recognition (33 Grand Lodges with about half of all PHA Masons); and
- (b) those without such recognition (11 Grand Lodges with about half of all PHA Masons).

To obtain their full inheritance as mainstream Masons, group (a) should be encouraged to seek wider recognition, both in North America and elsewhere.

Of those in group (b), ten Grand Lodges are in USA, in the ‘deep south’ where slavery was still lawful at the start of the civil war in 1861. These have little hope of achieving in-State recognition in the near future, and other US mainstream Grand Lodges are unlikely to recognise them without it, but mainstream Grand Lodges outside North America can extend recognition—and have begun to do so. This gives them an opportunity to gain part of their inheritance.

The other Grand Lodge in group (b) is the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alberta, formed in 1997. There is a persistent rumour that it has faded away and no longer meets, but a reliable Canadian source disputes that claim, and the matter needs further investigation.

PHO and mainstream

The National Grand Lodge (NGL) is not recognised by any mainstream Grand Lodge. It would be very difficult for the NGL to obtain recognition from US mainstream Grand Lodges which are based on State boundaries and are suspicious of any national movement in US Freemasonry. Under current mainstream practice, a single exchange of recognition would require the consent of all PHA and mainstream Grand Lodges in the 27 states where there is an NGL presence—54 opportunities to veto the proposal. Furthermore, at least eight of those 27 mainstream Grand Lodges have refused to recognise their PHA counterparts, and would certainly reject the NGL.

Recently the NGL has been corresponding with the United Grand Lodge of England, seeking recognition. The response indicates that England would not recognise the NGL without American consent. But recognition of the NGL by mainstream Grand Lodges outside the US avoids this problem if those mainstream Grand Lodges are prepared to follow the precedent of the Australian Grand Lodges with Georgia.

⁶ ‘When in Rome, live as the Romans do’, advice from St Ambrose to St Augustine, 4th century AD.

If PHO Grand Lodges erected by the National Grand Lodge attempted to obtain recognition on an individual basis within the same State, they would be faced with the mainstream requirement that candidates for recognition must be autonomous. It has been claimed that the NGL would permit individual PHO Grand Lodges to exchange recognition with other Grand Lodges, but the issue is fraught with difficulty and needs further clarification.

A PHO Grand Lodge seeking recognition outside the US would have much the same difficulty, but perhaps with a greater chance of success, provided it clearly had NGL support.

PHA and PHO

If PHA and PHO could be reconciled, it would go a long way towards solving the vexing problem of other Black Masonic and pseudo-Masonic groups (see below), as well as easing the way for mainstream recognition of the NGL, but the greatest benefit would be the redirection of effort currently wasted on feuding with each other. Two options may be considered:

- merger of PHA and PHO
- exchange of recognition between NGL and PHA Grand Lodges.

Both are difficult to achieve.

In 2001, thanks to the behind-the-scenes efforts of a small group of peacemakers, there was a meeting between the National Grand Master and his 'cabinet' (PHO) with five influential Grand Masters of PHA Grand Lodges. Those who arranged the meeting hoped for a merger, but the best that could be achieved was a resolution of goodwill, a precursor to *recognition*.⁷ The meeting was not between equals; the National Grand Master could bind the NGL, but the five PHA Grand Masters had no authority to bind the rest of the PHA Grand Masters. When the resolution was presented to the annual conference of PHA Grand Masters, it was passed to a committee for consideration. Following the committee's report, the conference voted for a *merger*, in terms which would prove unacceptable to the NGL, and there the proposal rests, in limbo.



Peacemakers: Joseph Walkes (PHA) and Cedric Lewis (PHO)
Photo courtesy of the Phylaxis Society

⁷ 'Be it resolved, that the Prince Hall Grand Lodges and the National Grand Lodge have agreed to mutually recognize each others existence as representative of the African American Masonic Family. Be it further resolved, that going forward, our goal will be Masonic Fellowship and the upward mobility of the African American Community.'

**The Most Worshipful National Grand Lodge of F. & A.A.Y.
Masons, Prince Hall Origin, National Compact, U.S.A.**

Resolution

**HOLIDAY INN
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

MARCH 3, 2001

Be it resolved, that the Prince Hall Grand Lodges and the National Grand Lodge have agreed to mutually recognize each others existence as representative of the African American Masonic Family. Be it further resolved, that going forward, our goal will be Masonic Fellowship and the upward mobility of the African American Community.

Norman A. Woodard
Hon. Norman A. Woodard, G.M.

Howard L. Woods
Howard L. Woods, G.M.

William O. Jones
Dr. William O. Jones, G.M.

John W. Jordan
R. W. John W. Jordan, N.D.G.M.

R. W. Clyde Shepard
R. W. Clyde Shepard, N.W.

R. W. Joseph W. Hurd
R. W. Joseph W. Hurd, N. Treas.

R. W. Samuel H. Lawrence
R. W. Samuel H. Lawrence,
N. Trustee

Deary Vaughn
Deary Vaughn, G.M.

Andrew E. Romington
Andrew E. Romington, G.M.

Rev. Dr. Donald C. Wherry
Rev. Dr. Donald C. Wherry, G.M.

R. W. Felton N. Ferguson
R. W. Felton N. Ferguson, N.S.W.

R. W. Lee E. Singleton
R. W. Lee E. Singleton, N. Sec.

R. W. Clarence Daniel
R. W. Clarence Daniel, Chems Trustee Bd

R. W. Loyce Searight
R. W. Loyce Searight,
N. Trustee

The PHA-PHO accord of 2001, now in limbo

The problem with a merger is the inequality of the two parties, on the one hand a National body with affiliated state units, and on the other hand 47 independent bodies. The PHA Grand Lodges are unlikely to submit themselves again to a National Grand Lodge, even though their greater numbers would ensure strong representation on the NGL. And for the alternative of PHO Grand Lodges merging with their PHA counterparts on terms of equality, the NGL itself would have to be dissolved.

Recognition of the NGL would require at least the unanimous agreement of the 27 PHA Grand Lodges where there are PHO lodges or Grand Lodges—and possibly the approval of the other PHA Grand Lodges as well. Some other formula for reconciliation must be devised.

Prince Hall and the 'bogus' groups

Some of the Grand Lodges classified as 'bogus' appear to be regular in conduct, and autonomous, lacking only the regularity of origin demanded by mainstream Grand Lodges—and therefore by Prince Hall Grand Lodges also. The Prince Hall fraternity is so carefully orthodox and conservative that it is unlikely to devise

a way to 'forgive' this lack of regularity of origin, unless mainstream Grand Lodges have demonstrated an applicable variation of their own requirements in this regard. Consequently, a merger with such a 'bogus' Grand Lodge, or recognition of it, is unlikely.

Individual members of such 'bogus' groups, if their personal qualifications meet Prince Hall criteria, are often 'healed' into a Prince Hall lodge (PHA or PHO), and sometimes a whole lodge of a bogus group is 'healed' and formed into a Prince Hall lodge. This is a piecemeal 'saving' of good Masonic material.

The question of what to do about 'bogus' groups in general, and the charlatans and rogues among them in particular, is best left to the Prince Hall fraternity to devise solutions.

Conclusion

We who belong to the mainstream Grand Lodges outside of North America have a part to play in bringing justice to our segregated black brethren in North America. To those of Prince Hall Affiliation whose Grand Lodge has exchanged recognition with the mainstream Grand Lodge in the same State or Province, we can meet them more than half way, offering encouragement to exchange recognition with our Grand Lodges and to participate more fully in our universal brotherhood. And to those to whom recognition is denied by the mainstream Grand Lodge in their own State, we can still offer the same hand of friendship if we are prepared to reject the territorial practice invented by the US mainstream Grand Lodges and supported by the United Grand Lodge of England—in other words, if we follow the Australian precedent.

With regard to the brethren of Prince Hall Origin, who are in the double bind of requiring permission from so many other Grand Lodges, both mainstream and PHA, before they can obtain a single agreement of recognition from any Grand Lodge in North America or by the United Grand Lodge of England, we could circumvent that by following the Australian precedent.

It appears that we cannot directly assist in bringing accord between PHA and PHO brethren, but acceptance of the regularity of the National Grand Lodge by our Grand Lodges, as demonstrated by the act of recognition, could encourage such an accord. As for those men who believe and act as Masons ought, but lack the direct and clear descent from African Lodge of Boston, our interaction with PHA and PHO brethren might help to bring them within the fold also.

May brotherly love prevail!