

# WORLD

## Abortion by race

**POLITICS: With two in five African-American pregnancies ending in abortion, are black voters beginning to look beyond loyalty to Democrats and vote pro-life?**

By ANTHONY BRADLEY

American history books frequently mention the lynching of African-Americans; one count from 1882 to the 1960s records 3,445 blacks dying that way. Other facts, though, go generally unrecorded: Since 1973 the number of aborted African-American babies totals 12 million, and every day in the United States some 1,500 die through abortion.

Clenard Childress Jr., a pastor in Montclair, N.J., and president of the northeast region of the Life Education and Research Network (LEARN), the nation's largest African-American evangelical pro-life group, hopes to reduce that last number. His goal is to "proclaim the message of life and to expose the vices of the abortion industry" to the African-American community.

He has a lot of work to do. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, more than 43 percent of African-American pregnancies end in abortion. Although African-Americans represent only 12 percent of the American population, they account for almost 35 percent of all abortions. In Mississippi, for example, while African-Americans represent only 37 percent of the population, they account for 73 percent of the state's abortions. More than 78 percent of Planned Parenthood's abortion centers are in or near minority communities.

Mr. Childress said many are not aware of the abortion industry's focus on African-Americans that began in 1939 with Margaret Sanger's involvement with the Negro Project. Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, supported the project's mission of promoting sterilization and birth control among African-Americans because she believed that "the procreation of this group should be stopped."

She enlisted African-American leaders to promote her beliefs, urging them to embrace eugenics, the science or pseudo-science that seeks to improve

racism through the control of hereditary factors by eliminating bad genes from reproductive populations. Sanger wanted to help the African-American community by ridding society of "increasing numbers of defectives, delinquents, and dependents."

Mr. Childress said the African-American church has been mute on the topic of abortion because of "a political tie where the Democratic Party became bigger than our God." Blacks embraced the Democrats' agenda, Mr. Childress

voted for President Bush in 2004 compared to only 8 percent in 2000.

Democrats such as Sen. Hillary Clinton are now seeking to soften their pro-abortion position as the run-up to the 2008 presidential election. She recently said at a pro-abortion event, "We can all recognize that abortion in many ways represents a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women. The fact is that the best way to reduce the number of abortions is to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in the first place."



said, because Democrats were seen as facilitators of the civil-rights movement while Republicans were seen as those "nasty white bigots who are out to oppress us." In embracing the Democratic agenda, however, African-Americans have also accepted values that are contrary to their heritage.

Voting trends in the 2004 presidential election showed signs of change. With Democrats promoting positions often abhorred by African-Americans, such as support for gay marriage, pro-life politicians received increasing African-American support. For example, 17 percent of New Jersey African-Americans

Although Mr. Childress, a registered Democrat, has been called a "sell out" for promoting a Republican platform, he insists that his concern "for the life of my people" stems from his convictions as a pastor rather than political motives. He tries to educate African-Americans about how abortion is affecting their community through a website, [blackgenocide.org](http://blackgenocide.org), and a radio program, "The Urban Prophet," which broadcasts five days a week in eight states.

*Anthony B. Bradley is a research associate at the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty in Grand Rapids, Mich.*