



■ **FEATURES** | Issue: "NextGen worship" July 26, 2008

'Black genocide'

ABORTION | Protesters want the NAACP to speak up on the slaughter of unborn African-Americans | *Alisa Harris*

If someone wiped out the entire African-American population in Oakland, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C., the number still wouldn't equal the number of black babies lost to abortion in one year: 683,294. According to the Allan Guttmacher Institute, African-American women are nearly five times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to have an abortion. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, almost one in every two African-American pregnancies ends in abortion.

These are facts, say pro-life blacks, that the NAACP can't afford to ignore. On July 14, the pro-lifers—including Alveda King (niece of Martin Luther King Jr.) and Clenard Childress of Life Education and Research Network—picketed the NAACP's 99th Annual Convention to address what Childress calls "black genocide." King said of Planned Parenthood, "It has led the way in eliminating African-Americans to the point where one quarter of the black population is now missing because of abortion. Planned Parenthood is anti-life and we are here to say enough is enough!"



Zuma Wire World Photos

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Childress said the group was protesting the censorship of a pro-life resolution from the NAACP chapter in Macon, Ga. In February 2004, the NAACP made a statement endorsing the pro-abortion March Against Fear. In 2004 and 2007, the Macon chapter proposed a pro-life resolution calling on the NAACP to abandon its pro-abortion language and start educating the black community on the issue.

The NAACP now says it has no official policy on abortion, but the national resolution committee has rejected the resolution so the NAACP has never read it on the convention floor or discussed it. Childress said pro-lifers only want to discuss the resolution and present the facts: "It would be gross negligence not to address the issue."

At the NAACP picket, which took place the same day Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama addressed the gathering in Cincinnati, about 100 people passed out over 10,000 pieces of literature as documentary makers shot film footage. "We had women who were hurt, harmed by abortion—African-American women—there handing out pamphlets," said Childress. The pamphlets gave information on the statistics of abortion in the black community, the alleged racism of Planned Parenthood, and research on the possible link between abortion and breast cancer.

Childress said almost all the NAACP delegates took the information: "Most of them were very shocked at the information, surprised, especially when we invited them to please investigate what we said: 'Don't take our word for it.'"

Walter B. Hoye II, founder and president of Issues4Life, said he has talked to other African-American leaders who respond in the same way when they hear statistics like these: Black women account for 6 percent of the population, but 56 percent of abortions. "First there's denial," said Hoye. "Then there's stunned silence."

Hoye noted that of the five abortion clinics in Alameda, Calif., four are in the heart of Oakland's African-American neighborhoods. He estimated that blacks and Hispanics together account for 88 percent of abortions, and he said this is an opportunity for the NAACP to work with other minorities on reducing abortions.

The NAACP could help first by acknowledging that black abortion is a problem, argued Hoye. Then it could incorporate pro-life principles into the anti-poverty and education programs it already runs. Childress suggested a health forum highlighting the physical and psychological toll abortion takes.

Poverty and lack of education can't be the only cause of black abortion, Hoye pointed out, because blacks have always faced difficult times and have pulled their families together and taken care of their children. He blames a silence in the pulpit: "They're pregnant, they have a problem, and there's absolutely no one to talk to about it."

Hoye said when he does sidewalk counseling at abortion clinics, a woman ignores him on the way into the clinic but comes out crying afterwards: "She's not experiencing the freedom she thought she would." Childress said, "It's up to moral and religious people to go to the streets and to the public square and let the cause and purpose be known in that fashion—peacefully—which is what we did."