

Millions More March brings broad agenda

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA)

After Black men had experienced a peaceful day of fellowship and renewal at the Million Man March on the Washington Mall in October 1995, many returned home, rejuvenated and ready to spread throughout their communities the goodwill they had attained.

But soon, the enthusiasm fizzled. Community meetings to discuss the march's atonement agenda gradually became sparse. Then, they died out for lack of cohesion and a national umbrella.

Disproportionate homicide, unemployment and incarceration rates of Black males went virtually unchanged.

But 10 years later, this October 14-16 when the Millions More Movement begins, there will be no returning to business as usual, said a chief planner of the anniversary march.

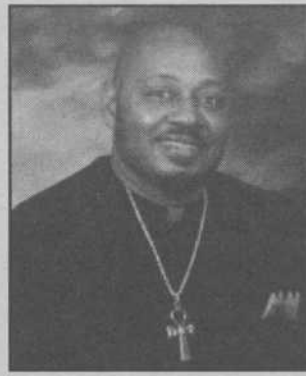
"It's going to be bigger

than '95," said Rev. Willie Wilson, the march's national executive director. "It's a much, much wider and broader and diverse coalition of groups and organizations than in '95. And of course this time it's both men and women."

With a broader agenda and supporters as varied as the Congressional Black Caucus and former President Bill Clinton, Wilson, pastor of the Union Temple Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., predicts that the march will have long lasting impact.

"We didn't really develop any systematized programs coming out of 1995. We had many men assuming the responsibilities of taking care of their families, but there was not an overall programmatic thrust that came from the top down that was perpetuated on a continual and consistent basis," he said.

"This time around, we are developing strategies, programs that will be ongoing, some of which will have



"It's [Million More March] a much, much wider and broader and diverse coalition of groups and organizations than in '95."

— Willie Wilson
National Executive Director
Million More March

short-term goals, some of which are more long-term. We're working on a systematic plan and a programmatic thrust in the areas of education development, economic development, health, housing, cultural development, spiritual development and the strengthening of the Black family."

According to Wilson, among the tangible action items already being solidified are:

- A Black Book to put into everybody's hand that speaks to how to eliminate debt, how to create wealth, how to

achieve home ownership and other practical information that Black people need.

- Task forces to work with Black organizations that have programs that can be expanded to strengthen the community.

- Mass support of the Congressional Black Caucus on its legislative and appropriations agenda as well as individual bills.

- A fundraising arm to support Black causes.

"We've got to have money to make these things work," said Wilson. "So, one of the things we're looking at is developing a transparent economic arm that deals with people who have noted integrity and respect in our community. We'd have over-

sight over a fund that will be funneled into each of the different areas. For example, a certain amount could go to the United Negro College Fund, some for health programs in Black community."

Unlike a decade ago, the Congressional Black Caucus is fully supportive of this event.

"This is an extraordinary moment for the leadership of our people," said Minister Louis Farrakhan. "Bringing together a far reaching coalition of our best and brightest political minds to effect change on the negative conditions of the masses of our people is the kind of unity we desperately need. Since no one group alone can solve the myriad of problems that our people face, the involvement and endorsement of the Congressional Black Caucus is a major step toward a united leadership."

The chairman of the CBC agrees.

"If we can get a million people supporting the agenda that we have developed and present it to the president, then maybe the president will take the agenda more seriously," said U.S. Rep. Mel

Watt (D-N.C.), chair of the 43-member CBC.

"The more pressure, the more cajoling that we can put on the president and on the congress to lay out our agenda, I think the better off we are from our perspective."

Wilson said the executive committee is still open for suggestions. So far, all of the actions can be organized and mobilized within the Black community, Wilson said.

"This does not excuse the responsibility and culpability of the government, but there are things that we need to do in our own communities for ourselves that we can do if we just pool our time, talents and resources to make it happen."

Wilson said he has already seen a major benefit from the march:

"That is, a newfound sense of community, of cooperative effort, and operational unity; if you will, where we see that beyond our theological, philosophical, personal difficulties and conflicts, is a greater cause," he said. "And that is the uplifting of the masses of our people, who are living in some very dire conditions."

Urban League: Black men in crisis

By Kenneth Mallory
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA)

Are Black males an endangered species? That question was posed to a variety of panelists, including the Rev. Al Sharpton and hip-hop journalist Kevin Powell, at the 95th National Urban League Annual Conference's plenary session, "The Black Male: Endangered Species or Hope for the Future?"

"I don't have to tell anyone in this audience that there is a crisis when it comes to Black males," NUL President Marc Morial told the session's attendees.

High incarceration, high dropout and unemployment rates, stringent drug policies impacting African-American males and the extent to which the media influences criminal behavior and perpetuates negative stereotypes of Black men were all salient topics addressed by the panelists.

Journalist and author Ellis Cose said Black and Latino men currently make up 1.3 million of those in the nation's jail and prisons. Collectively, Cose said, they would constitute the seventh largest city in the United States.

"One-third of Black males born today can expect to spend some time locked down," he said.

Judging from some of the

panelists' remarks, the issues reportedly affecting Black males seemed interrelated. But discussion hinged more on solutions than on the problems themselves.

According to Powell, in addition to addressing Black males' spiritual, political, cultural and economic engagement and well-being, attending to their physical and mental health is also needed to empower Black men. Powell said having family members who died from chronic diseases led him to take charge of his health.

Jawanza Kunjufu, author of the highly popular book "Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys," said the issue of fatherlessness in the Black community "needs to be addressed." Also, he said the Black community needs to provide greater support to Black businesses so they could produce more jobs for Black men.

Sharpton, using his signature "tell it like it is" delivery and preacher's cadence, aroused applause among attendees when he admonished politicians for not assuming responsibility for improving the plight of Blacks and criticized the media's influence on Black men.

Sharpton said record companies and media have not provided positive images and

messages for youths. He pointed to the current movie "Hustle and Flow," saying young Black men might be imbued by "models of success" shown in the movie's glorification of the "pimp" lifestyle, instead of having positive images to emulate.

"People emulate what they see, and people can't see what is not shown to them," said Sharpton.

But given the numerous issues facing Black men, are they really on the brink of extinction?

Cose and Adelaide Sanford, vice chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents, responded with a resounding "No."


Sanford spoke of her concern with using the term "endangered species" to describe African-American males.

"Historically, an endangered species is protected, is given sanctuary, is given support. And then, when it is released again into the ocean or into the air, it goes with a unit that allows for a monitoring of its progress," she said. "How can we possibly use the term 'endangered species' as it applies to men of African ancestry? They are not an endangered species. They have no protection; they have no sanctuary."

Kenneth Mallory writes for Afro Newspapers.


Follow the Rainbow to...

Good Health!



When your family counts on you to stay healthy, you can count on Rainbow Medical Centers' board certified family physicians to provide the highest quality of primary and urgent care services. Our facilities offer lab, x-ray, and are open evenings and weekends for your convenience. Rainbow Medical Centers has also been awarded Joint Commission Accreditation (JCAHO) for maintaining national standards of quality healthcare.

Track your health at
My Health Zone
You'll find it at...
www.rainbowmedical.com



RAINBOW Medical Centers

PRIMARY & URGENT CARE

West
255-6657
1341 S. Rainbow Blvd.

East
438-4003
821 N. Nellis Blvd.


North
655-0550
4920 Lone Mtn. Rd.

Rampart
254-9192
8522 Del Webb Blvd.

Galleria
436-5800
1397 Galleria Dr.

Golden Triangle
657-9555
1302 W. Craig Rd.

Boulder Hwy
898-1405
4241 S. Nellis Blvd.



Board Certified Physicians
Most Insurances Accepted