



Church

African Meeting House Restoration Enters 10th Month

The National Park Service (NPS) has announced that the \$1 million restoration of the African Meeting House, the oldest black church building in the United States, has entered its tenth month and is on schedule. The completion date has been tentatively set for October 2, 1987.

Considered the "Black Faneuil Hall", the Meeting House is located at 8 Smith Court, Beacon Hill, Boston, MA. The landmark structure, a featured part of the Boston African American National Historic Site, is being restored by the NPS, North Atlantic Region Preservation Laboratory which, in 1986, completed the famous restoration of the Statue of Liberty.

As of June 30th, work completed in the past month

included: the electric service has been installed; basement heating plant is in; the gallery stringers are being installed on the North side; the east and west gallery floors have been installed; exterior brick window sills are being replaced by wooden window sills; and the repointing of the exterior brick is 80% complete.

The original construction of the Meeting House dates to 1805 when Reverend Thomas Paul with 20 members officially formed the First African Baptist Church. Built through subscriptions and with free black labor, the Meeting House was dedicated in December 1806. The National Park Service is trying to locate descendants of any former church members of the First African Baptist Church.

The \$1 million restoration is funded through a Congressional appropriation. To complete the African Meeting House with furnishings and exhibits, approximately \$900,000 will be needed. Persons interested in helping to complete the restoration, may send contributions to the National Park Service, (NPS) African Meeting House Fund, 46 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02114.

For additional information, contact Dorothea L. Powell, Site Manager, Boston African American National Historic Site, 46 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02114.

BA HA'I

877-0377

WORDS OF LIFE

"This is the day which the Lord hath made — we will rejoice and be glad in it." —PSALM 118.24

I — God made today, it is good. When we doubt, or do not see, the goodness in today, in effect we doubt and distrust God. God made it. It is therefore good. I must simply claim the good which God has given.

II — God's plan is in today. Live it! God has His plan which is being unfolded throughout today. All that we need to do is to enter into God's plan and live it. He who made the world and all of the marvelously intricate life systems of each week, each flower, each bug, each bird, each life, also has an intricate plan to unfold through you.

III — God's glories are in today. Rejoice in them. "We will rejoice and be glad in it." So the psalmist suggests or offers as the appropriate response to God's glories which are inherent in each day. "The heavens are telling the glory of the Lord." "The kingdom of heaven," said Jesus, "is within you." Your inner and innate God life speaks to you and urges you to rejoice. Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!

PRAYER POEM

In 1825, the Danish lyric poet and novelist Bernard Ingemann wrote the words to the hymn, "Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow."

Ingemann was an heroic figure in Denmark largely because of his historical novels depicting life experiences and themes from the earlier days of his country. His talent was supported by the state, suggesting the value the public in Denmark in those days placed upon creative works. The last 40 years of his life were spent on a quiet and lovely island off the Danish coast. His poetic presentation of the all-enfolding goodness of God in every day is most remarkably evident in the lines below.

Through the night of doubt and sorrow
Onward goes the pilgrim band,
Singing songs of expectation,
Marching to the promised land...

One the object of our journey,
One the faith that never tires,
One the earnest looking forward,
One the hope our God inspires...

One the gladness of rejoicing
One the far eternal shore,
Where the one Almighty Father
Reigns in love for evermore.

A Mission for the Church

Does the church have an obligation to assist in economic development?

On a recent television program, a leading black clergyman was asked why, after all these years, the enormous financial resources of the black church have not been put to greater use in developing black communities. His haughty reply was in words to the effect that the only business the church should be in is that of saving souls. Is that so? Fortunately for our race, not all church pastors share his narrow sense of mission.

On the contrary, we are currently witnessing a slow, but steady return to a movement begun among blacks many years ago — that is, churches directly assisting in the economic development of their neighborhoods. In a series of articles, Rev. John Walker, who writes for the black

press on religion, points out the critical role which the church can play in helping to re-educate blacks on the importance of business enterprise as the key to prosperity. "Charity begins at home," he claims, and as our "strongest institution," the church must take the lead in helping blacks to make more productive long-range use of their \$200 billion worth of annual income.

No church is presently doing a better job of this than the Allen AME Church in Queens, New York. Under the guidance of Rev. Floyd Flake, Allen AME does more than just support a church school, two homes for the elderly, a medical clinic, and various other community projects. In far reaching programs, it is helping to

revitalize its immediate neighborhood. Directly responsible for the rehabilitation of nine local stores, the church also offers technical assistance to blacks who are forming small businesses. Prospective business owners are helped with the preparation of business proposals and are steered to funding sources. After an appropriate store has been located for a new enterprise, Allen AME provides architects and contractors to renovate and design the space.

This church is just one of a growing number which are determined to help blacks join the succession of America's other ethnics who have struggled up and out of poverty via the route of business enterprise.

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