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Walter Hoye, left, and Brian and Denise Walker, at the podium, were part of the program at the Jan. 22 Walk for Life in San Francisco.

JOSÉ LUIS AGUIRE PHOTO

Oakland right to life rally calls attention to 'black genocide'

By Michele Jurich
Staff writer

About 200 people gathered under bright skies in Oakland on Jan. 21 to, in the words of Issues4Life founder Walter Hoye, "to take a walk in Oakland."

Hoye, whose sidewalk counseling outside an Oakland abortion clinic led to a city ordinance aimed at his activity, and later, jail time, called on the community to end what he calls black genocide.

Speakers at the noontime rally, which was followed by a walk through downtown Oakland, included Kevin McGary, author of "Instanity!"; Denise and Brian Walker of Everlasting Light ministries of Minnesota; and Dion Evans, senior pastor at Chosen Vessels Christian Church in Alameda.

Abortion, McGary told the crowd, "has everything to do with human right, it has everything to do with civil rights, it has everything to do with social justice."

"If you're sincere about racism," he said, "this is the pivotal issue."

McGary estimated that 94 percent of Planned Parenthood's clinics are placed in African American neighborhoods. "Forty percent of all abortions are being performed on African American children," he said. Noting African Americans make up 12 percent of the population, and estimating that women of childbearing age make up 3 percent of the population, "23 million people have been denied life," he said.

“How can we have principled people that ignore this issue?” he asked, noting that the NAACP, Congressional Black Caucus and council of black churches remain silent on the issue of abortion.

Brian and Denise Walker offered their personal story of abortion. Four months before their planned wedding, they told the crowd, Denise discovered she was pregnant. They chose abortion; she said it was her third abortion.

“The shame started the very moment I decided to kill my child,” Brian Walker said. They told of spending the first 17 years of their marriage trying to overcome the chasm in their marriage that the abortion created.

“There are no resource dollars in the black community” for Hoyer’s work, Evans, the Alameda pastor, told the crowd, which responded with a steady stream of bills, ones and 20s, being brought to the microphone.

After the hourlong rally at Frank Ogawa Plaza in front of Oakland City Hall, marchers walked through the streets of downtown Oakland. Police reported no incidents during the event.

Among those walking were several representatives from Survivors, a Riverside ministry in which young people, ages 18 to 24, spend 18-week sessions visiting high school and college campuses to talk about abortion. They wore sweatshirts emblazoned with the words: “If you were born after 1972, you are a survivor.”

Daniel Rivera, 19, of Rancho Cucamonga, said the group visits high school and college campuses to “activate youth and give them the tools to show the evils of abortion.”

Also joining in the Oakland walk were David Bereit, national campaign director for 40 Days for Life, and four members of Sisters of Life. The New York order was founded in 1991 by Cardinal John O’Connor for the protection and enhancement of the sacredness of every human life.

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