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NATIONAL

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Black men converge on Washington for day of atonement, reconciliation

■ **RALLY:** Million Man March has gained broad-based support despite its controversial organizer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Black men converging on the nation's capital for today's Million Man March described it as a unifying, uplifting event that transcends its controversial originator, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

"It's not about a march, a man, words. It's about a movement," the Rev. Vernor Clay said after a Sunday sermon urging the men of Lincoln Congregational Temple in Washington to attend.

The event, actually more of a rally and prayer meeting than march, is called "a day of atonement and reconciliation."

Organizers asked women — and men who can't come to the rally — to stay home from work or school to mark a "holy day," and to avoid spending any money as a demonstration of black economic power.

The idea originated with Farrakhan, and he has been its chief organizer, with the help of ousted NAACP chief Benjamin Chavis Jr.

Farrakhan's remarks have infuriated Jews, Catholics, gays, feminists and others. He has called Judaism a "gutter religion" and recently defended his use of the term "bloodsuckers" to describe Jews or others who open businesses in minority communities and take the profits elsewhere.

Farrakhan canceled all his public appearances Sunday to prepare for the rally.

Crowds were expected to begin converging on the Mall soon after midnight. Some city subway stations were opening at 12:30 a.m., five hours earlier than usual, to accommodate them.

Activities start at 5 a.m. with prayer and African drumming, followed by speeches, music and more prayer throughout the day. Weather forecasters predicted a sunny and breezy day with temperatures in the 60s.

No one knows how many men will arrive. City officials say they are preparing for 500,000 to one million. Organizers predict more than 11,000 buses will bring men to the rally. Reaching the goal of 1 million would take more than one out of every 10 of America's black adult men.

Catholics: Church is requesting apology

■ Continued from Page 1

an end to public scrutiny surrounding the issue.

"The Rickies have apologized and we have forgiven them—or at least I have," said Andy Andreason, a parishioner from St. Mary's Catholic Church.

But Michael Whitney, a Springfield private investigator who filed an official complaint against the city of Eugene on Sept. 17, two days after the parade, said the city should also apologize.

The Rickies have a constitutional right to voice their opinion in the parade, asserted Whitney. But, he said, the city of Eugene does not have a right to give publicly raised money to a group that promotes bigotry, and that is what he believes the city did when prize money raised through parade entry fees was awarded to the Rickies by a committee of volunteer judges.

Whitney wants the city to take back the $200 prize and to publicly apologize, he said.

The committee was formed to review Whitney's complaint, and to make recommendations to the Human Rights Commission about how the city should react, said Margot Helphand, a Human Rights Commission member who was present at the committee meeting.

The committee report will also make suggestions about whether or not the city of Eugene should reexamine the way prize money is awarded, and about whether the city should alter its involvement in the Eugene Celebration, Helphand said. None of the Rickies attending the meeting spoke about the issue.

Oregon Daily Emerald

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