



Pro-lifers pray, protest at mega abortion clinic in Houston

By Bonnie Pritchett

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HOUSTON (BP)--As two African American organizations gathered Jan. 18 on separate parade routes in Houston to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., a diverse gathering in a third location called attention to what they said is the new issue of the civil rights movement -- the sanctity of human life -- a cause they declared would have been championed by the late civil rights leader.

Speakers over the course of the two-day gathering in Houston included Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; Abby Johnson, former director of a Planned Parenthood clinic; Harry Jackson, pastor of Hope Christian Church in Washington, D.C., and a leader in the black conservative movement; and many others from across the nation.

To commemorate the King holiday, the event included leaders of the African American and Hispanic Christian communities who charged Planned Parenthood with targeting minority populations. Planned Parenthood Federation is nearing completion in Houston of what organizers said would be the nation's largest abortion-providing clinic.

Attempts to contact Planned Parenthood Houston/Southeast Texas for a response went unanswered.

Land called the new facility a "monstrosity" and others said the site of the clinic is no coincidence but merely representative of the racist ideals held by the organization's late founder, Margaret Sanger. At the very least, Land said, the location is "making the taking of human life more convenient."

The new clinic is located just blocks from the University of Houston campus, the historically black Texas Southern University and within walking distance of predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods.

Other speakers pulled no punches in their accusations against the leading abortion provider in the nation.



Some prayerwalked around a large-scale Planned Parenthood clinic under construction in Houston while others stood silently to pray. Red tape covered the mouths of those participating in a "silent siege" prayer vigil at the site. *Photo by Bonnie Pritchett*



Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director, prays with one of the organizers of a two-day prayer and protest rally in Houston over what they say will be the nation's largest abortion clinic. *Photo by Bonnie Pritchett*



Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commissions, speaks with Laura Allred (center) and her mother Emily Zavala during a prayer and protest rally in Houston over what organizers say will be the nation's largest abortion clinic. Allred is founder

Samuel Rodriguez said the "spirit of Herod" is alive and well, referencing the desperate king's attempts to kill the baby Christ. Rodriguez said the building's location specifically targets minorities and begs the question, "Why is the devil so afraid of black babies and brown babies? It's time to turn the tide. Abortion is anti-Latino, anti-black and anti-life," he declared to the cheers of estimated 8,000-9,000 people gathered for a worship and prayer rally at the Catholic Charismatic Center, a few blocks from the 78,000-square-foot Planned Parenthood facility.

According to pro-life organizations in Houston, the clinic will be outfitted to perform late-term abortions, something Planned Parenthood Houston hasn't been legally equipped to do since legislation restricting the practice was passed in 2003.

Arnold Culbreath of Protecting Black Life in Cincinnati, Ohio, told the crowd that 62.5 percent of all Planned Parenthood clinics are located in predominantly black neighborhoods. When the clinics operating in Hispanic communities is added, Culbreath said the number located among minority populations rises to 76 percent.

Citing a National Vital Statistics report dated October 2009, Culbreath reported the number of live births to black women was 587,000 and the number of abortions was 452,000.

"These numbers are dangerously close together," he said, adding that for the first time in American history the black population is not keeping up with the birth-to-death replacement rate.

CALL TO RENEWAL

Lou Engle, leader of The Call to Conscience and the chief organizer of the Houston gathering, said the movement is primarily not a protest but a call to prayer and fasting. Monday's rally and silent march to the clinic began Sunday evening with a five-hour prayer vigil drawing pro-lifers from across the nation.

The Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in American began in Texas, Engle noted; the end of abortion can begin in Texas as well, he said.

Engle began Sunday's prayer service with a call to repentance.

"Revival will not come if we don't begin to deal with our secret sins. America has to get real. The church has to get real," he said.

"What do You do, God," Engle asked, "when your pastors do not speak up? As pastors we have sinned against You."

and director of Captured, a ministry to young women, especially minorities, the largest demographic group having abortions. *Photo by Bonnie Pritchett*



LaSondra Spears of Dallas worships during the opening service of a two-day pro-life prayer and protest rally in Dallas. The name of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. was invoked throughout the event as leaders proclaimed the right to life as integral to civil rights. *Photo by Bonnie Pritchett*

Several black pastors drew attention to the link between Darwinism, the eugenics movement of the early 20th century and the racist agenda of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger.

Pastor Stephen Broden of Fair Park Bible Fellowship in Dallas said the acceptance of Darwinism escalated racist ideals as blacks were seen as below par on the evolutionary scale. As blacks were dehumanized -- as Jews were in Germany -- there was little to no moral outcry within the circles of the intellectual elite who supported and promoted the practice of eugenics, the theory of improving humanity through selective breeding and discouraging breeding among those considered less fit.

Broden said Sanger supported the practice by promoting the use of birth control among the black populations in America.

"To the community of death," Broden declared, "no more eugenics. We will push back."

Harry Jackson, who led opposition to the push for same-sex "marriage" in Washington, D.C. said, "We are in danger of the civil rights movement selling us out. This is about the rights of the unborn."

Jackson said he understood intimately the struggles of blacks in America. He told of how his father's life was threatened when he tried to vote and of seeing lynchings and the burned body of a black man dragged through town.

Referencing that brutal history, Jackson said, "I'm here to tell you, right now is the same kind of lynching, the same kind of burning. But you are seeing us come together. I believe Dr. King would say, 'Save the unborn.' The ultimate civil right is the right of life."

Since 1973, there have been 50 million abortions in the U.S.

Land said God had a plan for those lives. "We are not going to rest," he said. "Hear us, pro-abortion forces. Hear us, liberals. This is our country too and we will never rest until we turn back Roe v. Wade," he said to cheers.

Quoting King, as other speakers had, Land continued, "I have a dream. My dream is of a day when America -- from sea to shining sea, from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border -- is pro-life and every baby is welcome as a gift of God."

Several speakers challenged the church to support adoption efforts.

PRAYER RALLY

The Houston gathering also included a prayer rally at the Planned Parenthood Clinic, where only the shuffling of feet on the sidewalk could be heard by those who chose to prayerwalk around the facility. They passed their prayer partners standing with iPod earbuds plugged in, or holding Bibles and silently reading, or raising arms in quiet invocations to God.

Less than a dozen pro-choice advocates were on the opposite side of the street. They held signs reading, "Abortion with no apologies," "Safe Sex" and "Abort Capitalism." They mocked those who turned to face them in a demonstration of prayer for them.

Abby Johnson, who quit her job as a Planned Parenthood clinic director in Bryan, Texas, last October, said Christians need to commit to pray for those who work in the abortion industry, adding that she is proof that those prayers are effective.

Following the event, Land told the Southern Baptist TEXAN he believes the pro-life movement is gaining momentum, citing recent polls indicating the majority of Americans refer to themselves as pro-life. Pointing to the participants at the pro-life gathering in Houston, Land noted the relatively young age of the assembly. Young people in America, he said, believe abortion is morally wrong but they don't have the political clout yet because many are not old enough to vote.

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