Pastors urged to fight abortion among blacks
By Diana Chandler
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NASHVILLE (BP) -- The abortion industry has infiltrated the African American community by cloaking the procedure as a woman's civil right and embedding the issue into politics, African American pro-life advocate Arnold Culbreath told Baptist Press.

"The abortion industry shamelessly slithered into the black American community on the heels of the 'free love' movement, soon after Woodstock, and at the outset of the civil rights movement," said Culbreath, urban outreach director for Protecting Black Life, an affiliate of the Life Issues Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio, working to end abortion through education.

The abortion industry "duped black women into believing that abortion was their civil right," Culbreath said. "Not only was this misguided ideology deeply imbedded into the fabric of our community then, but we are still working to dispel the deception of this deadly dogma today."

The industry's tactic is one reason abortion is the leading cause of death among African Americans, Culbreath told Baptist Press.

"Unbeknown to many, abortion remains the leading cause of death among black Americans, higher than all other causes of death combined," Culbreath said. "In 2008, the most recent statistics released in 2011 reveal there were 289,072 black deaths from all causes excluding abortion. But in that same year there were 360,000 surgical black abortions.

"Nearly 1,000 black babies die by abortion every day," Culbreath said. "My passion stems from a God-given burden to see this genocide ended."

The assistant pastor of the nondenominational Heirs Covenant Church of Cincinnati has focused much of his ministry within the Southern Baptist community to accomplish his goal, speaking to audiences of various ethnicities at churches, colleges and special events.

"The Lord just put on my heart the Southern Baptist Convention," Culbreath told Baptist Press. "I just started moving forward and pushing on doors, and the Lord has opened those doors tremendously. We're trying to share some information that I think will change the landscape of our community."

Margaret Sanger targeted the African American community with the Negro Project of 1939, enlisting African American leaders to promote birth control among blacks as family planning. In reality, Culbreath said, she was promoting eugenics and selective reproduction. Sanger founded in 1921 The American Birth Control League, which
became Planned Parenthood.

"Every time I speak I bring up Margaret Sanger. The white audiences, they get it. And many of them have known for years and cried out in protest to the genocide that's going on," Culbreath said. "It's so sad that when folks get offended about hearing the truth about Margaret Sanger and Planned Parenthood, I rarely if ever get offense from the white audiences; it's the black audiences, the very ones that she and Planned Parenthood are working to obliterate. And I find that very sad and quite ironic."

Planned Parenthood, the largest birth control provider in the United States, has located 62.5 percent of its clinics within a two-mile radius of neighborhoods where African Americans and Hispanics make up the majority of residents, according to Life Issues research.

Planned Parenthood denies the charge, citing statistics updated in June from the Guttmacher Institute. The group contends 60 percent of Planned Parenthood clinics are located in majority white neighborhoods.

"The Guttmacher Institute is a leading, independent, nationally recognized reproductive health research and policy organization and we appreciate its unbiased findings that debunk the claim that a majority of abortion providers are located in Black neighborhoods," Vanessa Cullins, Planned Parenthood Federation of America vice president of external medical affairs, said in an email to Baptist Press.

Undisputed are statistics showing that African Americans account for a disproportionate percentage of abortions. In 2011, African American women accounted for 30 percent of abortions, according to the Guttmacher Institute, when blacks numbered only 12.5 percent of the population, U.S. Census figures show.

Abortion is also fueled by politics, Culbreath said.

"I often say, and I hate to give the devil any credit, but I often say one of his most masterful strategies regarding the issue of abortion, was to politicize it," Culbreath said, "because most people, black, white, brown or yellow, have difficulty talking about, thinking about, dealing with this issue beyond political construct."

"There is a political side to abortion, because it was passed by a 7-2 decision by our Supreme Court. It does have a political side, but in reality, it's much, much more broad than that," Culbreath said. "It has health implications, it has a negative impact ... on women, it has financial implications. It is a multi-billion dollar industry. And one friend of mine often says that if abortion was not lucrative, it would not be legal."

Culbreath cites success in informing African American pastors and others of abortion's detrimental impact on the black community.

"Most pastors, when you're able to have the conversation with them, will begin weeping, and say things like, 'I did not know this. I should have known that,'" Culbreath said. "And then there are those scenarios where a pastor may be post-abortive himself, perhaps in college, that kind of a thing, and maybe never told anybody."
Abortion is more than a woman's issue, Culbreath teaches.

"I tell men, if men are the carriers of the seed, does abortion not have everything to do with us? So if we can train men, put them in accountability partnerships one with another, where they're challenging one another and answerable to one another, I'm talking about relative to their sexuality, we could shut some things down," he said. "And when I talk about the successes, which I don't take credit for, there is an army of young people who are keeping themselves sexually pure until marriage. And they don't mind people knowing that they're virgins."

Just as Sanger targeted African American pastors to encourage the use of artificial birth control within the black community, Culbreath said, black pastors can be the catalyst to ending the practice.

"Margaret Sanger, in her Negro Project of 1939, was successful at infiltrating the black community largely through black pastors and preachers. I believe that God wants to close that back door to our community by the same people group, the watchmen, that opened the door to the community," he said. "So if it was opened by black pastors and preachers, I believe black pastors and preachers are a significant people group."

As a co-founder of the California-based National Black Pro-Life Coalition, Culbreath will participate in two workshops and panel discussions at the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference, July 21–25 in Ridgecrest, N.C., to encourage the church to address the issue.

"We have such influence on any given Sunday morning. Any given Wednesday night, we're speaking to hundreds of thousands of people across this country. We could turn the tide on this issue," he said. "And that's one of the reasons the battle is so intense and so uphill, getting to these pastors and getting them to come forward and address the issue, because of the level of spiritual warfare that we're contending with. The enemy does not want them to get this information, because if the black community, the sleeping giant that it is, ever wakes up and begins contesting this issue, it's over. I believe that."

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Diana Chandler is general assignment writer/editor for Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention's news service. BP reports on missions, ministry and witness advanced through the Cooperative Program and on news related to Southern Baptists' concerns nationally and globally. Get Baptist Press headlines and breaking news on Twitter (@BaptistPress), Facebook (Facebook.com/BaptistPress) and in your email (baptistpress.com/SubscribeBP.asp).

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