

## Speaker promotes education at fundraiser

BY KRISTINA SMITH HORN •

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FREMONT -- Abortion is the leading cause of death among blacks, a pastor and social activist told the NAACP on Friday.

In 2005, 452,000 black babies were aborted, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Vital Statistics reports.

That number far eclipses the 292,808 blacks who died that year from all other causes, including heart disease and cancer, said the Rev. Arnold Culbreath, the urban outreach director of Life Issues Institute Inc. in Cincinnati.

"It's shocking," said Culbreath, the keynote speaker at the NAACP's annual scholarship fundraiser. "It's time for the black community to wake up. We've got to slow this train down."

Through Urban Outreach's initiative, Protecting Black Life, Culbreath's goal is to educate people about these statistics and show them other choices are available. And he feels this message of education was especially important Friday, at an event geared toward raising money for young locals' education.

"Education is power," said Culbreath, who started his presentation with a saxophone performance from his new instrumental praise CD. "We're working hard every day to make sure that the knowledge gets out there. It is a message that has been silent and avoided.

"Many have been in denial far too long."

Culbreath believes Planned Parenthood targets minorities by building clinics in minority neighborhoods and pushes them to have abortions. People need to understand this and be aware of their options so they can make an informed decision, he said.

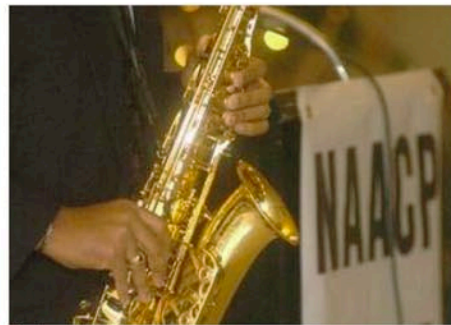
"This isn't a pleasant message to carry," he said. "This is a message that has to be delivered with generosity and ample doses of love and understanding. The NAACP could make a significant dent in this problem."

Nationally, the organization has not become involved, he said. Politics has driven a wedge into the issue, but Culbreath said the issue is much bigger than politics.



CULBREATH

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NAACP Scholarship Fundraiser



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The Rev. Arnold Culbreath, the keynote speaker, plays the saxophone before his speech during the NAACP Scholarship Fundraiser Banquet at Crystal Arbors in Fremont on Friday. (Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger)

Culbreath says he knows women who have had abortions, and said they struggle with it daily, as do their families.

Abortion isn't just about women, he said. Men are involved and a part of it because they helped create the fetus, he said.

If people abstained from sex, they would not have to deal with pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, he said.

Some people argue a young girl might be in a pregnancy crisis because she has her future ahead of her and a baby wasn't part of the plan, he said. But she should stop the crisis, not the baby, he said.

In cases of rape and incest, which he said account for less than 1 percent of abortions, he understands how difficult the situation must be for the woman.

"(But) what sin has that baby committed that he or she should be put to death by abortion?" Culbreath said.

Culbreath said he doesn't want people to do anything outrageous or violent. He wants them to help educate others about the issue.

"The vast majority of Americans don't know what you just learned," he said. "Don't fall into the trap of the enemy that deceives you into thinking you have to be an expert on the subject before you can talk about it.

"Just tell people what you know."

Culbreath said part of his message is to help young people, and he commended those who attended the event, including the winners of the Fremont NAACP's MLK Oratorical Contest.

Some of them gave their winning speeches. Paige Turner, 11, a fifth-grader at Atkinson Elementary School, talked about keeping dreams alive.

She said she keeps Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream alive through her dreams and aspirations, like her desire to teach children how to read.

Riara Holland, 11, a sixth-grader at Stamm Elementary School, gave a speech titled "Proceed to Succeed." She talked about King's decision to follow his dream.

"He had to proceed to succeed," she said. "Dr. King believed in a little thing called hope. He hoped to end racism. He hoped to end poverty."

Now we must decide what dream to follow and proceed to succeed, she said.

Marquis Crawford, 12, a seventh-grader at Fremont Middle School, talked about King's non-violent approach to creating change. As a peer mediator during his fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade years, Crawford helped people learn to resolve their differences without violence.

King worked to help stop racism. If not for him, Crawford would not be able to pursue his dreams of being an architect and owning corporations, he said.

"Together we can change America for the better," he said.

Fremont NAACP president Dallas Leake praised the students for their public speaking skills and reminded the audience that their scholarship donations help young people like those students. Through the years, the NAACP has donated more than \$34,000 in scholarships to area students, according to information the organization provided.

"The money that we raise is an investment," Leake said.