

March declared enormous success, brings lessons home

■ **RACE:** The organizers say the demonstration helped bring unity to African-American men

WASHINGTON (AP) — Black men energized by the huge rally in the nation's capital began spreading the spirit Tuesday, making plans to clean up inner-city neighborhoods back home, register voters and simply help each other survive.

As Washington got back to normal, meanwhile, both black and white members of Congress urged President Clinton to create a commission to study America's racial divisions.

Organizers of the "Million Man March" celebrated their success and accused the government of a racist undercut — the 400,000 estimated by the U.S. Park Service.

After Monday's long day of prayer, songs and speeches, many men traveled all night by bus, car or train to return home in time

for work Tuesday, tired but still inspired by the brotherhood they felt on the national Mall. Others who only saw the event on TV said they too were uplifted.

"I hope it reverberates around the country in energizing people right where they are," Joseph E. Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, told ABC-TV.

Some men said they already are volunteers in their communities but left Washington determined to take on more responsibilities.

Frederick Heard, a Detroit postman who helps out with an after-school sports league, said he wants to plan a local march with the same themes of self-help and self-respect. "We should get to all the inner-cities," he said.

Heard's 15-year-old son, Justin, said he hopes the spirit kindled Monday will keep some black men alive: "I want brothers to come together, stop killing each other."

Alvertis Simmons of Denver promised to encourage black fathers to pay the child support they owe.

"Brothers, make this commitment," he said. "If you know a brother who is not paying child support, cut him off because he should be taking care of his kids."

James Bolden Jr. caught some of the event from his home in Topeka, Kan. The speeches were inspiring, Bolden said. But he hopes the talk leads to action on issues such as job discrimination.

"The march is general," he said. "We need to break it down and make it more specific to the problems at hand."

Several members of Congress sent Clinton a letter urging him to appoint a commission on race relations "to issue a report on the progress and failures that our nation has made on race since 1968."

That was the year the Kerner Commission, appointed by President Johnson,

issued its famous study that concluded "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal."

The letter was signed by Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., John Lewis, D-Ga., Jim Leach, R-Iowa, Bill McCollum, R-Fla., Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., and Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia's delegate.

There have been several calls in the past for another Kerner-type study. But Schumer said the rally and reaction to the O.J. Simpson trial underscored the need for it.

During a wide-ranging two-and-a-half-hour speech that ended the rally, Louis Farrakhan exhorted the men to improve themselves, take care of their families, rebuild their communities and invest in black-owned businesses. He urged them to attend a church or mosque and to join political and social organizations that will help improve the lives of black Americans.

March leaders claim racism in undercount

■ **DEMONSTRATION:** Organizers claim they got a million marchers, Parks Service believes only 400,000

WASHINGTON (AP) — The "Million Man March" lived up to its name, leaders insisted Tuesday, accusing the U.S. Park Service of a racist undercut and threatening a lawsuit.

"They falsely said to the world that 400,000 black men came when they well know there were more than a million," said Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam.

"There never was a demonstration or gathering in the city of Washington to equal what happened yesterday," Farrakhan told a news conference. "For what reason would anyone fail to give us credit but racism?"

The U.S. Park Service announced hours after the day long event that about 400,000 people had attended. That would make it the fourth-largest demonstration ever, some 200,000 short of the anti-Vietnam War march in 1969.

"We don't think we are racist, we think we acted in a professional way," said Maj. Robert Hines, spokesman for the Park Service, which estimates crowds for major Washington events.

"We know they are unhappy with the count as have been a lot of other organizations in the past," he said.

The co-chairman of the group's legal committee, Abdul Arif Muhammad, said, "We intend to file suit and seek evidentiary proof that more than one million men came to Washington."

Where and when such action would be filed has not been decided, he said.

Hines said the park service made three photos from a helicopter, the first at 9 a.m. and the last at 3 p.m. when the crowd was at its peak. The count is made by comparing density of people in various sectors, and getting input from city police and transportation authorities.

The march was billed as a day of atonement and renewal for black men and Farrakhan said the day will be repeated — not necessarily with a march.

Air bag found to be cause of five-year-old boy's death

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — An autopsy has implicated an air bag in the death of a 5-year-old boy who broke his neck when his grandmother's car bumped into a concrete planter box in a parking lot.

The dual air bags inflated in the Oct. 10 accident, twisting Jordan West's head, said Val Wilson, North Salt Lake police chief. Medical examiners said "the air bag definitely had a cause in the death," Wilson said Monday.

Lynn Oliver was trying to park the Camaro Z-28 and was driving slowly, Wilson said.

General Motors Corp. spokesman Ed Lechtzin said, "Because we haven't had a chance to investigate the case or the car, it would be inappropriate to comment on it."

Ms. Oliver said she and the

boy, who lived in Bountiful, were wearing seat belts. But investigators have not been able to confirm that since the youngster's body had no marks or bruises that would indicate seat belt use.

Dr. Jeffrey Augenstein, a Miami trauma surgeon who is studying auto accidents, said the only known cases in which an air-bag deployment led to a death were when the victim was not wearing a seat belt.

Medical examiners have not yet provided a specific cause of death but said the boy's broken neck contributed, Wilson said.

Ms. Oliver was not hurt, and no charges were filed.

"We don't feel there was any negligence on her part. We have checked it out several times," Wilson said. "The damage to the car was almost minimal."

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A Message For Women

Women do not ask for, cause, invite or deserve to be assaulted. Women and men sometimes exercise poor judgment about safety behavior, but that does not make them responsible for an assault. Attackers are responsible for their attacks and their use of violence to overpower, control or abuse another person.

If you or someone you know is in danger, call the nearest shelter, your local YWCA or a hotline.

Women can't stop violence alone. We need to support each other and work with men who care about us. Together we can create a safer future for women, children and men.

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