In the 74 years since Islam was introduced in the United States of America, there has not been a Nation of Islam celebration like this one.

More than 20,000 people, mostly Muslim Believers from all over the country, gathered in a massive white tent erected on the grounds of the NOI's National Center and in every available space inside Mosque Maryam and the adjacent Muhammad University of Islam Oct. 17 for a keynote address by the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan commemorating the ninth anniversary of the historic Million Man March (MMM) and Holy Day of Atonement.

The faithful—Black Muslims, Latino Muslims, even Muslims who appeared to be Caucasian—began assembling two hours before the scheduled address.

At speech-time, in addition to the 15,000 seated and many more standing inside, hundreds and hundreds stood and sat outside in the parking lot. Thousands of brothers from the city of Chicago gave up their seats inside the tent to allow out-of-town guests to have a closer viewing of the address. In a calm spirit similar to the two million men that stood in peace during the historic Million Man March in 1995, hundreds more patiently stood on the sidewalks along Stony Island Avenue and 73rd Street, in lines wrapped completely around the block, anxiously hoping to hear from Minister Farrakhan.

The Muslim leader did not disappoint. He promised a year of "Supreme Organizing" and peacemaking, which would lead to the 10th anniversary commemoration of the MMM by millions of men, as well as by women, in Washington, D.C. in October 2005.

"I want us to be able to go to Washington next year with a million Black men, two million, three million, four million, five million, 10 million," Minister Farrakhan declared. "And then, let's tell our Brothers, we've got this program" to make life better for liberation.

The peacemaking, the organizing, the educating of young people, especially gang members and rappers, will produce impressive results, he explained. "And if all of us say to America, 'You owe us. We want justice,' we're going to end police brutality in one day.

“We’re going to start right here in Chicago,” he said, promising to organize members of gangs who are now fighting each other. “The Latin Kings, we’re going to visit them. They’re our family. We cannot allow the violence to continue in the streets where we live,” he insisted.

The Muslim leader promised to take the campaign throughout the Midwest, the East Coast, the Mid-Atlantic, the Deep South and the West Coast.

A nation of peacemakers

Muslims, he said the day before, would enforce “General Orders” and would “not allow a disturbance”—not even by foreign perpetrators or terrorists—“on or near our post.”

“Our post,” he insisted, is the 3,000 mile by 2,000 mile entire geography of the U.S.

Islam is not a “religion of hate,” Minister Farrakhan told the keynote address audience. And despite the desire of some in government to destroy the Nation of Islam, the distaste which the U.S. population has for Muslims who are bent on suicide in order to inflict pain and suffering on this country’s population may open a door for some unprecedented progress and development by the Nation of Islam in the same way Americans’ distaste for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and his minister Malcolm X in the 1960s opened a door for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to make progress, even though White society opposed most of what Dr. King advocated.

“The elderly men and the elderly women have to be able to leave their homes and go where they want to go and come where they want to come and feel that they are safe, because we are going to be the protectors of our community and not the destroyers of our community. I want a Nation of peacemakers,” he stressed.

Minister Farrakhan plans to empower a cadre of young people from the Nation of Islam as leaders for the youth. They would participate in youth activities and their influence would enable youth to begin to “police themselves,” he said. Young people in attendance said they are ready for the task.

“My father’s the minister in the Sacramento Study Group, so I believe I might step up to be Jr. FOI minister,” 16-year-old Elijah Muhammad told *The Final Call*.

Like other young NOI members present, Bro. Elijah said he believes he will earn his own stripes as a leader, and not simply advance because of his father’s position.

A formal delegation of young Muslims took part in the keynote program. Led by Kabasa Muhammad, Vanguard Captain at Mosque Maryam; Leonard Muhammad, an 18-year-old freshman at Howard University in Washington; and Miriam Muhammad, an 18-year-old freshman at Lewis College in Romeoville, Ill., participants in the weekend’s youth activities presented Minister Farrakhan a bouquet of flowers and contributed a check for $6,000 to the Nation of Islam No. 2 Poor charity.

The challenge and appeal for young leadership is appealing to women, as well as men.

“It’s a brilliant idea,” Sis. El-Medina from Kansas City, Mo. told *The Final Call*. “Because I am a young person, I am preparing and in the training right now to possibly become a leader to lead our people into the future and to uplift the rest of humanity.”

“Rappers can become the teachers of the students, but the wise enemy’s got you wrapped in filth, so the children pick up filth,” Minister Farrakhan argued. “But suppose you got D.A. Smart and started learning wisdom? That’s why every rapper should pursue knowledge.”

Older Muslims were also enthused after hearing his remarks.

“He is bearing witness that God Is, God Was, and God always will be, and basically he has given us the next step of our assignment: to continue to spread the word of Islam, to continue to stand on truth, and bear witness by your example that God Is, God Was, and God will always be,” Kendra Muhammad, the reigning Mrs. Illinois International, from Bloomington, Ill., told *The Final Call*
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“I’ve been to just about every one (of Min. Farrakhan’s speeches), to the Million Man March and everything,” said Brother Elijah from Milwaukee, Wis. “It’s a blessing to see so many people out. It makes me think about Washington, D.C.” and the MMM, he said.

His friend, Rayfield Johnson agreed. “I’ve been a part of the Nation since 1945,” said Brother Rayfield. “Every time he comes out, I just praise him. I know he’s a man from God. That’s the way I feel.”

Righteousness brings peace

Members of the Nation have an important role to play in the rise of our people, Minister Farrakhan insisted. Muslims can lead the way, he said, with a universal message, preaching our own doctrine without preaching hate for the doctrine of others.

Human beings are born making a universal sound and humans all make the same sound when they die, he said, but during the life in-between there is no universal sound, no universal religious message and no universal educational message.

“Every mother understands the universality of the first sound that the baby makes,” said Minister Farrakhan. “We come into the world not crying in English or Spanish or Arabic or French,” he said. Human beings all die making the same sound, the hissing sound of the final breath leaving the body.

“Universal sound, birth, death. But in life, there’s no universal sound to make men and women the brothers and sisters of each other, so that our life can be pleasant and beautiful on the Earth. We are divided by color, divided by education, divided by nationality, divided by ethnicity. Everything is division. Unity coming in. Unity going out. Division all through life,” he continued.

Righteousness, he noted, is what brings peace, and the commitment to piety and righteousness and to moral rectitude in our lives begins at home, he added.

“You cannot go out and be a peacemaker outside, until we become peacemakers inside of this house,” he remarked about the Nation of Islam itself.

“You don’t need your gun, because you reach for it too quickly to kill your brother. Let’s put it down. Put it down, put it away and if I can get you to do that this year, then it’s not I, but God inspiring you to do it.

“I want the rap community—since you’re over all the youth of the world—let’s turn them into peacemakers. So these old men, old men my age and older who want to use you for their greed, for oil and wealth,” will not be able to turn our young people into cannon fodder.

“I would like us to have the youth so fired up that, when the enemy says it’s time for us to go to war, we say: ‘Just a minute. Blessed are the peacemakers. Have you tried to make peace? Because I’m not killing another human being that God has not ordered me to kill and you don’t look like God, Mr. Bush. So I’m not going.’

“They’ll say: ‘Wait a minute, you’re going to jail. You’re going to jail.’ ‘I’ve been in jail all of my life. I’m not going to kill another man for you or anybody else. My way is the way of God; it’s the way of peace.’

“If we turn the world into peacemakers, then the rulers won’t be able to use young men and young women to fight their terrible wars,” Min. Farrakhan said.

We need a change

Minister’s Farrakhan’s message is particularly important, coming on the eve of the presidential election. The Democratic and Republican candidates, however, are merely flip-sides of the same political coin, he has charged.

“So in our being messed up in a world of injustice then, naturally, we will go to the polls and we

will vote for Bush or Kerry and we will think that this is a solution," he explained. "If I were you, I'd cast my vote for Jesus. If I were you, I'd cast my vote for Muhammad. If I were you, I'd cast my vote for a righteous standard, because when you think that that is going to preserve and protect your rights, those people are the ones who were born to take your rights.

"I'm not going to stop you from voting. I want you to vote your conviction, if you have one," Min. Farrakhan said. "You can vote for either one, it's your choice, but you're going to catch hell with either one. My mother used to say: 'You never see the flower's backside until the wind blows,' and Bush is out there on front street. If you want that, you've got what you hoped for. But listen to Kerry's talk. He focused on Iraq and Bush said, 'It's the wrong war, the wrong place, the wrong time.'

"Kerry said we should have been focusing on Iran. Now, what do you mean by that, Mr. Kerry? See, Iran, Syria, Iraq are enemies of Israel because they do not believe that the stealing of Palestinian lands is justified by Bible or Qur'an. And there are some Orthodox Jews who share that view.

"I listen to George Bush talk to AIPAC, and I listen to John Kerry talk to B'nai B'rith, the Anti-Defamation League. Both of them talking the same thing. They're sworn to protect Israel."

Pres. Bush, Min. Farrakhan said, "does not want God's Kingdom."

Members of the Nation of Islam, however, do want God's Kingdom, he said. "Let Jesus come and tell (Pres.) Bush to sit down. 'Bush, you did a bad job. Tell your father he did, too.' In fact, I won't stop there, tell (British Prime Minister) Tony Blair 'Sit down.' Tell (French President Jacques) Chirac 'Sit down.' Tell the Prime Minister of Japan, 'Sit down.' Sit them all down because he said, 'I came to set up a kingdom that will produce on earth, good will toward men.'

"Where is the peace? Where is the good will? It is nonexistent. It's a word you say around Christmas time, but the reality is not there. It's not good will in your own home with your own family. It's not good will between a husband and a wife. It's not good will with the children and parents. It's not good will between the student and the teacher. It's not good will between the governor and those who are being governed.

“We need a change,” Min. Farrakhan urged. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

Source