

MINISTER LOUIS FARRAKHAN, "MILLION MAN MARCH"  
(16 OCTOBER 1995)

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On October 16, 1995, an estimated 837,000 black men traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the "Million Man March," a political protest organized to promote change within the black community.<sup>1</sup> The march's messages of hope, self-improvement, and commitment to family generated support from many Americans. According to an *ABC News/Washington Post* poll, 76 percent of all respondents said that they supported the demonstration and about 84 percent of the blacks surveyed "said they think it's a good idea."<sup>2</sup> The same respondents answered less positively when asked about the protest's controversial leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan. In all, 51 percent surveyed said that Farrakhan's participation in the march made them "less likely" to support the event, 16 percent reported that his participation made them "more likely" to endorse the demonstration, and 25 percent said that it made "no difference."<sup>3</sup> Media coverage leading up to the march highlighted these divergent views, casting aside the larger issues the march sought to publicize. The *Pittsburg Post-Gazette*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the *Boston Globe* all focused the spotlight on Farrakhan and his critics' repeated attempts to rhetorically distance the contentious messenger from the march's positive messages.<sup>4</sup>

In his speech at the Million Man March, Farrakhan had the opportunity to redirect attention back to the demonstration's goals. Yet rather than emphasize the march's messages of hope, change, and unity, Farrakhan used the speech as an opportunity to respond to his critics. Reasserting his position as the messenger of the movement, Farrakhan claimed that God had sent him to lead blacks on their path to liberation. He offered the march's initial success as evidence of his leadership appeal and as validation of his vision for the black community. God and his people had granted him his authority, Farrakhan argued, and none of his critics could discredit it.

Because of his controversial public image, Farrakhan's involvement in the Million Man March drew considerable national attention to himself and the movement. In his speech, however, Farrakhan evaded his responsibility to direct that attention away from the controversy over his own leadership and toward the marchers' demands for civil rights. Instead, Farrakhan delivered a two-and-a-half hour speech that focused primarily on his own legitimacy as the messenger of the movement. The confrontational speech, which confirmed his critics' concerns that Farrakhan would use the march to support his own agenda, helped undermine the march's theme of unity and the common cause.

In the end, many will remember the Million Man March as a powerful demonstration of black men joining together in support of their communities. Few, however, will describe Farrakhan's involvement in the march as positively. The

controversial leader's speech at the Million Man March and his attempts to retain control over the movement in the months following the event revealed how one man's drive for power can eclipse a whole movement's commitment to change.

### *Farrakhan's Biography*

Louis Farrakhan was born Louis Eugene Walcott on May 11, 1933, in the Bronx, New York.<sup>5</sup> His mother, Sarah Mae Manning Clarke, was a Caribbean immigrant and his father, Percival Clarke, was a Jamaican immigrant. Farrakhan, who never met his birth father, grew up with his mother and brother in the middle of a West Indian community in the Roxbury section of Boston.<sup>6</sup> There he witnessed first-hand the difficulties of growing up poor and black in America.

Louis Eugene Walcott, "the boy," biographer Arthur J. Magida writes, "was everything that the world at large would later say Louis Farrakhan, the preacher, was not."<sup>7</sup> The young man, whom his family and friends called "Gene," was obedient and well-mannered, attended church regularly, rarely got into trouble, and earned high marks in school. He developed an "all-consuming" passion for music and, at the age of sixteen, began a career as a Calypso singer and violinist.<sup>8</sup> After he graduated from high school in 1951, Farrakhan set aside his musical aspirations and enrolled in the Winston-Salem Teacher's College, an all-black school in North Carolina. Unable to handle the intense racism in the south, he left college two years later and married his girlfriend, Betsy Ross, who was pregnant with their child.<sup>9</sup> To help support his family, Farrakhan returned to performing and, as Florence Hamlish Levinsohn notes, was "on his way to a successful career" until he "found a more exciting life as a visionary."<sup>10</sup>

Farrakhan's life changed in February 1955, when he and his wife joined the Nation of Islam (NOI), an Islamic religious and socio-political organization founded by Elijah Muhammad to "restore and resurrect" black people.<sup>11</sup> Elijah Muhammad's and the NOI's message of black redemption, liberation, separatism, and self-improvement appealed to Farrakhan, but he later admitted that he "was far from fully persuaded that this was the right path."<sup>12</sup> Magida writes, "not until a few months later, when [Farrakhan] heard Malcolm X speak, was he convinced that he had found the right niche" for himself.<sup>13</sup> Farrakhan later explained his decision: "I went looking not for a new religion, but for new leadership that would address the concerns of black people. And I found Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad. I was not interested in changing my religion, but they were Muslims and they spoke a truth that I could identify with."<sup>14</sup> This "truth" resonated with much of the Black Nationalist thought Farrakhan was exposed to as a child.<sup>15</sup> Magida asserts that the young Farrakhan, surrounded by supporters of Marcus Garvey's Black Nationalism movement, had absorbed "by osmosis, if not directly" a "less vitriolic but no less potent brand of theological black pride" that Farrakhan would "echo, if not outright mimic in his own fashion, decades later."<sup>16</sup>

After joining the Nation of Islam at the age of 22, Louis X, as Farrakhan began calling himself, quickly ascended through the ranks.<sup>17</sup> Malcolm X, the minister of Temple 7 in Harlem, New York, took Farrakhan under his wing and placed the new recruit in the temple's ministry as his personal assistant.<sup>18</sup> In 1957, the NOI transferred Farrakhan to

the struggling Boston mosque, where he was appointed as the assistant minister and captain of the Fruit of Islam, the paramilitary branch of the movement. "Implicit in Louis X's assignment in Boston," Magida writes, "was to do what Malcolm X had not been able to pull off": increase the Boston temple's membership roles.<sup>19</sup> Farrakhan did just that and more. Within six months of taking over Temple #11 he was appointed minister, and in fewer than five years, he had tripled the temple's membership.<sup>20</sup> In 1965, Farrakhan was promoted to the national representative, one of the most distinguished positions in the Nation of Islam. When Elijah Muhammad fell ill in the early 1970s, Louis X poised himself to assume leadership of the NOI.<sup>21</sup>

Although he was not chosen to replace Muhammad as the leader, Farrakhan eventually assumed power over the organization in the late 1970s. Asserting that he was "divinely chosen to lead" the Nation of Islam, Farrakhan set out to rebuild the movement and promote the "resurrection of our people."<sup>22</sup> Over the next ten years, Farrakhan established himself as a prominent, yet controversial, black leader. His bold statements, calls for separatism, and unapologetic condemnation of racism attracted more than 10,000 blacks nationwide to the NOI and generated many more supporters within the larger black community.<sup>23</sup>

Farrakhan's fiery approach also attracted a fair share of critics. His overly defiant attitude toward the white establishment, his description of Hitler as a "very great man," and his characterizations of Judaism as a "dirty religion" became the sources of great controversy among members of the broader black, white, and Jewish communities.<sup>24</sup> Robert Singh writes that Farrakhan is "easily the most controversial black American to have achieved a public position of national political influence since Malcolm X."<sup>25</sup> Farrakhan's bold rhetoric and his separatist views have prompted some critics to label him a "reverse racist," an "anti-Semite," a "black Hitler," a "bigot," a "hate monger," a "demagogue," and an "Islamic fundamentalist."<sup>26</sup> William Pleasant sums up Farrakhan's image: "painted as a monster by the corporate-owned media, denounced by the left, center and right political establishments, Farrakhan has come to symbolize the uncompromising fury of Black political resistance."<sup>27</sup>

Yet, in spite of all of his critics, Farrakhan has remained "one of the most prominent black nationalist leaders for more than two decades."<sup>28</sup> Ron Daniels writes: "Minister Farrakhan more than any other black leader in this period has captured the imagination of Black America precisely because of his steadfast denunciation of racism and white supremacy and his persistent call for moral and spiritual renewal, self reliance and self determination."<sup>29</sup> A *Time* magazine and CNN poll in 1994 supported these assertions. The poll found that 67 percent of the blacks who knew of Farrakhan said he was an "effective leader," 62 percent said he was "good for the black community," and 53 percent said he was a "good role model" for youth.<sup>30</sup> While Farrakhan's authority within the black community is undeniable, his ability to command "larger" and "more loyal" audiences than other black leaders is perplexing.<sup>31</sup> Why are so many blacks attracted to Farrakhan and his visions for black America? In order to address these questions, we must examine Farrakhan's rhetoric and assess his messages to the black community in America.

### *The Call to March*

The 1980s and early 1990s was a period of stagnation for the black civil rights movement. Michael C. Dawson and Lawrence D. Bobo assert that during the 1980s, "whatever progress Blacks had made on a number of fronts came to a halt."<sup>32</sup> The Reagan and Bush administrations' strong opposition to race-based policies and social welfare programs led some blacks to view the government as hostile to their cause. The political downfall of Jesse Jackson during the 1980s and a leadership vacuum within the black community left black Americans with no strong voice in Washington.<sup>33</sup> President Bill Clinton's election in 1992 offered hope that the White House would once again turn its attention to remedying the racial inequalities within the social, economic, and justice systems. However, the Republican Congress' resistance to civil rights initiatives meant that blacks would not see significant results for several more years.

In 1994, Minister Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam announced that they were tired of waiting for the government's response and introduced a plan to bring blacks together to initiate immediate social and political change. Farrakhan first presented his vision for what would become the Million Man March and Holy Day of Atonement to the First African American Leadership Summit in June of that year.<sup>34</sup> Addressing many of the black leaders who had repudiated him in the past, Farrakhan asked them to reconcile their differences and to join together under one banner for black liberation. He asserted that there was an "increasingly conservative and hostile climate growing in America towards the aspirations of Black people" and he called upon blacks to make a unified response.<sup>35</sup> A few months later, Farrakhan introduced his vision to the public and issued a national call for "one million disciplined, committed, and dedicated black men, from all walks of life in America" to join him in Washington, D.C., for a day of atonement, reconciliation, and protest.<sup>36</sup> Over the next year, Farrakhan rallied support for the demonstration and encouraged thousands of men to "stand up" for themselves and join together at the march "to make demands upon our government and ourselves."<sup>37</sup>

The official purpose of the Million Man March was to "enable and encourage" black men in the United States to "take a greater responsibility and play a greater role in caring for, and uplifting the status of, the Black family."<sup>38</sup> Farrakhan blamed black men for the proliferation of drug use, crime, and fatherlessness within their communities and called upon the men to atone for their sins. In addition to promoting self-enhancement and moral reform within the black community, the march would demonstrate to the nation and the world that black Americans would no longer tolerate racism, inequality, and inaction. Cornell West wrote that the march was intended to "jump-start a critical dialogue on the legacy of white supremacy" with President Clinton and Congress, "send a sign of hope and a sense of possibility" to black Americans, and—perhaps most importantly—magnify the marchers' demand that "black suffering take center stage for the country and world."<sup>39</sup>

Farrakhan's leadership of the protest bolstered the marchers' demand, drawing both attention and controversy. S. Craig Watkins explains that the organizers' publicity efforts, the march's anticipated size, and its arrival in a period of high racial tensions

amplified media coverage.<sup>40</sup> However, the "most crucial factor," Watkins asserts, "was the presence, leadership style, and racial politics of Louis Farrakhan."<sup>41</sup> News coverage leading up to the demonstration "pivoted around Farrakhan" and focused on his past reputation, his anticipated messages, and his claims to leadership within the black community.<sup>42</sup> Watkins writes that the media's "decision to peg the march to Farrakhan was crucial to the formation, tone, and ideological implications" of the coverage leading up to the march, and it "played a decisive role in how the demonstration was constructed and perceived as a newsworthy event."<sup>43</sup>

Farrakhan's promotion of himself as the spokesperson for black Americans generated even more media coverage. William E. Nelson, Jr. asserts that Farrakhan's role as the "leader and guiding spirit" was a "logical extension of a political/career [*sic*] that has seen him emerge as one of the best known and most popular political figures in Black America."<sup>44</sup> At the same time, Farrakhan's role in the march embroiled it in controversy, distracted attention away from the issues the march sought to publicize, and led several public figures and organizations to renounce the event altogether. Black congressmen Gary Franks (R-CT) and John Lewis (D-GA), a well-known civil rights activist and chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee in the 1960s, openly stated that they could not endorse or join a march led by Farrakhan.<sup>45</sup> "I don't want to be associated with or identified with anything that tends to demonstrate signs of racism, bigotry or anti-Semitism," said Lewis.<sup>46</sup> Mary Frances Berry, chairwoman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, expressed similar views: "African Americans as a community are in deep trouble at this hour. However, let me make it unmistakably clear: I do not trust Louis Farrakhan or [NOI leader] Benjamin Chavis to lead us to the Promised Land. I do not endorse the Million Man March."<sup>47</sup> Neither did the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, the Anti-Defamation League, or the African-American Agenda 2000, a group specifically founded in opposition to the event's exclusion of women and its allegedly sexist agenda.<sup>48</sup>

Others leaders and organizations tried to express their support for the march while rhetorically distancing themselves from its controversial leader. Colin Powell, former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, refused Farrakhan's invitation to speak at the march and added that the demonstration was about "hundreds of thousands of black men coming together not to celebrate Louis Farrakhan or to buy into his agenda or to speak in racist terms, but to begin to uplift black men and uplift African-Americans to be part of an inclusive America."<sup>49</sup> President Bill Clinton offered a similar response in a speech at the University of Texas at Austin on the morning of the march. Clinton praised the marchers and the values they upheld, but insisted that "one million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division."<sup>50</sup>

Some of the marchers also tried to distance themselves and the event from Farrakhan. Joe Certaine, managing director for the city of Philadelphia, told *USA Today*: "The goal is to set ourselves upon a new path in our communities and begin to do some things collectively, no matter what organization we represent. This is not about Minister Farrakhan."<sup>51</sup> Jesse Jackson and the Congressional Black Caucus echoed that message. Initially refusing to support the march, both eventually endorsed the event after

Farrakhan agreed to expand the agenda, adopt a more ecumenical approach, broaden the leadership, and issue new publicity posters that did not include his picture.<sup>52</sup> These demands and Jackson's assurance that "the march will be successful because all of the forces are coming together" reflected a concerted effort to distance Farrakhan from the center of the march.<sup>53</sup>

Yet Farrakhan supporters, like the Reverend Benjamin Chavis, Jr., a national organizer for the event and former NAACP president, insisted that "the attempt to separate the message from the messenger is not going to work."<sup>54</sup> Chavis defended Farrakhan's leadership and cited the many endorsements of the march as evidence that "the message and the messenger have transcended all divisions in the black community."<sup>55</sup> The list of supporters was indeed impressive. "With a few notable exceptions, the march was endorsed by most black leaders and organizations," including the National African American Leadership Summit, the National Association of Black Social Workers, and numerous churches, fraternities, and sororities.<sup>56</sup> In spite of all the controversy and contention surrounding Farrakhan and the Million Man March, William E. Nelson, Jr. observed that "the march was successful in drawing representation from virtually every sector of the Black community."<sup>57</sup> On Monday, October 16, 1995, more than 837,000 thousand black men, women, and children from diverse backgrounds, professions, and regions registered for and attended the much anticipated Million Man March. The demonstration on the nation's Capital would prove to be the largest demonstration of black power and unity in U.S. history.<sup>58</sup>

#### *Farrakhan's Address at the Million Man March*

"Black religious leaders," Felton O. Best and Charles Frazier write, have long been "flames of fire" in the communities they serve.<sup>59</sup> As the leaders of the black church—"the most stable institution in serving African-American communities"—they have taken the lead in eradicating the social, political, and economic injustices that black Americans have experienced historically.<sup>60</sup>

The Million Man March provided Farrakhan an opportunity to emerge from the crowd and show the world that he too was a flame of fire. The demonstration provided him a platform from which he could present his vision for black America to hundreds of thousands of U.S. blacks dedicated to social change. The march not only offered a sign of hope and possibility to black Americans, it presented Farrakhan with an opportunity to seize a position of leadership in the broader civil rights movement.

Farrakhan's controversial reputation and the criticism leading up to the march, however, drew attention away from its goals and undermined Farrakhan's vision and authority. In an attempt to promote the march's immediate goals and strengthen his claims to leadership, Farrakhan presented a two-and-a-half hour speech about self-improvement, black liberation, and racism in America. At the same time, he responded to his critics both inside and outside the march. Defending himself against his critics' charges, Farrakhan relegitimized his personal role in the protest and presented himself as a divinely chosen prophet sent to lead the black community. Farrakhan's attempts to reunite himself with the march's message may have been somewhat successful, but

they ultimately hindered the march's success because they focused the media spotlight once again on the controversial leader.

Farrakhan began his speech by recalling how poorly blacks had been treated in U.S. history. Reflecting on the location for the event, he reminded those gathered that "right here on this mall where we are standing . . . slaves used to be brought . . . in chains to be sold up and down the eastern seaboard" (11).<sup>61</sup> He offered this reference not as an illustration of how far blacks had come, but rather as a reminder that they remained second-class citizens. "There's still two Americas, one Black, one White, separate and unequal" (7) he declared. But, he assured the marchers, "this is a very pregnant moment, pregnant with the possibility of tremendous change in our status in America and in the world" (24). He echoed the march's message of hope by reminding those gathered that if they accepted the "responsibility that God has put upon us," they could "become the cornerstone and the builders" of a "new world" (32). Recognizing that the men gathered on the mall had joined together to do just that, Farrakhan explained in detail their path to liberation.

Farrakhan invoked the march's themes of self-help and personal responsibility as he explained that change must first begin with the individual. "Our first motion then must be toward the God who created the law of the evolution of our being. And if our motion toward him is right and proper, then our motion toward a perfect union with each other and government and with the peoples of the world will be perfected" (40). In order to become closer to God, each man needed to complete an eight stage atonement process that included identifying, acknowledging, and confessing one's wrongs; repenting and atoning for one's transgressions; seeking forgiveness; and finally, reconciling with God (40-80). After completing each of these steps, Farrakhan assured his listeners, each man would possess the tools needed to improve conditions for all blacks.

Although Farrakhan declared that "freedom can't come from white folks" or from "staying here and petitioning this great government" (87), he acknowledged that whites would need to play a central role in the liberation of blacks. But, he argued, President Clinton's approach to black civil rights failed to address the real problems in white society. Farrakhan stated, "Now, the President spoke today and he wanted to heal the great divide. But I respectfully suggest to the President, you did not dig deep enough at the malady that divides Black and White in order to affect a solution to the problem" (15). Farrakhan asserted that the real problem was not race per se, as Clinton suggested, but rather white supremacy: "There is a great divide, but the real evil in America is not white flesh, or black flesh. The real evil in America is the idea that undergirds the set up of the western world. And that idea is called white supremacy" (136). After repeated references to the racist practices of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and other national figures, Farrakhan directly addressed President Clinton: "So either, Mr. Clinton, we're going to do away with the mind-set of the founding fathers. You don't have to repudiate them like you've asked my brothers to do me. You don't have to say they were malicious, hate-filled people. But you must evolve out of their mind-set" (140). Farrakhan asserted that as the leader of America, President Clinton had to help other whites recognize that "white supremacy has to die in order for humanity

to live" (143). Only then could blacks and whites both achieve the perfect union God had intended.

Farrakhan's comments to Clinton were more than just advice from one leader to another. They were a response to one of his most publicly visible critics. Farrakhan scoffed at Clinton's attempts to discredit him, first by defending his contributions to the success of the Million Man March: "[W]hether or not you like it or not, God brought the idea through me and He didn't bring it through me because my heart was dark with hatred and anti-semitism, he didn't bring it through me because my heart was dark with hatred for White people and for the human family of the planet" (29). Emphasizing the absurdity of the charges, he added: "If my heart were that dark, how is the message so bright, the message so clear, the response so magnificent?" (29). Farrakhan repeatedly defended himself against Clinton's criticism: "I must hasten to tell you, Mr. President, that I'm not a malicious person, and I'm not filled with malice" (83). And he even challenged the president's ability to mend the nation's racial divide: "Power and wealth has made America spiritually blind and the power and the arrogance of America makes you refuse to hear a child of your slaves pointing out the wrong in your society" (83). Americans, Farrakhan stated "are being torn apart. And we can't gloss it over with nice speeches, my dear, Mr. President" (81).

Throughout the speech, Farrakhan defended himself against Clinton's and other well-known political leaders' attempts to undermine his leadership. He acknowledged that "many have tried to distance the beauty of this idea from the person through whom the idea and the call was made" (24). Again pointing out the futility of those efforts, he stated:

Brothers and sisters, there is no human being through whom God brings an idea that history doesn't marry the idea with that human being no matter what defect was in that human being's character. You can't separate Newton from the law that Newton discovered, nor can you separate Einstein from the theory of relativity. It would be silly to try to separate Moses from the Torah or Jesus from the Gospel or Muhammad from the Koran. (25-26)

So too would it be ridiculous to deny Farrakhan's appeal within the black community or to question his authority as one of God's greatest prophets. Farrakhan pointed out that even though his critics had "played all the cards" and had "pulled all the strings" to trigger division among blacks (52), their efforts had failed. He offered the march's turnout as evidence of his success, asserting: "I stand here today knowing, knowing that you are angry. That my people have validated me. I don't need you to validate me. I don't need to be in any mainstream" (90). Turning the tables on the dominant society, Farrakhan argued that the men standing before him were the new mainstream and criticized political leaders for failing to represent the "masses of the people, White and Black, Red, Yellow, and Brown, poor and vulnerable [who] are suffering in this nation" (91). Legitimizing himself as the spokesperson for those forgotten people, Farrakhan insisted that it was the politicians who were "out of touch with reality" (91).



Farrakhan's critics, however, were not limited to the mainstream politicians. Many of the people who had traveled to Washington, D.C., for the march had made it quite clear that they did not support Farrakhan or his views.<sup>62</sup> Discussing Farrakhan's attempt to manage this ethos problem in his speech, John Pauley, Jr. has argued that Farrakhan recognized that his reputation was a "major obstacle to his rhetorical effect" and therefore adopted the role of the prophet in an attempt to reshape his persona and transcend his past reputation.<sup>63</sup> For example, Farrakhan explained that the men "came not at the call of Louis Farrakhan," but had gathered together "at the call of God" (23). Dismissing the public attacks against his character, he noted that "there is no prophet of God in the Bible that did not have a defect in his character. But, I have never heard any member of the faith of Judaism separate David from the Psalms, because of what happened in David's life . . . you never separated any of the Great Servants of God" (28). Farrakhan once again defended his leadership of the march, asserting that God called upon him to lead black people to salvation: "God is sending His decision. I can't help it if I've got to make the decision known. You don't understand me. My people love me. . . . I point out the evils of Black people . . . but my people don't call me anti-Black, because they know I must love them in order to point out what's wrong so we can get it right to come back into the favor of God!" (99-100). The audience's applause and enthusiastic shouts bolstered Farrakhan's claims as the marchers confirmed that they endorsed and supported Farrakhan a formidable civil rights leader.

By portraying himself as God's spokesman, Farrakhan rose above his critics' accusations and legitimized his leadership, which he insisted, God had bestowed upon him. This posturing allowed Farrakhan to address and appeal to three different audiences simultaneously. As Pauley explains: "[T]o black Christians, he portrays himself as another Moses or Isaiah, a mouthpiece of God's word; to people of his own Nation of Islam community, he shows himself to be a diviner of mysteries; and for his white listeners, Farrakhan assumes the role of the spiritual doctor who has a diagnosis for the illness that affects them."<sup>64</sup> Farrakhan moved among these roles throughout his speech, weaving together a patchwork message of hope, forewarning, redemption, and promise. With every word and reference, however, Farrakhan made it clear that only he possessed the authority and knowledge to speak the truth. Neither Clinton nor any of his other critics could undermine his God-given role as a prophet for his race.

Clarence Taylor argues that these appeals were symptomatic of Farrakhan's long-term attempts to shift his public image. Taylor writes that from the late 1970s to the very early 1990s, Farrakhan depicted himself as a "religious-masculine warrior, doing God's bidding on behalf of dark-skinned people."<sup>65</sup> In the early 1990s, however, Farrakhan attempted to "shift his image from a masculine figure who was defending the race to the all-wise and ecumenical sage who is acting as the savior of the entire nation."<sup>66</sup> Taylor explains that these changes were indications of Farrakhan's attempts to be seen as a "respected national leader."<sup>67</sup>

The "Million Man March" speech bears some of the general characteristics that Taylor attributes to Farrakhan's new approach. First, Farrakhan attacked the power structure, not Whites in general, a marked change from his past rhetoric. For instance, Farrakhan emphasized that the *attitude* of white supremacy was at fault for the

mistreatment of blacks, not white people themselves. Second, Farrakhan warned of doom and devastation, but in "Million Man March" he assured Americans that they could avoid destruction by choosing the right path to God and denouncing white supremacy. Finally, Farrakhan aimed his speech at the family of all humanity. Even though the march attracted mostly blacks, Farrakhan called upon all Americans to atone and accept an "agenda that's in the best interest of the Black, the poor and the vulnerable in this society" (191). Promoting a more universalized and less racialized view of the problem than was typical of his earlier rhetoric, Farrakhan tried to appeal to a broader audience than he had in the past. This move had real implications for the larger quest for civil rights. As Gardell asserts: "Farrakhan's move to the mainstream means a mainstreaming of Farrakhan."<sup>68</sup> He explains:

In the course of that process, Farrakhan has softened his message and sought reconciliation with former foes. The dress of an elderly statesman requires a moderate voice, which is more inclusive and open to dialogue and reason than it is exclusive, uncompromising, and unreasonable. This was clearly the tone of Farrakhan's Million Man March address.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, an analysis of Farrakhan's speech calls into question Taylor's claim that Farrakhan presented himself as a "respected national leader." It also casts doubt on Gardell's suggestion that Farrakhan's rhetoric positioned him more within the mainstream of political thought. Farrakhan's denunciation of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as unpatriotic racists, his inexplicable references to numerology and Masonic mysteries, and his portrayal of himself as a "doctor" heavenly sent to "point out, with truth, what's wrong" with America (83) all sounded like the militant and even demagogic Farrakhan of the past. Steven R. Goldzwig has described Farrakhan's use of violent threats, exaggeration, vilification, polarization, and conspiracy appeal as being characteristic of a "rhetoric of symbolic alignment," a defiant style that "challenges unstated myths (and offers competing ones) by exposing regnant ideologies through verbal and non-verbal symbol-using (and misusing)."<sup>70</sup> Although Farrakhan may have toned-down his defiant rhetorical style a bit at the Million Man March, as Taylor and Gardell suggest, he certainly did not abandon that style altogether. Consistent with his past rhetoric, Farrakhan's highly militant and divisive speech attacked the values of the present culture and promoted "alternative interpretations of reality" that provided the marchers with "motives for action on behalf of social change."<sup>71</sup> Farrakhan's revised rhetorical style may have been less militant than some of his past speeches, but it certainly did not sound like the style of a respected national leader.

Farrakhan may have reshaped his public persona by adopting the prophetic role, as Pauley has argued. He even may have legitimized his leadership in the black community and appealed to a larger national audience with his less militant message. However, as those who heard the oration can attest, Farrakhan's speech hardly lived up to its promise to rally the black community toward long-term changes. Farrakhan biographer, Arthur Magida, attended the march and summarized the speech's lackluster reception:

A cheer rose when Farrakhan finally took the podium, yet when he started to speak, many were visibly let down. Within fifteen minutes, Farrakhan began to lose the crowd, some drifting toward benches to rest their feet, some heading toward the train stations or bus depots for their long rides home. At the pinnacle of his career, before a Mall crammed with men who had been stirred by his improbable vision of such a gathering, and with 2.2 million households watching him on television, Louis Farrakhan, ordinarily a master of oratory, meandered through a loose patchwork of themes that never quite cohered.<sup>72</sup>

Even Farrakhan seemed to notice that his lecture, as he called it, failed to keep the crowd's attention. More than five times during the speech, Farrakhan assured his audience that he was "almost finished" (121, 161) and beckoned to them "Don't move. Don't move" (134). His disjointed message, however, failed to hold much less persuade the marchers. Two-and-a-half hours later, roughly two-thirds of his audience had left the Mall.<sup>73</sup> In the end, Farrakhan's attempts to legitimize his leadership overshadowed his audiences' need. The *Million Man March*, as the *New York Times* astutely noted, "produced a huge crowd hungry for great oratory. But instead of something like the crystalline 19 minutes of Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech, this crowd got a rambling, self-obsessed two hours from Louis Farrakhan."<sup>74</sup> Instead of focusing the national spotlight on the march's goals and themes, Farrakhan had stolen the attention for himself.

### *Legacy of the "Million Man March"*

Initially, the Million Man March appeared to be a great success. The mass demonstration drew attention to the plight of the black community. Its peaceful nature offered a new image of black men and, perhaps most significantly, the thousands of marchers demonstrated that they were willing to look past their differences to support a common cause. Immediately following the march, several black organizations reported increases in membership.<sup>75</sup> A month later, Farrakhan and the National African American Leadership Summit announced a Ten-Point Action Program to improve the lives of blacks in America.<sup>76</sup> A year later, the black leaders successfully encouraged approximately 1.5 million more black men to vote in the 1996 presidential election than had voted in 1992.<sup>77</sup> Farrakhan's call for unity and community participation, it seemed, had at least some positive, long-term effects.

The Million Man March also generated some positive publicity for Farrakhan, at least for a time. Singh argues that the march "represented the culmination of Farrakhan's bold attempts to achieve political legitimacy and full inclusion within the ranks of the national black American political leadership cadre."<sup>78</sup> And in Singh's opinion, it worked: "To the deep chagrin of his many implacable opponents and ardent adversaries, it succeeded spectacularly."<sup>79</sup> Even Farrakhan's drawn-out speech could not dampen what Gardell has dubbed the greatest manifestation of black solidarity "in the history of the United States."<sup>80</sup> Immediately following the march, supporters and critics

alike acknowledged Farrakhan's impressive drawing power. As Magida wrote, "the march's indisputable success finally convinced some black leaders that Farrakhan was a force to be reckoned with."<sup>81</sup> However lackluster his speech, the sheer turnout for the demonstration elevated the status of its controversial leader. At least "momentarily" as H. Viscount E. Nelson wrote, as "Minister Louis Farrakhan eclipsed [Jesse] Jackson as the most prominent African American of the 1990s . . ."<sup>82</sup>

Immediately following the march, groups like the African American Agenda 2000 worked to discredit Farrakhan's leadership and his vision for the black community. Farrakhan's personal ambitions inadvertently contributed to his critics' efforts and undermined the march's long-term success. Within three months of the protest, Magida writes, "Farrakhan answered the implicit queries about how he would leverage the massive political capital" he had gained.<sup>83</sup> He quickly showed that "he would deploy his new claim to power on *his* terms."<sup>84</sup> Farrakhan alienated other black and white leaders by pursuing his own agenda for reform. For instance, Farrakhan's bold criticism of U.S. foreign policy and his meetings with some of America's worst political enemies during his "World Friendship Tour" in January 1996 made many Americans question his political sagacity. Magida writes: "Instead of marshalling the momentum of the march in the service of a very specific, very detailed agenda, very aggressive political agenda that he could have announced at a press conference the day after the march, he chose to solder alliances with some of America's worst adversaries abroad."<sup>85</sup> In the process, Farrakhan destroyed the hopes of many blacks that their leaders could transcend their differences and come together to address the real problems facing the black community.

As H. Viscount Nelson has argued, black leaders who pursue selfish agendas "help the white establishment maintain hegemony in the judicial, executive, and legislative affairs of the nation" and serve as gatekeepers at the door of opportunity rather than as leaders of their race. In his opinion, Farrakhan has become one of those gatekeepers. Nelson acknowledges that Farrakhan has "presented creative ideas" for improving the lives of blacks, but he contends that "in the broadest sense" those accomplishments have proven "meager" for several reasons. First, Farrakhan seems reluctant to share the spotlight with other black leaders. Second, he has shown limited commitment to sustain his ideas through follow-up activities and initiatives. Finally, he embodies the "long-standing problem" that black leaders have displayed "for generations"—an inability to establish and maintain positive intra-racial bonds. As Nelson concludes, Farrakhan's actions before, during, and after the Million Man March illustrated these shortcomings and shed light on why he—and other modern black leaders—have had difficulty effecting positive long-term changes for blacks in U.S. society.<sup>86</sup>

Ten years after the Million Man March, Farrakhan again discussed the plight of the black community at a commemorative ceremony dubbed the Million Man March, part II.<sup>87</sup> He again offered a plan for strengthening the black community, and again he challenged the audience to initiate change in their own lives. Reflective of the Millions More Movement's broader vision of uniting all Americas under a shared banner for change, Farrakhan issued a call for "all of our brothers and sisters, black, brown, red and white . . . to work collectively to address the many issues that affect our people and the

poor in this country."<sup>88</sup> He concluded his address with a message of reassurance, stating: "United we can solve our problems and divided we have nothing."<sup>89</sup>

The Million Man March offered many blacks hope that together they could initiate positive change within their communities. As the designated leader and spokesperson of the event, Minister Louis Farrakhan had the potential of drawing media and national attention to the march's goals and themes. Instead, the controversial leader evaded his responsibility and seized the opportunity to legitimize his position of leadership. Farrakhan's divisive, self-absorbed two-and-a-half hour speech and his selfish actions in the months following the march proved that he was unwilling to put the interests of the black community above his own. In the end, Farrakhan's drive for power lessened his rhetorical effectiveness, undermined the march's theme of unity, and ultimately hindered the cause's long-term success.

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#### Notes

1 Disputes over the number of people attending the march arose immediately after the National Park Service estimated the attendance at 400,000. Boston University researcher Farouk El-Baz, who employed a more advanced method of crowd estimation, placed the attendance at around 837,214. According to El-Baz, the actual number could have been as low as 670,000 or as high as 1,004,000. Joseph Mallia, "New Estimate: Over 800,000 Marched in D.C.," *Boston Herald*, October 28, 1995. See also "New View Cuts Short Million Men," *Independent* (London), sec. International, October 28, 1995, 10.

2 The exact question asked by the *ABC News/Washington Post* poll was as follows: "As you may know, the Million Man March is intended to encourage black males to accept more responsibility for their families and communities. Do you support or oppose such a march?" *ABC News/Washington Post* Poll, September 28, 1995-October 1, 1995, Accession Number 0267412. <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> (accessed 21 August

2007); Michael A. Fletcher and Mario A. Brossard, "Poll: Many Blacks Back March but Find Organizers Troubling," *Houston Chronicle*, October 6, 1995, A6.

3 The exact question asked by the *ABC News/Washington Post* poll was as follows: "One of the main organizers of the Million Man March is Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam. Does his participation in the march make you more likely or less likely to support the march? (If more or less likely, ask:) Is that a lot more/less likely to support the march or somewhat more/less likely?" *ABC News/Washington Post*

Poll, September 28, 1995-October 1, 1995, Accession Number 0267416. <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> (accessed 21 August 2007).

4 The media both documented and perpetuated the contentious message/messenger debate. For examples prior to the march, see: "One-Man March: Sadly, Louis Farrakhan's Role Will Leave That Impression," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 25, 1995, A10; Edward Walsh, "Criticism of Farrakhan's Million Man March Muted; Nation of Islam Leader's Effort Pushing Him to Forefront of Black Leadership," *Washington Post*, October 8, 1995, A22; Francis X. Clines, "Organizers Defend Role of Farrakhan in March by Blacks," *New York Times*, October 13, 1995, sec. A, 1; Rachel L. Jones, "Chavis Downplays Farrakhan March Role; But Anti-Semitic Remarks by Nation of Islam Leader on TV Renew Controversy," *Pittsburg Post-Gazette*, October 14, 1995, A1; ". . . Not the Messenger," *Boston Globe*, October 15, 1995, 86; Paul Shepard, "Farrakhan's Shadow Rolls with Caravans of Black Marchers," *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, OH), October 15, 1995, 1A; Richard Sisk, "N.Y.C. Sending Many to March Prez Tries to Love Goals, Not Goalie," *Daily News* (New York), October 16, 1995, 4; Julian Beltrame, "Million Man March: Controversy Detracts from Positive Message," *Ottawa Citizen*, October 16, 1995, A6; Lynn Sweet, "White House Shrinks from 'Bigoted' Farrakhan," *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 16, 1995, 10.

The message/messenger theme continued in the post-march coverage. See, for example, Mario A. Brossard and Richard Morin, "Leader Popular Among Marchers; But Most Came to Support Black Family, Show Unity, Survey Finds," *Washington Post*, October 17, 1995, A01; Terry M. Neal, "Farrakhan's Message of Redemption; He Denounces White Leaders While Calling for Black Self-Improvement," *Washington Post*, October 17, 1995, A01; Richard Roeper, "Message of Hope Is Worth a Million," *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 18, 1995, 11; Larry King, "A Memorable March; A Bet on Colin Powell," *USA Today*, October 23, 1995, sec. Life, 2D; William Raspberry, "The Only Leadership," *Washington Post*, October 27, 1995, A25.

5 Clarence Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals: The Fight for Equality from Jim Crow to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 151. Farrakhan underwent several name changes over the course of his life. He was born Louis Eugene Walcott and, upon entering the NOI, began calling himself Louis X. He later renamed himself Louis Farrakhan, Abdul Haleem Farrakhan, and then went back to Louis Farrakhan. Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 58.

6 Shortly after his parent's marriage, Farrakhan's father abandoned the family for extended periods of time. During one of Clarke's long absences, Farrakhan's mother fell in love with Louis Walcott, who fathered her first child, Alvan Walcott in 1931. A year later, Clarke "briefly surfaced" and Manning became pregnant with Farrakhan. Arthur J. Magida, *Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 9-10; See also Florence Hamlish Levinsohn, *Looking for Farrakhan* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1997), 181-182.

7 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 9.

8 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 15.

9 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 24-27.

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10 Levinsohn, *Looking for Farrakhan*, 206.

11 An old friend convinced Farrakhan and his wife to attend the Nation's annual Saviour's Day convention in Chicago, where Farrakhan had been touring at the time. Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals*, 151. The Nation of Islam was derived from previous Black Nationalist movements, which issued an "unequivocal rejection of white America" and a "turn inward to the black man and the black community as the only source of hope for resolving racial problems." The NOI places an emphasis on black consciousness and racial pride and grounds its teaching in religious appeals. As part of its separatist plan, the NOI encourages members to support black-owned businesses and it maintains its own paramilitary branch, the Fruits of Islam. For more information, see J. Herman Blake, "Black Nationalism," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 382, Protest in the Sixties (March 1969): 15-25.

12 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 32.

13 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 32.

14 As stated in an interview with Author Magida. See, *Prophet of Rage*, 32.

15 Both Magida and Levinsohn note that Farrakhan's mother, and many of the other West Indian residents in Roxbury, strongly supported the teachings of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican Black Nationalist. Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 15; Levinsohn, *Looking for Farrakhan*, 168, 214. Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the largest mass-based protest movement among Black people in the history of the United States.

16 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 17.

17 Upon entering the Nation of Islam, the Muslims provide each member with a new name that eliminates the person's slave name. For example, upon entering the NOI, Louis Walcott began calling himself Louis X.

18 Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 120-21.

19 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 59.

20 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 62.

21 Gardell argues that Farrakhan's ascendancy made him a "chief contender" to succeed the Messenger and lead the Nation. Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 122.

22 As stated in an interview with Steven Barboza. See, *American Jihad: Islam after Malcolm X* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 142, 148.

23 Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals*, 151.

24 "Farrakhan Again Describes Hitler as a 'Very Great Man,'" *New York Times*, July 17, 1984, A18; Nathan McCall, "Backing Farrakhan Seen as Way of 'Hitting Back'; Popularity Linked to Audacity and Agenda," *Washington Post*, December 11, 1989, A6. For a more complete discussion of Farrakhan's controversial statements, see Michael C. Kotzin, "Louis Farrakhan's Anti-Semitism: A Look at the Record," *Christian Century* (2 March 1994): 224-225.

25 Robert Singh, *The Farrakhan Phenomenon: Race, Reaction, and the Paranoid Style in America Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997), 1.

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- 26 Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 5.
- 27 William Pleasant, *Independent Black Leadership in America* (New York: Castillo International, Inc., 1990), 22.
- 28 Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectual Leaders*, 150
- 29 Ron Daniels, "The Meaning of the Million Man March and Day of Absence," *Million Man March/Day of Absence: A Commemorative Anthology*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 83.
- 30 Tananarive Due, "Farrakhan: Pride or Prejudice," *Houston Chronicle*, August 13, 1994, sec. Religion, 1.
- 31 Pleasant, *Independent Black Leadership in America*, 22.
- 32 Michael C. Dawson and Lawrence D. Bobo, "The Reagan Legacy and the Racial Divide in the George W. Bush Era," *Du Bois Review* 1, no. 2 (2004): 210.
- 33 For a discussion of Jackson's defeat and the black leadership problems in the 1990s, see H. Viscount "Berky" Nelson, *The Rise and Fall of Modern Black Leadership* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003) 251-311.
- 34 Cornel West, "Historic Event," *Million Man March/Day of Absence: A Commemorative Anthology*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 98. Consistent with the religious element of Black Nationalism, Farrakhan emphasized the importance of all blacks' atoning for their sins on the day of the march.
- 35 Farrakhan argued that the Republican-endorsed Contract with America and a recent Supreme Court decision against affirmative action showed that Congress had begun "turning back the hands of time" and that the Supreme Court had "set the stage" in the United States for "closing doors" and "impeding the progress" of Blacks. "The Vision for the Million Man March," reprinted in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 150.
- 36 Farrakhan, "The Vision for the Million Man March," 151.
- 37 Haki R. Madhubuti, "Took Back Our Tears, Laughter, Love and Left a Big Dent in the Earth," *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 2.
- 38 "Million Man March Fact Sheet," reprinted in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 152.
- 39 West, "Historic Event," 98.
- 40 S. Craig Watkins, "Framing Protest: News Media Frames of the Million Man March," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18, no. 1 (March 2001): 89. Although the Million Man March was scheduled several months in advance, it arrived two weeks after the controversial verdict in the O.J. Simpson double-murder trial. Simpson's acquittal sparked controversy across the country as Americans' responses to the verdict seemed to be divided along the color line.
- 41 Watkins, "Framing Protest," 89.
- 42 Watkins, "Framing Protest," 89.
- 43 Watkins, "Framing Protest," 89.



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44 William E. Nelson, Jr., "Black Church Politics and the Million Man March," *Black Religious Leadership from the Slave Community to the Million Man March: Flames of Fire*, ed. Felton O. Best (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 246.

45 Nelson, "Black Church Politics," 250.

46 D'Vera Cohn and Debbi Wilgoren, "March Foes Assail Leader, Not Aims; Goal of Uniting Black Men Wins Wide Support, But Farrakhan Draws Fire," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1995, A11.

47 Cohn and Wilgoren, "March Foes Assail Leader, Not Aims," A11.

48 Shepard reported that the NAACP and National Urban League voiced support for the movement's goals, but refused to endorse the march because of Farrakhan's involvement. Paul Shepard, "Marching for a Reawakening; Despite Shadow of Controversy, D.C. Rally is Gaining Support with Local Men Set to Join," *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, OH), September 24, 1995, 1B. The Anti-Defamation League vehemently protested Farrakhan's role and issued a full page ad in the *New York Times* that stated: "we understand the need of African Americans to come together in a march on Washington" and we "understand that the vast majority of participants in the march will not subscribe to the anti-Semitism and racism of the march's leader." Likening Farrakhan to a white supremacist, however, they maintained that they could not "ignore the fact that a hater was the driving force behind the March." Lynn Sweet, "Jewish Groups Back Million Man March But Blast Farrakhan," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 30 September 1995, sec. News, 5. A partial image of the ad is available at <http://www-cgi.cnn.com/US/9510/megamarch/10-15/flier.jpg> (accessed 21 August 2007). The African-American Agenda 2000 issued a statement in opposition to the march: "No march, movement or agenda that defines manhood in the narrowest terms and seeks to make women lesser partners in this quest for equality can be considered a positive step. Therefore, we cannot support this march." Cohn and Wilgoren, "March Foes Assail Leader," A11. A few women attended the march, including Maya Angelou and Rosa Parks who addressed the marchers. See, Maya Angelou, "From a Black Woman to a Black Man," in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 30-31.

49 Colin Powell told *CBS This Morning*: "I was concerned that my presence on the stage with Farrakhan might give him a level of credibility—more of a level of credibility than I would have liked to have seen, so I would have regretted it." "Retired General Colin Powell Discusses His Book, the Million Man March, Racism in America and His Reaction to the O.J. Simpson Trial Verdict," *CBS This Morning*, CBS News, October 16, 1995, <http://lexis-nexis.com/> (accessed 21 August 2007).

50 William J. Clinton, "Remarks at the University of Texas at Austin October 16, 1995," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Web Page*, <http://www.gpo.gov/nara/pubpaps/photoidx.html> (accessed 21 August 2007): 1601. For an analysis of Clinton's speech, see Jill M. Weber, "Bill Clinton's 'Racism in the United States,'" *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, National Endowment for the Humanities, [voicesofdemocracy.com](http://voicesofdemocracy.com).

51 Desda Moss and Gary Fields. "Mobilizing 1 Million; Theme Timely, but Organizer Is Controversial," *USA Today*, October 13, 1995, 1A.

52 Art Golab, "Jackson Backs Million Man March on D.C.," *Chicago Sun-Times*, September 23, 4.

53 Hamil R. Harris and Michael A. Fletcher, "Jackson Endorses Men's March; Black Caucus, Others Back Farrakhan Event," *Washington Post*, September 23, 1995, A01.

54 Francis X. Clines, "Organizers Defend Role of Farrakhan in March by Blacks," *New York Times*, 13 October 1995, sec. A, 1.

55 Clines, "Organizers Defend Role," 1.

56 Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 344-45. Some officials from the NAACP and the Urban League planned to attend the march although their organizations refused to endorse the event. Cohn and Wilgoren, "March Foes Assail Leader," A11; "Million Man March Partial Listing of Endorsements to Date, September 30, 1995," reprinted in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, eds. Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1996), 154-155.

57 Nelson, "Black Church Politics," 245.

58 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 March on Washington, the largest civil rights march, attracted more than 200,000 demonstrators. "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," *The King Encyclopedia*, Stanford's Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project, [http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about\\_king/encyclopedia/march\\_washington.html](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/march_washington.html) (accessed 21 August 2007).

59 Felton O. Best and Charles Frazier, "Introduction," *Black Religious Leadership from the Slave Community to the Million Man March: Flames of Fire*, ed. Felton O. Best (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 15.

60 Best and Frazier, "Introduction," 2, 15.

61 Here and elsewhere passages in "Million Man March" are cited with reference to paragraph numbers in the text of the speech that accompanies this essay.

62 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 193; Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 344-345.

63 John L. Pauley, II., "Reshaping Public Persona and the Prophetic Ethos: Louis Farrakhan at the Million Man March," *Western Journal of Communication* 62, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 519.

64 Pauley, "Reshaping Public Persona," 515.

65 Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals*, 151.

66 Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals*, 151.

67 Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals*, 160.

68 Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 345.

69 Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 345.

70 Steven R. Goldzwig, "A Social Movement Perspective on Demagoguery: Achieving Symbolic Realignment," *Communication Studies* 40 (Fall 1989): 218.

71 Goldzwig, "A Social Movement Perspective on Demagoguery," 218.

72 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 193.

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- 73 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 196.
- 74 "Earnest Crowd, Empty Leader," *New York Times*, October 17, 1995, sec. A, 24.
- 75 Desda Moss, "March Gives Black Groups Momentum," *USA Today*, October 30, 1995, 3A. Manning Marable, *Black Leadership*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 162.
- 76 "Where We are After the Million Man March: Toward the Million Family March," *Million Family March*, <http://www.millionfamilymarch.com/agenda/intro.htm> (accessed 21 August 2007).
- 77 Marable, *Black Leadership*, 163.
- 78 Singh, *The Farrakhan Phenomenon*, 62.
- 79 Singh, *The Farrakhan Phenomenon*, 62.
- 80 Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, 5.
- 81 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 197.
- 82 Nelson, *The Rise and Fall of Modern Black Leadership* 308-309.
- 83 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 199.
- 84 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 199. (original emphasis)
- 85 Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 201.
- 86 Nelson, *The Rise and Fall of Modern Black Leadership*, 310-311.
- 87 "An Historical Perspective," *Millions More Movement* <http://www.millionsmoremovement.com/history.htm> (accessed 21 August 2007).
- 88 "More than a Million Pledged to Restore, Rebuild and Repair Broken Lives and Communities at the 10 Anniversary Commemoration of the Million Man March," *Millions More Movement* [http://www.millionsmoremovement.com/news/press\\_rel10-15-2005.htm](http://www.millionsmoremovement.com/news/press_rel10-15-2005.htm) (accessed 21 August 2007).
- 89 "More than a Million Pledged to Restore, Rebuild, and Repair Broken Lives," (accessed 21 August 2007).