

Next fall's Million Man March to include women

By Valencia Mohammed
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan visited the nation's capital recently to prepare for the 10-year celebration of the Million Man March. Unlike the controversial and misunderstood men-only march, which first took place Oct. 16, 1995, this year's anniversary will include direct participation, organization and involvement from millions of women.

With final plans still being mapped out, Farrakhan met with local religious, education, economic, health and community leaders to gain support for an event which many Black Americans said is long overdue.

"This is a moment that we must not let slip by us... [as] Black people, we are being called by God to do something big! The Million Man March was a sign of what could be done. The Million Woman March was a sign of what could be done when people mobilize for something bigger than themselves. The Million Youth March was another sign of what could be done," said Farrakhan.

Addressing a packed Union Temple Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration week, the 72-year-old inspirational and religious leader Farrakhan said Black Americans are at the same point in time as the civil rights leaders and human rights advocates who peacefully protested for equality in healthcare, housing, education, economic development, justice and to stop the practice of unjust wars.

More than 300 men and women gathered at the church to listen, learn and organize around how their specific discipline, abilities and organizations' expertise would guarantee a solidified march.

The Rev. Willie Wilson, pastor of Union Temple, is the national co-convenor for the march. When offered the position, Wilson graciously accepted, said Minister Farrakhan. However, Wilson pointed out that he would be more energized "if women were directly involved."

As the Rev. Mary Wilson, co-pastor and wife of Rev. Wilson listened attentively; Minister Farrakhan looked directly at her and said, "It's time. It's needed. The women

will discipline the women, and we men will discipline the men like in the past."

The Rev. Walter Fauntroy, pastor and longtime civil rights leader of New Bethel Baptist Church in Washington D.C., was in attendance to lend his support and input: "The whole purpose to any march is to raise the public consciousness to the need for change. What excites me about this march [is that] not only will we return with a million men, but millions of Black women as a demon-

stration of the awesome power of families to improve the quality of our lives."

Farrakhan called on spiritual leaders to take their ministry to the streets to help heal the communities. He also invited those seeking justice worldwide to unite.

"An unjust war is being prosecuted by our government and those of us who are here because of nonviolence see our communities erupting in senseless violence, where we are becoming killers of one another — some-

thing that we never did in the darkest days of slavery," said the charismatic speaker.

The Nation of Islam leader said, "The blood spilling in our streets by our own hands must come to an end by our own hands. It must come now."

According to Farrakhan, the goal is the symbol of a successful and peaceful assembly to do the work of God for our people all over the world.

Reflecting on his role 10 years ago, Farrakhan said,

"My brothers and sisters, in the Million Man March, I was used as an instrument. The hammer does not know the effect of its work in the hands of a carpenter. The broom does not know the effect [of] its work in the hands of a sweeper. I did not experience the Million Man March, I marveled at what people tell me. I was used as an instrument to bring it to existence with the help and assistance of so many others."

Valencia Mohammed writes for Afro Newspapers.

Officer

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Villaume is referring to the fact that the court had to make its decision on the City's motion for summary judgment based on viewing the facts of the case "in the light most favorable" to the Craighead family.

At the trial "I think that the more believable witnesses and the more consistent testimony will support Officer Lee," said Villaume.

"There is enough evidence to find Lee guilty of use of excessive force," said Craighead family attorney John Goetz. "It's important for us to prove that Lee had a propensity for this kind of behavior," said Goetz.

Goetz pointed to Lee's suspension in 1990 for use of excessive force, lying to Internal Affairs investigators, and making false statements on a police report.

A disciplinary letter from then chief of police William McCutcheon obtained by the *Spokesman-Recorder* confirms Goetz's assertions. In the letter, McCutcheon reprimands Lee for striking a "suspect at least twice with a flashlight." The letter goes on to say that "Under the circumstances, this force was un-

necessary and excessive, i.e., the suspect was under control and other officers were present."

McCutcheon also says that Lee "exacerbated the situation by making false statements to the Internal Affairs officer investigating the incident by denying that [he] had, in fact, struck the suspect," and that Lee "made a written false report to that same effect"

Last Friday, leaders of the St. Paul NAACP met with the U.S. attorney and presented a formal letter demanding a federal investigation into the case of Leon Nins under federal civil right law.

In addition, the two organizations sent a letter to St. Paul Mayor Randy Kelly, First Ward Council Member Debbie Montgomery, and the president of the St. Paul City Council. The letter demands that an independent investigator be appointed to handle both the criminal and internal investigation of the Nins incident, Nathaniel Khaliq, president of the St. Paul NAACP, said in an interview.

Chris Nisan writes for the Minneapolis Spokesman-Recorder.

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