

C O M M E N T A R Y

Time to meet promise of Million Man March

By Ron Walters

Special to Sentinel-Voice

I believe that Brother Minister Louis Farrakhan is right when, looking at the upcoming 10th anniversary of the Million Man March, said: "God has called us to do something great."

I believe that the tremendous legacy set by the appearance of 2 million brothers on the Mall in Washington, D.C., on October 16, 1995, should evolve. Ten years later, we should be focused on building upon that legacy with the substance, especially the economic substance, that it will take to make the vision of healing and forward movement a reality.

My view is that, 1 million or 2 million brothers should commemorate this event by their contribution of \$100 dollars to a freedom fund such as the Black United Fund or some new organization. That would raise \$100 million dollars to begin the process of self-development and self-healing at a mass level.

We don't all have to come to Washington, to do that; there could be a symbolic commemoration in Washington, but a more fundamental, local day of contributions by Blacks to those issues that are crying out for financial support. And even if a person doesn't have \$100, they can give whatever they have.

When I say everyone, I mean everyone:

drug pushers, welfare moms, working poor, blue collar, white collar or no collar. This should not be a "boogie" thing; it should be a community thing.

After reading brother Randall Robinson's book "The Reckoning: What Blacks Owe To Each Other," I feel even stronger about this. Robinson wrote this after his hit book "The Debt," in which he charged that America still owes a debt to Black people for our having helped to build this country.

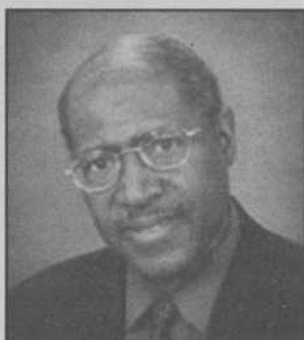
But "The Reckoning" implies that the process of reparation really begins with us and the respect that we have for one another.

So, we can begin the process of reparation more successfully, I believe, by making a demand that America cannot ignore.

We could throw down a gauntlet that, at the same time, both challenges America to remember our contributions while enriching our legacy and future.

This "Million Man March" would benefit Black banks that can hold and grow our funds in a safe and secure environment for at least one year while a planning committee begins the sacred work of building some steps to the next plateau for our progress.

Remember what Ossie Davis said: "It's



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not the man, it's the plan; it's not the rap, it's the map."

The Jewish community, the Palestinian community, Native Americans, church groups, such as the Mormons, and others, have a network of social service and economic networks that serve the health and welfare needs of their people. So whatever else is available to them through the

state is gravy.

Blacks are largely under-served by health and welfare institutions in their own country and do not have their own, save the church. That dependent reality is the source of a lot of pain and suffering.

Not to preempt a planning committee, but I think that a large chunk of that \$100 million Freedom Fund should be invested in a way that takes advantage of compound interest on the stock market.

Then \$100 million might grow to \$1 billion if a day is set aside each year for the community to commemorate the Million Man March with a march to Wall Street.

Then, I think that some of the proceeds should be invested in a think tank that begins the process of working through our problems and how we can solve them — or contribute to the solution of many of them.

In this, we might marshal the talents of Black institutions we already have, such as: The Patterson Institute of the United Negro College Fund; the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, or a new research consortium of Black colleges and universities. Their unique focus would be on solutions — on a plan of attack in each of the critical areas necessary to our survival and progress.

Obviously, an overarching organization or mechanism needs to be created that would look like a small Congress, with representation from all of the segments of the Black community.

However, to avoid fractiousness and downright foolishness, it would have a streamlined decision-making capacity, comprised of people who are widely regarded for their integrity and skill at moving projects.

These are just a few thoughts about how the Million Man March might be commemorated. It would not be so much a commemoration, but a new beginning based on the legacy that exists.

We owe this new phase to the spirit of the October 16, 1995, March; we owe it to our ancestors, and we owe it to our future and to those yet unborn.

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Let's listen to revolutionary voices from our past

By James Clingman

Special to Sentinel-Voice

There comes a time "in the course of human events" for persons who have been mistreated "to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with" those who mistreat them. In the interest of self-respect and to claim the respect of others, after a long train of abuses, such persons have the "right" and the "duty to throw off" those who mistreat them "and to provide new guards for their future security..."

In case you have not read it in a while, the Declaration of Independence contains the phrases quoted in the above paragraph. This country was established on the simple fact that people were being mistreated, they were tired of it, and they were not going to take it anymore.

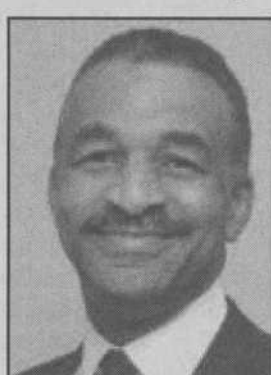
One cannot help but admire people who

come to the end of their rope, defiantly proclaim the truth about their condition and then do something about it.

I long for the day when Black people finally get so tired of the abuse we suffer all over this country that we then decide to spend much more of our time, not trying to hurt someone else, but using our resources to help ourselves.

The plight of African-Americans in 2005 is similar to that of the founders of this country. The biggest difference is that they were fed up and determined to make a change; we are just fed up. They had to go to war, as we must go to war if we want change.

Our war must be revolutionary as well, but



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it must be fought with dollars rather than musket balls.

Our resolve must be the same as the patriots, however. We must "admit" our problem and then "commit" to doing what we have to do to get what we want.

Why would we continue to hope and wish for change from people who have demonstrated no indication of their willingness to do so? Check out how

Patrick Henry put it:

"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to

justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves..."

Henry knew he had to fight rather than hope and wish for change. He asked his compatriots what would make them believe their captors would change:

"Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet."

Patrick Henry continued:

"They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed... Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?"

Black people, we must ask ourselves those same questions. Henry reminded the people of their futile petitions, their arguments against oppression, their entreaties and supplications to the King.

He reminded them of their demonstrations, their protestations, and their humility — all rejected by the power structure.

He told them it was time to take things into their own hands and stop begging their oppressors to come to their rescue. He said, "There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free... we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight!"

Until Black people — who occupy the bottom of every economic category and the top of every incarceration category; who suffer from the lowest education levels among males and have the highest percentage of female-headed households — until we de-

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backbone of the legislation.

Under NCLB, schools are required to assess student progress, give parents information about test scores, and provide parents of students in underperforming schools with options, including the right to transfer to another school and the opportunity to obtain extra tutoring for children.

Thus far, critics deem NCLB to be a miserable failure. They cite that parents are not receiving sufficient information about the schools to hold them accountable or to exercise their options.

So, while the President and Mrs. Bush are running around the country visiting Boys and Girls Clubs, taking pictures with little Black children, it's actually a front, because behind their backs he's even cutting his own NCLB

initiative, as well as Head Start.

Since he signed NCLB into law he has underfunded it by \$26.5 billion dollars, and now he is trying to make some of it up. While he's increasing the federal Title I program for poor children by \$603 million, it falls far short of the \$20.5 billion he promised and serves to deny nearly five million disadvantaged children critical education services, such as extra help to become proficient in reading and math.

One would really have to ask the question, "What is the President smoking, and what is it laced with?"

Is he still smoking marijuana?

In analysis, he states in his budget that "college costs are rising significantly" and proclaims that "aid is increasingly important to ensure that students have an opportunity to

go to college," but on the other hand, the very tools that will help them are being eliminated.

Even his modest Pell Grant increase will only reach 36,000 students, far short of the 5.5 million current Pell Grant recipients.

Everyone has been criticizing the administration for not finding any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. They were looking in the wrong place. It appears that based on these budget proposals, the weapons of mass destruction are housed at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

It is a slow fuse that has been set, and when it finally blows it will be the most devastating force for opposing the forward march of progressive thinking in human history.

The President is willfully affecting all mankind and it is quite possible that mankind isn't going to survive it.