



**REMEMBRANCE, REFLECTION, REPARATIONS AND RESISTANCE
THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY MILLION MAN MARCH
MISSION STATEMENT**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 10-16-25, p. E-1, 2

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

BY ANY MEANINGFUL MEASUREMENT AND reflective understanding, we are living in difficult, dangerous and demanding times, and we are compelled to bring forth the best of our ideas and practices to meet the challenges, overcome the obstacles, and continue the struggle to expand the realm of freedom, justice and shared good in this country and the world. These are times of increasing signs and expressions of an aggressive White supremacist agenda of unfreedom, injustice, oppression and war in this country and the world, and an emerging fascism which fosters widespread anxiety, apprehension, fear, and hopelessness about the health, well-being and future of the world.

But we are a people created in the crucible and formative fire of struggle and we are known globally for our resilience and resourcefulness and our radical refusal to be defeated or dispirited, regardless of conditions or the odds and adversaries against us. And thus, we refuse to walk away from the battlefield until the struggle is won for a shared and inclusive good in the world.

Thirty years ago, we came to Washington, D.C., over a million Black men strong and augmented in numbers, voice and strength by mutually supportive Black women. We came to speak truth to our people and to speak truth to power about the conditions in this country negative and noxious to our lives and relationships as Black men and members of our families and community. We spoke also about our responsibility for our own lives and liberation as persons and a people and about policies and practices needed to be ourselves and free ourselves internally and externally, and

build the good communities, society and world we want and deserve.

In 1995, we committed ourselves to recognize wrongs done and make amends, to be self-critical and self-corrective, especially in ways beneficial to repairing relations with our sisters in love, life and struggle and to rebuilding and strengthening our families and communities. Also, we committed ourselves to reconcile with each other, to overcome conflicts, and set aside grudges and hatreds in our personal, organizational and social relationships in the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, to reject and oppose personal, family and community violence, and to strive mightily to build and sustain loving, mutually respectful and reciprocal relations. And we committed ourselves to take responsibility, to willingly assume obligations and duties in personal conduct in family relations and in the community, to the struggle for a just society and a better world, and to be accountable and dependable.

Today, thirty years later, we are faced with unfinished tasks and new challenges and the ongoing obligation to continue the struggle, keep the faith and hold the line in all we do. We are challenged first to repair, renew, maintain and expand the relationships and structures we have put in place and to keep our commitments to each other, our sisters, families and communities. And we must face together new challenges that are negative to the health and well-being of our families and communities and to ourselves as Black men. For we are being targeted in special ways with police violence, mass incarceration, extensive unemployment, social media disin-

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formation and misdirection, and corporate media of similar madness of various kinds.

Indeed, Black men are being systematically targeted and too many are being caught up in a network of online groups and websites promoting disinformation, resentment, hatred and toxicity toward our sisters and women partners. Called Manosphere culture, this evolving phenomenon proposes and promotes negative ideas and concepts of women and narrow notions of what it means to be a man. We must not let it make us see men as essentially victims of evil and manipulative women, disrespect our sisters' rights, and cultivate a sense of worthlessness and desire for revenge of various kinds. For it can be a great threat within and without, damage our mental and physical health, injure and weaken our relationships and surely make us less capable of resisting and ending our oppression as a people.

Thus, there is an urgent need for us to come together again in strength and struggle, and as we committed ourselves 30 years ago, "by freeing and renewing our minds, by joining as families and persons the faith communities of our choice, supporting them, living the best of our traditions ourselves and challenging other members and the leadership to do likewise and constantly insisting that our faith communities give the best of what we have to offer to build the moral community and just society we struggle for as a people".

Therefore, we come together in this critical moment in our history not only to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Million Man March, October 16, 1995, but also to reaffirm the continuing relevance of the policy proposals and practice commitments we made then, and to recommit ourselves to continue the struggle, keep the faith and hold the line on our best values and moral vision for a new society and world of shared and inclu-

sive good. Thus, we now, as then, reaffirm the best values and practices of our struggle and justice tradition, which requires at a minimum, respect for the dignity and rights of the human person and all peoples; racial, social and economic justice; and the ongoing struggle to secure and sustain these and bring good into the world.

In our *Mission Statement* of 1995, accepted by consensus, we put forth key areas of focus for our collective and personal work and struggle, and these remain unfinished and ongoing tasks which we recommit ourselves to address. First, then, we recommit ourselves to reaffirm and strengthen the Black family through quality male/female relations based on principles of equality, complementarity, mutual respect and shared responsibility in love, life and struggle. This calls for a self-conscious unity in the community to address problems and pursue possibilities of good in our lives and the world. We speak here, also, of operational unity in work and struggle, a unity in diversity, unity without uniformity and unity in principles, purpose and practice.

In addition, we recommit ourselves to practice an independent politics which is directed toward creating a free and empowered community, a just and good society, and a good and sustainable world. And the original *Mission Statement* commits us to build a Black economic initiative "to enhance economic development, cultivate economic discipline and cooperative practices and achieve economic self-determination". Also, it requires of to be rightfully attentive to the well-being of the natural world and all in it.

Furthermore, we are obligated to continue the struggle for reparations in the fullest sense, that is to say, a comprehensive initiative involving: public dialogue; public admission of the injuries - the Holocaust of African

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enslavement, the savagery of segregation and ongoing systemic racism; public apology; public recognition of the injuries; appropriate compensation by the government; corrective measures and structures to prevent its recurrence; and the necessary struggle to achieve these goals. In other words, reparations in its fullest sense is a struggle in which we understand ourselves not simply as victims of oppression, but also as injured physicians who have within ourselves the capacity to repair, renew and remake ourselves in the process and practice of repairing, renewing and remaking the world that injures and oppresses us.

Important also is our continuation of the “struggle against police violence, government suppression, violations of civil and human rights and the industrialization of prisons; and in support of the freedom of all political prisoners, and prisoners' rights . . .” The original *Mission Statement* also urges us to continue to struggle in the critical task of “organizing the community as a solid wall in the struggle against drugs, crime and violence in the community which we see as interrelated and which must be joined with the struggle to reduce and end poverty, increase employment, strengthen fatherhood, motherhood and family, support parents, provide education and prevention programs and expose and reject those who deal in death for the community”.

Moreover, the original *Mission Statement* commits us to intensify the struggle for affordable and adequate housing for all, especially the homeless, the poor and the recently displaced, and for structures and incentives to achieve this. Likewise, we are to continue the struggle for affordable and culturally competent physical and mental health care to achieve and sustain the well-being and wholeness of our people.

It calls on us, also, to continue and expand support for African-centered independent schools and intensify and broaden the struggle for quality public education, as well as to continue and reinforce our efforts to reduce and eliminate negative media approaches to and portrayals of Black life and culture. As a people in struggle, the original *Mission Statement* tells us too, we must be about “strengthening and supporting organizations and institutions of the Black community concerned with the uplifting and liberation of our people”. In addition, we are to stand in solidarity with other African peoples and other peoples of color in their struggles for liberation and ever higher levels of human life, and build appropriate alliances with oppressed, struggling and progressive people on the bases of mutual respect, mutual interests, mutual support and mutual benefit.

Moreover, we are, by tradition and lived experience, committed to reaffirming the indispensability of the spiritual and ethical grounding of our people in accomplishing the historical tasks confronting us. This requires that we follow the ancient African ethical imperative to bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place, especially among those who are made voiceless, who are degraded, downtrodden and oppressed. And we must hold fast to our commitment to love and respect our people and each other, seek and speak truth, do and demand justice, be constantly concerned with the well-being of the world and all in it, and prefigure the good world we all work and struggle to bring into being and leave as a legacy for those who come after us.

And likewise the original *Mission Statement* charged us to embrace and practice in meaningful and transformative ways a common set of principles that reaffirm and strengthen family, community and culture.

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This set of principles is the *Nguzo Saba* (The Seven Principles), which serve as a foundational pan-African value system for us in this country and for African peoples throughout the global African community. These principles are: *Umoja* (Unity); *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination); *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility); *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics); *Nia* (Purpose); *Kuumba* (Creativity) and *Imani* (Faith).

Finally, as we go forth to continue and expand our struggle for good in the world, we remember and raise up the closing paragraph of the 1995 *Mission Statement* which calls on us to stand up and stand together as Black men and women and as a people for the Good on every level and everywhere. For in doing this, the text says, “we honor our ancestors, enrich our lives and give promise to our descendants. Moreover, through this historic

work and struggle we strive to always know and introduce ourselves to history and humanity as a people who are spiritually and ethically grounded; who speak truth, do justice, respect our ancestors and elders, cherish, support and challenge our children, care for the vulnerable, relate rightfully to the environment, struggle for what is right and resist what is wrong, honor our past, willingly engage our present and self-consciously plan for and welcome our future”. And we constantly ask ourselves, “if not this then what, and if we don’t do it who will?”

This is the 30th Anniversary Million Man March Statement written in conversation and collaboration with members of the 30th Anniversary Million Man March Collective in remembrance, reflection, repair and resistance, facilitated by Matsimela Mafumo (Rev. Mark Thompson). ▲

DR. MAULANA KARENGA, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of *Kwanzaa*; and author of *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture* and *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.